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The OLD TESTAMENT of the Holy Bible

CONFRATERNITY VERSION

With introductions and commentaries by

Reverend Joseph A. Grispino, S.M., S.S.L.

R-Bartlett



This edition of the Old Testament is one you will read and re-read. Over one-fourth of this book is a key to understanding the divine message hidden within ancient languages and customs. You will thrill to a new understanding of God's encounter with man. Brilliant introductions and clear commentaries bridge the centuries to bring God's truth to you as never before

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The main objective has been to clarify passages which appear to contradict science and history. More important, the theological content of the scriptural text is pertinently analyzed. Each of the forty-five books has a special introduction which gives the time, place and purpose of the writings.

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine version has been made from the original languages. It is one of the best English translations in the world today.

Father Grispino offers his commentaries in the spirit of the ecumenical movement. The interpretation of Sacred Scripture in this edition, governed by exact philological and historical sciences, tends to bring more agreement among those whose faith is founded on the Bible. It is his hope that persons of all faiths will find in this volume guidance and inspiration.

THE COMMENTATOR:

Father Joseph Grispino is a priest of the Society of Mary and holds his licentiate in sacred scripture from the Biblical Institute in Rome. He has taught sacred scripture both at Marist College and the Catholic University, Washington, D.C. He is a member of the Catholic Biblical Association. As author and editor of Current Scripture Notes, he is involved day-to-day with all the new developments in scriptural scholarship throughout the world.



JOSEPH A. GRISPINO, S.M., S.S.L.

GUILD PRESS • NEW YORK

THE OLD TESTAMENT

COMPLETE WITH ANNOTATIONS

BY

REV. JOSEPH A. GRISPINO, S.M., S.S.L.

The text is the new translation sponsored by the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for the Books of Genesis to Ruth, Job to Sirach, and the Prophetical Books. The Books of Kings to Esther, and 1, 2 Machabees are from the Douay Version.



An Angelus Book

GUILD PRESS • NEW YORK

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PREFACE

The purpose of this annotated edition of the Old Testament is to offer a readable, up-to-date book of Holy Scripture to the layman and student.

It has been the endeavor to render, without presupposing a wide biblical background, the greatest intelligibility with the least explanation, and to give the best distillation of the interpretations laid down by modern Catholic biblical scholars. These interpretations, of necessity, incorporate the latest findings in literary criticism, history, and archeology. The aim has been to embody the general consensus of modern Catholic biblical scholarship and to shun personal interpretations. Since scholarship is always progressing, the interpretations can, of course, not be final.

A main objective of this work has been to clarify passages which appear to contradict science and history, and cause offense to accepted proprieties and conventions. Hebraisms, wherever possible, have been anglicized in the annotations. The introductions point out specifically those books of which particular use is made in the liturgy. This practice is also reflected in the annotations.

The introductions to the various groupings of books as well as to the individual books of the Old Testament include information on the time and place of writing, the addressees, the purpose, the type of literature, and on whatever general aspects that are indispensable for better understanding of a given book. The more technical problems of the text and the canon were in general omitted.

This edition may serve as a thumb-nail study course of the Old Testament with the latest biblical trends seen "in action." Teachers of religion from elementary to college levels may use this work together with their students as a basic text for further study. It will also be useful to scripture study clubs and Newman Clubs, in convert instruction and for Confraternity of Christian Doctrine classes. It may make it easier for the laymen to follow the biblical sermon of the parish priest. The biblical scholar, naturally, will not find anything new therein. It is a consolation to know that perhaps there is none better than the scholar who can appreciate the delicate task of avoiding, in popularization, the reefs of technical explanations without tumbling into the shoals of oversimplification.

The smooth and accurate translation used, commonly known as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine text, has been made from the original languages. It is one of the very best English translations in the world today. Of the Old Testament there are only

thirteen historical books not yet newly translated. They are 1, 2, Samuel, 3, 4, Kings, 1, 2, Paralipomenon, Esdras, Nehemias Tobias, Judith, Esther, 1, 2, Machabees. It is fortunate that of al the Old Testament books these thirteen were the least in need of translation from the Douay version. Because the headings within the text of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine translation correspond with the divisions given at the beginning of each book, these divisions were, for the sake of clarity to the reader retained in the introductions. Moreover, some translators' notes of the CCD edition have been incorporated into the annotations Cross references were, in favor of more pertinent annotations omitted.

Special *Introductions* to The Old Testament (p. 1), the Pentateuch (p. 2), the Books of Wisdom (p. 891), and the Prophetical Books (p. 1247), aim to give general notions which apply to various clusters of books.

May this edition help to bring the Catholics back to Scripture and Scripture back to the Catholics.

Marist College
Washington, D.C.

JOSEPH A. GRISPINO, S.M

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Their names and order, with the number of chapters

CHS.	PG.	
50	4	Genesis
40	100	Exodus
27	174	Leviticus
36	227	Numbers
34	296	Deuteronomy
24	358	Josue
21	400	Judges
4	444	Ruth
31	452	1 Samuel (1 Kings)
24	512	2 Samuel (2 Kings)
22	561	3 Kings
25	620	4 Kings
29	673	1 Paralipomenon (1 Chronicles)
36	720	2 Paralipomenon (2 Chronicles)
10	776	Esdras
13	796	Nehemias (2 Esdras)
14	822	Tobias
16	842	Judith
16	868	Esther
42	892	Job
150	939	Psalms
31	1087	Proverbs
12	1130	Ecclesiastes
8	1146	Canticle of Canticles
19	1157	Wisdom
51	1187	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
66	1254	Isaia
52	1349	Jeremia
5	1441	Lamentations
6	1451	Baruch
48	1464	Ezechiel
14	1553	Daniel
14	1592	Osee
3	1610	Joel
9	1617	Amos
1	1632	Abdia
4	1636	Jona
7	1642	Michea
3	1652	Nahum
3	1657	Habacuc
3	1663	Sophonia
2	1671	Aggai
14	1676	Zacharia
4	1695	Malachia
16	1701	1 Machabees
15	1760	2 Machabees

Alphabetical List of Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible used in this Edition

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Abdia	Abd	Ezechiel	Ez
Aggai	Ag	Genesis	Gn
Amos	Am	Habacuc	Hb
Baruch	Bar	Isaia	Is
Canticle of Canticles	Ct	Jeremia	Jer
Daniel	Dn	Job	Jb
Deuteronomy	Dt	Joel	Jl
Ecclesiastes	Eccl	Jona	Jon
Esdras	Esd	Josue	Jos
Esther	Est	Judges	Jgs
Exodus	Ex	Judith	Jdt

3 Kings	3 Kgs	2 Paralipomenon (2 Chronicles)	2 Pa
4 Kings	4 Kgs	Proverbs	Prv
Lamentations	Lam	Psalms	Ps(s
Leviticus	Lv	Ruth	Ru
1 Machabees	1 Mc	1 Samuel (1 Kings)	1 Sm
2 Machabees	2 Mc	2 Samuel (2 Kings)	2 Sm
Malachia	Mal	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)	Sir
Michea	Mi	Sophonia	So
Nahum	Na	Tobias	Tb
Nehemias (2 Esdras)	Neh	Wisdom	Wis
Numbers	Nm	Zacharia	Za
Osee	Os		
1 Paralipomenon (1 Chronicles)	1 Par		

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Acts of the Apostles	Acts	Luke, St.	Lk
Apocalypse	Ap	Mark, St.	Mk
Colossians	Col	Matthew, St.	Mt
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1 Peter, St.	1 Pt
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	2 Peter, St.	2 Pt
Ephesians	Eph	Philemon	Phlm
Galatians	Gal	Philippians	Phil
Hebrews	Heb	Romans	Rom
James, St.	Jas	1 Thessalonians	1 Th
John, St.	Jn	2 Thessalonians	2 Th
1 John, St.	1 Jn	1 Timothy	1 Tm
2 John, St.	2 Jn	2 Timothy	2 Tm
3 John, St.	3 Jn	Titus	Ti
Jude, St.	Jude		

Miscellaneous Abbreviations

ch., chs.	chapter, chapters
e.g.	for example
Heb.	The Hebrew of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament
i.e.	that is
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
n.	annotation
Sep.	Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament
Vg.	Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible
v., vv.	verse, verses
[ ]	indicates a gloss of a later inspired writer
|	indicates verse beginning where this is not otherwise clea

How to Read the References

Rom 5, 6—means the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 5, verse 6.
Jer 2, 1.8—means Jeremia, chapter 2, verse 1 and verse 8.
Ex 7, 14-18, 20-21, 24—means Exodus, chapter 7, verses 14 to 18, verses 20 to 21, and verse 24 of the same chapter.
Mt 9, 4-8—means the Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 9, verses 4 to 8.
Gn 48, 10—49, 6—means Genesis, chapter 48, verse 10 to chapter 49, verse 6 inclusive.
2 Pt 2, 3; 3, 10—means the second Epistle of Saint Peter, chapter 2, verse 3; and chapter 3, verse 10 of the same book.
Dt 13—14—means Deuteronomy, chapter 13 to chapter 14 inclusive.
Ps 5, 2f—means Psalm 5, verse 2 and the following verse 3.
Ps 5, 2ff—means Psalm 5, verse 2 and the following verses.
See Acts 15, 8 n.—means there is an annotation on Acts, chapter 15, verse 8. The scripture text and the annotation should be consulted.
v. 16a; v. 11b—means the first part of verse 16; the second part of verse 11.

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Exodus	
Introduction	Easter liturgy
16, 35	Daily Mass
Leviticus	
Introduction	Ritual, Mass
Ruth	
2, 4	Frequently used in the liturgy
Tobias	
Introduction	Various Masses
Judith	
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22	Corpus Christi
24, 4-5	Antiphons in Advent and Lent
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45, 2-12	Ascension
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65, 9	Easter liturgy
67, 19	Ascension
68	Lenten liturgy

* This is an index of the annotations and Introductions in which mention is made of the place in the Roman liturgy where the Scripture passage is used or referred to.

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Abraham	1850?	Babylonian Kingdom—1826-1526 (Hammurabi—1724-1682)
Age of the Patriarchs	1850-1550	The Hyksos—1720-1560
Moses		
Exodus		Rameses II—1289-1224 (Pharao of the Exodus)
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THE
OLD TESTAMENT

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

COME, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

℣. Send forth Thy spirit and they shall be created.

℟. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let Us Pray.

O GOD, who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit: grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Indulgence of five years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if the prayer has been recited daily for a month.

INDULGENCES FOR THE READING OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

(a) *An indulgence of three years is granted to the faithful who for at least a quarter of an hour read the books of Sacred Scripture as spiritual reading with the reverence which is due the word of God.*

(b) *An indulgence of five hundred days is granted to those who piously read at least some verses of the Gospel and besides, while kissing the book of the Gospel, devoutly recite one of these invocations: "By the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out"; "May the Gospel lesson be our salvation and protection"; "May Christ the Son of God teach us the words of the holy Gospel." A plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, provided they perform the above-mentioned pious work each day for a month.*

The indulgences listed above are found in the 1950 edition of the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (##287 and 694, respectively).

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament contains forty-five books. This miniature yet rich library was written mostly in Hebrew. Some small parts were written in Aramaic and Greek (Hebrew and Aramaic are almost as closely related as Spanish and Italian). Over a thousand years elapsed between the writing of the first book to the writing of the last. The authors of these religious masterpieces are generally unknown. They wrote in a variety of literary forms: epics, short stories, speeches, allegories, prayers, poetry, oracles, and letters. Some of these forms are strange compared with our western literary forms, e.g., the Vision of Daniel, chapter 7 to chapter 12. The geographical background of the Old Testament books stretches from the Egyptian Nile to the Mesopotamian rivers, Tigris and Euphrates.

Catholics conveniently divide the Old Testament into twenty-one Historical, seven Sapiential, and seventeen Prophetical books. The Historical books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Josue, Judges, Ruth, first Samuel (1 Kings), second Samuel (2 Kings), 3 Kings, 4 Kings, the two books of Paralipomenon (Chronicles), Esdras, Nehemias, Tobias, Judith, Esther, and the two books of Machabees. The Sapiential books are: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticle of Canticles, Book of Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus). The Prophetical books are Isaia, Jeremia (to which Lamentations are commonly appended), Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets.

The liturgy of the Church has always enthusiastically utilized the Old Testament riches. The members of the Church have not. One reason, among others, for the lack of interest is that the New Testament supposedly contains all that the Old Testament offers. Only within the last hundred years has this belief been proven an oversimplification. Historic, archeological, and linguistic discoveries in the Bible lands have made the Old Testament more intelligible. These revolutionary discoveries have made us realize that the best commentary on the New Testament is the Old Testament. Thanks to these cultural studies, the Old Testament is better understood today than it ever was in the Christian era.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH

The term "Pentateuch" means the first five books of the Bible. They are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The composition of these books is different from any known composition in either ancient or modern times. Some of the obvious differences are the many sharp breaks in the narrative, and the narratives are often carelessly connected. Perhaps the most curious feature is repetition. Sometimes the same story is told in two different ways. The creation and the flood are examples of repetition. Literary styles and vocabularies change back and forth without warning. Moreover, the Pentateuch contains a variety of literary forms such as creation stories, epics, legal codes, poems, and exhortations.

After centuries of discussion on the best theory of the Pentateuch's composition, which would explain all the above peculiarities, most scholars today agree on the following working hypothesis: the Pentateuch was made up of four traditions, each of which contained centuries-old orally transmitted traditions before these were finally written down. The Yahwist tradition (known to scholars by J) was probably formed in the southern kingdom of Juda. It was written down in the tenth century B.C. The Elohist tradition (E) was probably formed in the northern kingdom. It was committed to writing in the eighth century B.C. In the seventh century B.C. Deuteronomy (D) was written. Last of all, during the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C. priestly writers wrote the Priestly tradition (P). They further expanded their version of the Hebrew nation's history and made it the framework of the Pentateuch. In the fifth century B.C. the final edition of the Pentateuch was written.

Consequently, although the reader of the Pentateuch in English does not notice it, he is constantly passing from one to another of these four traditions. A reader of the Hebrew Pentateuch would notice that "P" runs through Genesis, most of Exodus, Numbers, and all of Leviticus; "J" wanders through Genesis, Exodus, Numbers; "E" runs through them also, but to a lesser degree. "D" comprises all of Deuteronomy and some of Exodus. The best way to describe the composition of the Pentateuch is to call it the Mosaic Law enshrined within an historical framework. This means that a steady stream of historical narratives interrupts a series of legal proclamations. It follows from this peculiar structure that the main purpose of the Pentateuch is not to teach the history of Israel, but the law of Israel.

If practically everything in the Pentateuch was written after

Moses died in the thirteenth century B.C., how can it be said that he is the author? For us moderns an author is one who writes everything that becomes known under his name. For Semites, an author was one who may have written very little, but if he initiated a literary movement it was he that was considered its principal author. The other writers following his lead were merely considered to write according to the initiator's spirit when they explained and modernized his ideas or laws. Even when they wrote about times preceding Moses (e.g., Genesis) they did so in the light of his doctrine. In this sense the New Testament writers said, "Moses wrote."

Passing from the literary to the historical aspect of the Pentateuch, we ask: can we prove that the persons and events described in the Pentateuch are historical? Since these biblical persons and events were so insignificant in secular history when compared with the rulers of Egypt and Babylon, historians do not expect to find direct historical proof. They are more than content with a superabundance of indirect proof. This means that the historical, geographical, social, and juridical backgrounds described in the Pentateuch agree very well with what secular history and archeology tell us of the ancient Near East in the period between 2,000 and 1,750 B.C.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

INTRODUCTION

Sometime in the fifth century B.C., one or more Hebrew authors wrote a final edition of what we call today the Book of Genesis.

Genesis means "beginning." Chapters 1—11 of Genesis are a religious prehistory on cosmic and human beginnings. Those chapters are "religious" because they are not a scientific account of the origin of matter, of life, of human civilizations. They are wholly preoccupied with the one true God who created everything. They are "prehistory," for the events sketched in these chapters happened before the invention of writing. These events and stories extend from creation to the flood. They cannot be verified by documents nor by eyewitness accounts.

There are six fundamental truths in Gn 1—11 which can be disentangled from their folklore wrappings. They are: first, the creation by God at the beginning of time; second, God's special infusion of a soul into the first human couple; third, the descent of all men from this first couple; fourth, a state of happiness and moral integrity; fifth, the sin of the first couple; sixth, the subsequent chastising hereditary penalties. Inasmuch as these six truths are also facts, Gn 1—11 may be called historical.

The six fundamental truths, and many other minor truths in these chapters, were not necessarily revealed by God to the individual sacred writers. It is neither necessary to believe that they were handed on from the beginning of the human race all the way down to Abraham, nor that a monotheistic doctrine was miraculously passed on by pagans who did not understand it, and that this "tradition" was carried on for nearly two million years. The most reasonable explanation seems to be that the Hebrews came from a larger group of Semitic peoples who possessed a fund of polytheistic stories about the creation of the world and of man. Many myths were told about man's golden age of happiness. Then, in the nineteenth century B.C., God made a three-fold revelation to Abraham. He revealed that He was the one true God, that He was all powerful, and that He was all-merciful. From the time of Abraham to the tenth and sixth centuries B.C., when Gn 1—11 were written, the best thinkers of the nation rethought their polytheistic stories in the light of God's three-fold revelation. The religious truths in Gn 1—11 are the best distillation achieved by these generations of thinkers. Therefore, the earlier revelations that God made to man may have been handed down for some generations but were finally forgotten. A new revelation was made to Abraham. In other words, Gn 1—11 are inspired, that is, written by God and man, but only three truths were revealed—truths either beyond man's mental acumen or too difficult for him to grasp with certainty through reason alone.

Chapters 12—50 of Genesis describe national origins. This part is not written like modern history books, which avail themselves of documented data and set the peoples of the world in the larger perspective of world history. Genesis is only concerned with popularly acknowledged traditions of the Hebrew ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

These traditions are related in picturesque biographical anecdotes. They are "religious" historical traditions insofar as every happening is attributed to God. All events are represented as providential. These traditions are woven around a three-fold teaching, namely: there is one God who formed one chosen people to lead them to one Promised Land. Note this national credo in Deuteronomy 26, 5-9. Nevertheless, these thirty-eight chapters relate real events that can be verified by the collective memory of the Hebrew people as a whole. As these were transmitted orally down the centuries, they were always subject to correction by national poets who guarded against falsifications creeping into the national literature.

Main divisions of the Book of Genesis are:

1. The Primitive History, 1, 1—11, 26
2. The Patriarch Abraham, 11, 27—25, 18
3. The Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob, 25, 19—36, 43
4. The History of Joseph, 37, 1—50, 26

I. THE PRIMITIVE HISTORY

I

1 ***The Story of Creation*** In the beginning God created the
2 heavens and the earth; the earth was waste and void; darkness covered the abyss, and the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.

3 God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw
4 that the light was good. | God separated the light from the

---

1, 1: *In the beginning:* since the inspired writer enumerates all categories of beings, he means that God created everything at the beginning of time when there was nothing. Pagan accounts of creation, contemporary with the biblical account, taught at least implicitly that matter was eternal. *The heavens and the earth:* a Hebraism for the entire visible universe.

1, 2: *The earth:* refers to the universe. *Waste and void:* a Hebraism for the greatest possible state of confusion. *Abyss:* refers to the waste and void, a limitless mass of dark agitated water. This is the biblical counterpart of our Greek idea of absolute nothingness. *The spirit of God:* the power of God is hovering over nothingness with the intention of producing life and establishing order. The tenth century Hebrew writer is not revealing the Third Person of the Trinity.

1, 3: *Said:* an anthropomorphism for: God wills. *Let there be light:* the sacred writer never speaks scientifically but religiously. His inspired religious message is: God created *everything*. In the artificial wrapper of this message, he has God begin by creating light. *And there was light:* after each item is created, the author will use a similar patterned expression to teach how immediately the will of God is executed. *God saw that the light was good:* whatever was created corresponded perfectly to what God wanted.

1, 4-5: The creation of light naturally produced the first day which ended with dusk, followed by the first night which ended with dawn.

darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night. And
there was evening and morning, the first day.
Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of
the waters to divide the waters." And so it was. | God made
the firmament, dividing the waters that were below the firma-
ment from those that were above it. God called the firmament
Heaven. And there was evening and morning, the second day.
Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be
gathered into one place and let the dry land appear." And
so it was. God called the dry land Earth and the assembled
waters Seas. And God saw that it was good. | Then God
said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants
and all kinds of fruit trees that bear fruit containing their seed."
And so it was. | The earth brought forth vegetation, every
kind of seed-bearing plant and all kinds of trees that bear fruit
containing their seed. God saw that it was good. And there
was evening and morning, the third day.
And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the
heavens to separate day from night; let them serve as signs
and for the fixing of seasons, days and years; let them serve as
lights in the firmament of the heavens to shed light upon the
earth." So it was. | God made the two great lights, the greater
light to rule the day and the smaller one to rule the night, and
he made the stars. God set them in the firmament of the heav-
ens to shed light upon the earth, to rule the day and the night
and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it
was good. | And there was evening and morning, the fourth
day.
Then God said, "Let the waters abound with life, and
above the earth let winged creatures fly below the firmament

1, 6-8: *Firmament:* what we call the skies appeared to many ancient Orientals as a solid blue, inverted bowl restraining the waters above from those below. Windows in the firmament allowed for the downpour of rain, snow and hail.

1, 9-10: The earth is like an immense disk floating above the waters.

1, 11: The world of vegetation was popularly divided into two classes: first there were plants which produced seeds and not fruit, e.g., oak and maple, and second, there were fruit trees.

1, 14-15: *Lights:* their tasks are assigned to them.

1, 16: *Two great lights:* the author writes according to appearances when he says that the sun and the moon are the largest luminaries in the skies. He does not know, nor does he care about, the scientific theories of how the astral bodies originated and evolved.

1, 20: *Above the earth . . . below the firmament of the heavens:* an awkward phrase for "in the air."

21 of the heavens." And so it was. | God created the great sea
monsters, all kinds of living, swimming creatures with which
the waters abound and all kinds of winged birds. God saw
22 that it was good, | and God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful,
multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds mul-
23 tiply on the earth." And there was evening and morning, the
fifth day.
24 God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living crea-
tures: cattle, crawling creatures and wild animals." And so it
25 was. God made all kinds of wild beasts, every kind of cattle,
and every kind of creature crawling on the ground. And God
saw that it was good.
26 God said, "Let us make mankind in our image and like-
ness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the
birds of the air, the cattle, over all the wild animals and every
creature that crawls on the earth."
27 God created man in his image. In the image of God he
created him. Male and female he created them.
28 Then God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and
multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the
fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle and all the ani-
29 mals that crawl on the earth." God also said, "See, I give you
every seed-bearing plant on the earth and every tree which
30 has seed-bearing fruit to be your food. To every wild animal
of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to every creature that
crawls on the earth and has the breath of life, I give the green
31 plants for food." And so it was. | God saw that all he had made
was very good. And there was evening and morning, the sixth
day.

1, 21: *Sea monsters:* the Hebrew word means any large marine inhabitant: whales, sea serpents, crocodiles, sharks, etc. *Winged birds:* the Hebrew word means birds and insects. Exactly how fishes, birds and insects originated and evolved is a scientific question. The author merely says that God made them.

1, 26: *Let us make:* this is either a normal oriental plural of majesty or a metaphor of God deliberating with His celestial court. *Mankind . . . them:* the Hebrew word is "Adam." The plural "them," shows that "Adam" here is not the proper name of the first man. In this verse the sacred writer is not saying that God made one or several men but the human species. *Dominion:* it is characteristic of a Hebrew writer to say that man is like God insofar as man rules creatures lower than himself, just as God rules all creatures. A Greek writer would say that man is like God insofar as man has an intellect and will.

1, 28: This is not a condemnation of celibacy.

1, 29-30: The inspired writer's message is that man lived in peace before he sinned. His message prepares the readers for the disharmony


יהוה
SHEOL

The Hebrew Idea of the World

This is a graphic representation of the Hebrew idea of the world. Above the superior waters is the home of God whose name, Yahweh, is written in Hebrew characters. These waters above can fall down to the earth in the forms of rain and snow through the openings in the blue heavenly vault. The blue sky or the firmament was conceived as being an overturned bowl supported by columns. In the firmament are the stars, the sun, and the moon. Then there is the land mass which was conceived as being a disc floating upon the world-sea. Directly underneath the submerged columns are the inferior waters. "Sheol" represents the home of the dead. Based on common unscientific observation, the sacred writers describe the creation in Genesis 1-2 against an imagined structural background of the universe, as pictured above. This prescientific image does not teach cosmography nor astronomy but only that God made everything.

2
1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all
2 array. On the sixth day God finished the work he had
doing. And he rested on the seventh day from all the wor
had done.
3 God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because
he rested from all his work of creation.

4 ***Man in the Garden of Eden*** This is the story of
5 heavens and the earth at their creation. When the Lord
made the earth and the heavens, there was not yet any
shrub on the earth nor had the plants of the field sprung up
the Lord God had sent no rain on the earth and there wa
6 man to till the soil; but a mist rose from the earth and wat
7 all the surface of the ground. Then the Lord God formed
out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils
breath of life, and man became a living being.
8 The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, to the east, an
9 put there the man he had formed. The Lord God mad

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brought on by sin after the fall. The wrapper he uses to convey message is that man and the animals were on a vegetative diet. implies that men and animals lived in peace. Actually, science fa the view that animals were wild from the very beginning.

2, 3: This is the writer's way of saying that the creator of the w is the same as the God who gave the ten commandments, one of w obliges rest on the Sabbath.

2, 4b-25: This is the second account of creation, dating from tenth century Yahwist tradition. The author pictures the world at beginning as a desert because he lives in a climate where veget begins only after the rainy season.

2, 6: The inspired writer's message is that God created everyth According to the prescientific ideas of his day, he thinks of the on top of a world-sea which irrigates the earth.

2, 7: A popular way of saying that God made man's body. coming from the earth is common in Egyptian and Mesopotamian eratures. The idea may have arisen from seeing man die and re to dust. *Breathed . . . breath of life:* a popular way of saying that put a soul into man. The picture may have arisen from the obv fact that when a being breathes he is alive; when he stops breat he is dead. The context speaks of the first man, hence, monogen is the common interpretation of the Church but scholars are not bidden to pursue their research of polygenism.

2, 8-14: The author most likely had no idea where on earth originated. He does not seem to be describing an actual geograph site. He knew the rivers Euphrates and Tigris of Mesopotamia, the other two were legendary. As a semi-nomad, it is natural for to describe an oasis, in this text, as his garden of paradise. This is utopia. His message is: man was living in a happy place before fall. Scientists tend to believe that man originated in a warm cli

grow out of the ground all kinds of trees pleasant to the sight
and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the gar-
den, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
10 A river rose in Eden watering the garden; and from there,
11 it separated into four branches. The name of the first is Phison,
which encircles all the land of Hevila where there is gold.
12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx are
13 there. The name of the second river is Gihon, which encircles
14 the land of Chus. The name of the third river is Tigris,
which flows east of Assur. And the fourth river is the Eu-
phrates.
15 The Lord God took the man and placed him in the gar-
16 den of Eden to till it and to keep it. And the Lord God com-
manded the man thus, "From every tree of the garden you
17 may eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
you must not eat; for the day you eat of it, you must die."
18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man is
alone; I will make him a helper like himself."
19 When the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the
beasts of the field and the birds of the air, he brought them to
the man to see what he would call them; for that which the
20 man called each of them would be its name. The man named
all the cattle, all the birds of the air and all the beasts of the
field; but he found no helper like himself.
21 The Lord God cast the man into a deep sleep and, while
he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
22 And the rib which the Lord God took from the man, he made
23 into a woman, and brought her to him. Then the man said,
"She now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall

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onducive to life such as South Africa or southern Asia. This is a cientific not a religious biblical question.

2, 15: God created man outside the garden (2, 8) and then put him n the garden. *To till it:* since God is bestowing gifts the cultivation f the land may be interpreted as pleasant work.

2, 16-17: *From every tree:* together with "the Tree of Life" in erse 9 a picture is presented in which man eats of the tree and remains mmortal. This common Semitic symbol of immortality corresponds) the classical "fountain of youth." *You must die:* the message in- ended is that God destined man for immortality, but he lost this gift hen he sinned.

2, 18-20: The author does not mean to say there was a real parade f animals in paradise during which Adam named them lion, cow, tc. For a Semite to name something means to have power over it. Be- ore the fall man ruled animals perhaps by having superior knowledge nabling him to use animals as he does today. This text does not mean hat man had infused knowledge of modern sciences.

2, 21-23: The message here is simply that God made man and woman.

24 be called Woman, for from man she has been taken." For
reason a man leaves his father and mother, and clings to
wife, and the two become one flesh.
25 Both the man and his wife were naked, but they felt
shame.

3

1 ***Temptation and Fall*** Now the serpent was more cun
than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made
said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any
2 of the garden'?" The woman answered the serpent, "Of
3 fruit of all the trees in the garden we may eat; | but 'Of
fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden,' God said,
shall not eat, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' "
4 But the serpent said to the woman, "No, you shall not
5 for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes wil
opened and you will be like God, knowing good and e
6 Now the woman saw that the tree was good for food, plea

Whatever science proves about the formation and evolution of male and female bodies from the lower animals, and whether or man is found among the Australopithecus of about one million y ago, will be compatible with the biblical text. The author does literally mean the woman came from man's ribs. This picture, toge with "she is now bone of my bone . . ." means they are intima related, they are of the same nature but they are different from previously mentioned animals. The text says nothing about the "bea of mankind before the fall. It is a miniature marriage ceremony betw man and woman with God as the officiating witness. *Called wo* the Hebrew pun imagines that the first language was Hebrew. W ever the first language was, if primitive man had one, is a scientific a biblical problem.

2, 24: It is because man and woman are so closely united in na and love that they leave their parents and become one flesh in marr The fall and sin will introduce polygamy.

2, 25: The Church's common interpretation of this text is that did not know concupiscence before the fall.

3, 1: The writer chose the serpent as a symbol of Satan perhap ridicule belief and worship of the reputedly "wise" serpent an the Chanaanites.

3, 2-6: The message is that God gave man a test and man sin through some act of pride. Since the author does not know the pr nature of the test nor of the first sin, he symbolizes the test as a hibition to eat the fruit (not apples) from the tree of knowledg good and evil. The popular idea that in the author's symbolic acc God forbids Adam and Eve marital relations for a while is usu rejected by scholars because a Semitic author would hardly cons this evil. A better interpretation is that they are forbidden to try kind of experience independently of any moral law.

3, 6: In the "story" the woman sinned first; in the actual histo event we do not know the order of sinning.

to the eyes, and desirable for the knowledge it would give.
She took of its fruit and ate it, and also gave some to her
7 husband and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and
they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig-leaves
8 together and made themselves coverings. When they heard
the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of
the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord
9 God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called
to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" | And he said,
"I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was
11 naked; and I hid." Then he said, "Who told you that you
were naked? You have eaten then of the tree of which I com-
12 manded you not to eat." The man said, "The woman you
placed at my side gave me fruit from the tree and I ate." Then
the Lord God said to the woman, "Why have you done this?"
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me and I ate."

14 ***Punishment; the Promise of a Redeemer*** Then the Lord
God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, cursed
are you among all animals, and among all beasts of the field;
on your belly shall you crawl, dust shall you eat, all the days
15 of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman,
between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and
you shall lie in wait for his heel."

16 To the woman he said: "I will make great your distress in
childbearing; in pain shall you bring forth children; for your
husband shall be your longing, though he have dominion over
you."

3, 7-13: They became subjected to concupiscence and lost the happiness and gifts God gave them.

3, 14: This does not mean the serpent used to walk upright on its legs until God cursed it. These are expressions of contempt.

3, 15: The tenth century writer of this "first-gospel" is making a Messianic prophecy in the sense that he foretells a moral struggle between the devil and the seed of the woman—mankind; but "he," mankind, will triumph in the end. The second century B.C. Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible made "her seed" mean the Messia. In and after New Testament times it became evident that it was Jesus who defeated the devil. Insofar as Mary is His mother, the Fathers of the Church translated "she" shall crush the serpent. The Latin Bible (Vulgate) began translating "she" in the sixth century A.D. Thereafter, art has been inspired to represent Mary crushing the serpent.

3, 16: The message is that there was an increase of physical suffering after the fall. Before the fall there must have been minor suffering which was, nevertheless, compatible with the state of happiness. The author epitomizes the suffering of woman in childbearing.

17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to
wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded yo
to eat: "Cursed be the ground because of you; in toil
18 you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles
it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the plants of the
19 In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, till yo
turn to the ground, since out of it you were taken; for
you are and unto dust you shall return."
20 [And the man called his wife Eve because she was the m
of all the living.]

21 ***Adam and Eve Expelled from the Garden*** The
God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and cl
22 them. And he said, "Indeed! the man has become like one
knowing good and evil! And now perhaps he will put fort
hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live
23 ever!" Therefore the Lord God put him out of the Gard
24 Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. He drov
the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he place
Cherubim, and the flaming sword, which turned every wa
guard the way to the tree of life.

4

1 ***The Story of Cain and Abel*** The man knew Eve his
and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have given bir
2 a man-child with the help of the Lord." Later, she bor
brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of flocks and Cain a
3 of the soil. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lor
4 offering of the fruit of the ground. Abel also brought som
the firstlings of his flock with their fat portions. The Lord

3, 17: The writer reflects his own agricultural background
he epitomizes the sufferings of first man as a farmer's frustratio
making the earth produce.

3, 18-19: The author does not mean that the earth produces th
and thistles for the first time after the fall. This is part of his wra
to tell of the great suffering which entered the world. These ve
16-19, speak of hereditary penalties. The complete revelation of o
nal sin is made in Romans 5.

3, 22: The author makes God say ironically that man will not be
God nor be immortal.

3, 24: The Cherubim and the sword are symbols of the loss of
mortality and of all the gifts man enjoyed before he sinned.

4, 1-16: The sacred writer did not mean to say this story act
happened in the first generation of man. The background indicat
later period. Science teaches that in the Near East the food gathe
or hunter economy lasted until about 10,000 B.C. Afterward be
the food producing or farmers' economy. The Cain and Abel s

pleased with Abel and his offerings; | but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. Cain was very angry and downcast.
The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry and why are you downcast? If you do well, will you not be accepted; but if you do not do well, will not sin crouch at the door! Its desire is for you, but you must master it."
Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out into the field."
Now when they were in the field, Cain turned against his brother Abel and slew him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" | And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground. And now cursed are you in the soil which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the soil, it shall not give its fruit to you; a fugitive and a wanderer shall you be on the earth." Cain said to the Lord, My punishment is too great to bear. | You are driving me today from the soil; and from your face I shall be hidden. And I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." But the Lord said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain shall be punished sevenfold." Then the Lord gave Cain a token so that no one finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, to the east of Eden.
Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Henoch; Cain was the founder of a city which he named after his son

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and all of Gn 1—11) is silhouetted against the background of the ater economy. Verse 14 shows that the world was already populated ince there were other men who could kill Cain. Verse 17 shows that ain had no trouble in finding a wife. By pushing this story back to e first generation the sacred author wanted to teach this: after the st sin against God came the first crime against man. Death entered e world with violence. As man begins his reign of sin, God remains erciful in His punishments (v. 15). The story does not mean that od preferred the shepherd's life, represented by Abel, to the farmer's fe, represented by Cain (v. 2). However, a shepherd people like the lebrews would naturally delight in such a story.

4, 7: *Will not sin . . . master it:* this uncertain text may mean that od wants Cain to resist temptation.

4, 10: The picture of blood crying for revenge embodies a moral essage in a primitive wrapper. Since life is in the blood (the wrapr), life comes from God. Therefore, to destroy life is to destroy od's private property (the message).

4, 15: The token or mark of Cain is not a badge indicating that he lled his brother but a tattoo signifying the right of protection from nemies.

4, 17-24: The descendants of Cain began civilization through arts nd crafts.

18 Henoch. To Henoch was born Irad, and Irad became t
ther of Mahujael, and Mahujael the father of Mathusae
19 Mathusael the father of Lamech. Lamech took two wive
20 one named Ada and the other Sella. Ada bore Jabel; h
the forerunner of those who dwell in tents and have flock
21 brother's name was Jubal; | he was the forerunner of al
22 play the harp and flute. It was Sella who bore Thubalcai
forerunner of those who forge vessels of bronze and iron
sister of Thubalcain was Noema.
23 Lamech said to his wives: "Ada and Sella, hear my
wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech: I kill a ma
24 wounding me, a youth for bruising me. | If Cain sh
avenged sevenfold, Lamech seventy times sevenfold."
25 Adam knew his wife again and she bore a son and
him Seth, saying, "God has given me another child in
26 of Abel whom Cain slew." Seth also had a son whom he
Enos.
At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord.

5
1 *Adam's Descendants* This is the record of the descen
of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the lik
2 of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed
3 and called them Man when they were created. When Adan
one hundred and thirty years old, he became the father of
in his own likeness, after his image, and he called him
4 Adam lived eight hundred years after the birth of Seth, an
5 other sons and daughters. The whole lifetime of Adam wa
hundred and thirty years; then he died.
6 When Seth was one hundred and five years old, he be
7 the father of Enos. Seth lived eight hundred and seven year
8 er the birth of Enos, and had other sons and daughters.
whole lifetime of Seth was nine hundred and twelve y
then he died.
9 When Enos was ninety years old, he became the f

4, 23-24: The Song of Lamech may have been originally a b
thirsty, victorious war song.
4, 26: To call on the name of the Lord may mean the beginni
a public cult.
5: To bridge the gap of time between creation and the flood
sacred writer stretched out the few names he knew into ten generat
The Sumerian writers did the same thing because their pre-
patriarchs "lived" from 12,000 years to 18,600 years. The long
meant, not how long the pre-flood patriarchs lived, but how long
Moreover, a long life for a Semite is an indication of holiness.
torically speaking, man's life span then was shorter than it is t

of Cainan. Enos lived eight hundred and fifteen years after
the birth of Cainan, and had other sons and daughters. The
whole lifetime of Enos was nine hundred and five years; then
he died.
When Cainan was seventy years old, he became the fa-
ther of Malaleel. Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years
after the birth of Malaleel, and had other sons and daughters.
The whole lifetime of Cainan was nine hundred and ten years;
then he died.
When Malaleel was sixty-five years old he became the father
of Jared. Malaleel lived eight hundred and thirty years after
the birth of Jared, and had other sons and daughters. The
whole lifetime of Malaleel was eight hundred and ninety-five
years; then he died.
When Jared was one hundred and sixty-two years old,
he became the father of Henoch. Jared lived eight hundred
years after the birth of Henoch, and had other sons and
daughters. The whole lifetime of Jared was nine hundred and
sixty-two years; then he died.
When Henoch was sixty-five years old, he became the father
of Mathusale. Henoch walked with God three hundred years
after the birth of Mathusale, and had other sons and daughters.
The whole lifetime of Henoch was three hundred and sixty-
five years. Henoch walked with God; and he was seen no more
because God took him.
When Mathusale was one hundred and eighty-seven years
old, he became the father of Lamech. Mathusale lived seven
hundred and eighty-two years after the birth of Lamech, and
had other sons and daughters. The whole lifetime of Mathusale
was nine hundred and sixty-nine years; then he died.
When Lamech was one hundred and eighty-two years old,
he became the father of a son, and called him Noe, saying,
"This one shall bring us comfort from our work and from the
toil of our hands in the ground which the Lord cursed." La-
mech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after the birth
of Noe, and had other sons and daughters. The whole lifetime

In contrast, a modern historian would only say of this period, "We do not know how long the period was between creation and the flood."

5, 23: *365 years:* a symbolic number of perfection based on the solar year.

5, 24: *Henoch walked with God:* the latter expression and the above "365 years" both connote exceptional sanctity in a corrupt world. And, therefore, *God took him* to a mysterious paradise without dying a natural death.

of Lamech was seven hundred and seventy-seven years; t
he died.
32 When Noe was five hundred years old, he became the
ther of Sem, Ham and Japheth.

6
1 When men began to multiply on the earth, and had daugh
2 born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of
were fair, and they took wives for themselves, as many as t
3 wished. Then the Lord said, "My spirit shall not remain
man forever, since he is flesh. His lifetime shall be one hund
and twenty years."
4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and
afterward, when the sons of God had relations with the dau
ters of men, who bore children to them. These were
mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.
5 When the Lord saw that the wickedness of man on the e
was great, and that man's every thought and all the inclina
6 of his heart were only evil, he regretted that he had m
7 man on the earth and was grieved to the heart. Then the L

6, 1-4: The general sense of this obscure passage is that God
distressed because of man's increasing sins from Adam-Cain-Lam
Giants. The inspired writer uses the legend of angels, "sons of G
having intercourse with mortal women and producing polygam
titans as an example of corruption at that time.

6, 5—9, 17: The flood is the principal event between creation
Abraham, who begins the history of Israel in chapter 12. Numer
repetitions show that two different accounts, dating from the tenth
sixth centuries B.C., respectively, are woven together into one narrat
Many peoples throughout the world have flood stories which
rive from Babylon, Genesis, or from some local flood. But of all th
stories the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh resembles most the bibl
flood. Three differences are: in the Babylonian flood story there
many gods whereas in the Genesis story there is only one God; in
pagan account there is no other reason given for the destructive fl
but caprice, whereas in the Genesis account the world was destro
because of man's increasing sins; in one account the hero is saved
cause he was a favorite of the gods, whereas in the other, Noe was sa
because he was a "just man." Although the biblical account did
borrow literally from the older Babylonian story, the biblical st
came from the same stock of folklore which may have originated fr
an exceptionally devastating flood in the actual history of Mesopotam
The historical nucleus may have contained an historical Noe. T
popular imagination exaggerated its extent to cover all men all o
the world. Sir C. L. Woolley discovered *a* flood in Kish—southe
Mesopotamia—dating about 3,800 B.C., but this does not prove th
it was the biblical flood. Hence, it is most unlikely that remains
Noe's ark will ever be discovered on Mount Ararat (8, 4) or an
where.

said, "I will wipe from the earth man whom I have created—
man and beast, crawling creature and bird of the air as well—
for I regret that I made them." But Noe found favor with
the Lord.

Warning of the Flood This is the story of Noe. Noe was
a just man, blameless among the men of his day. | He walked
with God. Noe became the father of three sons, Sem, Ham
and Japheth.
The earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and it was filled
with violence. God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all men
lived corruptly on the earth. And God said to Noe, "The
end of all creatures of flesh is in my mind; the earth is full of
violence because of them. I will destroy them with the earth.

Description of the Ark "Make an ark of resin-wood; make
it tight with fibre and cover it with pitch inside and out.
"This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three
hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cu-
bits. Make an opening for the ark and finish it a cubit from
the top. Set a door in the side of the ark; make it with a bottom,
second and third level. For in truth I will bring the flood upon
the earth to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which
there is the breath of life. All that are on the earth shall die.
But I will establish my covenant with you; you shall go into
the ark, you, your sons, your wife and your sons' wives with you.
Of every sort of living creature of all flesh you shall bring two
into the ark to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and
female. Of birds according to their kind and of cattle accord-
ing to their kind, of every kind of creature moving over the
ground, two of each shall enter with you to be kept alive.
Take with you also every kind of food that can be eaten and
store it up with you, and it shall serve as food for you and for
them." And Noe did all that God commanded him.

7

Then the Lord said to Noe, "Go into the ark, you and all your
household; for you, in this generation, I have found just in my
sight. Of all clean animals take with you seven pairs, a
male and its mate; and of the unclean animals two, a male
and its mate; of the birds of the air also, seven pairs, male
and female, that they may raise up offspring over all the earth.

6, 15: A cubit is 1-½ feet. The dimensions of the ark are: 450 feet
long, 75 feet wide, 45 feet high.

4 For after seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty d
and forty nights, and I will wipe from the ground every liv
thing that I have made."

5 ***Noe and His Household Enter the Ark*** Noe did
6 that God commanded him. He was six hundred years
7 when the flood came upon the earth. Noe and his sons,
wife and his sons' wives went together into the ark to esc
8 the waters of the flood. Of clean animals and the unclean,
9 birds and of every creature crawling on the ground, | pai
male and female, entered the ark with Noe, as God had co
10 manded him. And after the seven days the waters of t
flood came upon the earth.
11 In the six hundredth year of Noe's life, on the seventeen
day of the second month, on that very day all the fountai
of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heave
12 were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and for
13 nights. On the very same day Noe and his sons, Sem, Ham ar
Japheth, Noe's wife and the three wives of Noe's sons entere
14 the ark together: they and every kind of wild animal, ever
kind of cattle, every kind of reptile crawling on the earth an
15 every kind of bird, every kind of winged creature. Pairs of a
flesh in which there was the breath of life entered the ark wit
16 Noe. And they that entered were male and female of all fles
as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.
17 The flood continued forty days upon the earth. The water
increased and bore up the ark and it rose above the earth
18 The waters rose higher and increased greatly on the earth
19 but the ark floated on the surface of the waters. The water
rose higher and higher on the earth so that all the highest moun
tains everywhere under the heavens were covered.
20 The waters rose fifteen cubits above the mountains so tha
21 they were covered. All flesh that moved on the earth died: birds
cattle, wild animals, all creatures that creep on the earth, and
22 all men. All that were on the dry land in whose nostrils was
23 the breath of life, died. And every living thing on the earth
was wiped out, from man to beast, from reptile to bird of the
air; they were wiped from the earth. Only Noe and those with
24 him in the ark were left. | The waters rose on the earth one
hundred and fifty days.

7, 4: Forty is often used in the Bible as a round number to express a long time.

7, 14-16: If the author meant to be taken literally, Noe would have had to take about 519,000 species and feed them in the ark.

8
1 Then God remembered Noe, and all the wild animals and
all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God sent a
2 wind over the earth and the waters subsided. The fountains
of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens were closed. The
3 rain from the heavens was withheld. | The waters steadily
receded from the earth. They subsided at the end of one
4 hundred and fifty days. And in the seventh month, on the
seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested on the mountains
5 of Ararat. The waters continued to recede until the tenth month;
on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains
appeared.
6 At the end of forty days, Noe opened the window which
7 he had made in the ark, and released a raven. It flew to and
8 fro until the waters had dried off the earth. Then he sent a
dove to see if the waters had abated from the surface of the
9 ground. But the dove found no place to alight, so she returned
to him in the ark; for the water covered the whole earth. He
put forth his hand and caught her and drew her to him in the
ark.
10 He waited another seven days, and again sent forth the dove
11 from the ark. The dove came back to him in the evening, and
there in her mouth was a green olive leaf! So Noe knew that the
12 waters had abated from the earth. Then he waited another
seven days, and sent forth the dove; but she did not return to
him any more.
13 Now in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on
the first day of the month, the waters were dried off the earth.
Noe removed the coverings of the ark and saw that the surface
14 of the ground had dried. In the second month, on the twenty-
15 seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God said to
16 Noe, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and
17 your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living
thing you have of all flesh: birds, cattle, and every creature
crawling on the earth, that they may abound on the earth and
18 be fruitful and multiply on the earth." Noe went forth with
19 his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. All wild animals, all
cattle, all birds and all creatures crawling on the earth: accord-
ing to their kinds they went out of the ark.

20 *Noe's Sacrifice after the Flood* Then Noe built an altar
to the Lord; he took of every clean animal and of every clean
21 bird, and offered holocausts on the altar. When the Lord smelled
the sweet odor he said to himself, "I will never again curse the
ground on account of man, for the inclination of man's heart is

evil from his youth; I will never again destroy every livin
22 creature, as I have done. As long as the earth shall last, seedtim
and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and nigh
shall not cease."

9

1 ***Noe Blessed; Blood Forbidden*** God blessed Noe and hi
sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill th
2 earth. The fear and dread of you shall be upon all the wil
animals of the earth and upon every bird of the air, upon al
creatures that crawl on the ground, and all the fish of the sea
3 into your power they are delivered. Every creature that move
and lives shall be food for you; as I gave you the green plants
4 I give you everything. But flesh with its life—that is, its blood—
5 you shall not eat. Surely I will require an account of your life's
blood; from every beast I will require it, and from man; from
every man I will require the life of his fellow.
6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood
7 be shed; for in the image of God man was made. But you, be
fruitful and multiply; abound on the earth and subdue it."

8 ***The Covenant with Noe*** Then God said to Noe and to his
9 sons with him, "I will establish my covenant with you, and with
10 your descendants after you; and with every living creature that
is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every wild animal with
you; all that came out of the ark, even the wild animals. I
11 establish my covenant with you. Never again shall all flesh be
destroyed by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be
12 a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the token
of the covenant; I set it between me and you and every living
13 creature that is with you, for all generations to come. I will set

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9, 4: God gives man permission to eat animal flesh provided the blood is drained out.

9, 5: A homicidal beast is explained in Ex 21, 28-32.

9, 8-17: God makes a covenant with all post-flood mankind represented by Noe. This is the Israelite's idea of a natural religion, i.e., a relationship between man and the one true God without any revelation. The writer has God seal the covenant with the rainbow. The symbolic religious meaning of this natural phenomenon is: hereafter, when men see the rainbow they should recall that even if they are continuing in sin and deserve to be destroyed again by a flood, God will not destroy them. The rainbow covenant is the main point of the story. It is the only outstanding feature not borrowed from other flood stories. From this it does not follow, however, that the writer thought the rainbow never existed before the flood.

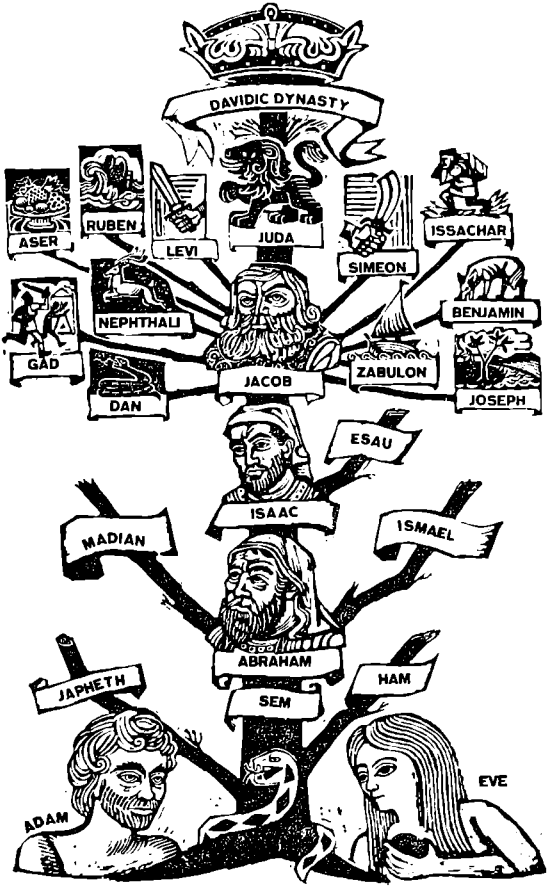
my bow in the clouds and it shall be a token of the covenant
14 between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth,
15 and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember my
covenant which is between me and you and every living creature
of all flesh. Never again shall the waters become a flood to
16 destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon
it and recall the perpetual covenant between God and every
17 living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said
to Noe, "This is the token of the covenant which I establish
between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

18 ***The Sons of Noe*** The sons of Noe who went out of the ark
were Sem, Ham and Japheth. [Ham is the father of Chanaan.]
19 These three were the sons of Noe and from these the whole earth
20 was peopled. Now Noe began to till the soil, and he planted a
21 vineyard. When he drank of the wine, he became drunk and
22 lay naked in his tent. Ham [the father of Chanaan] saw his
23 father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. But Sem
and Japheth took a robe, and laying it upon their shoulders,
went backward and covered their father's nakedness; as their
faces were turned away, they did not see their father's naked-
24 ness. When Noe awoke from his drunkenness and learned what
25 his youngest son had done to him, he said: "Cursed be Chanaan;
26 meanest of slaves shall he be to his brethren." Then he said:
"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Sem; let Chanaan be his slave.
27 May God expand Japheth; let him dwell in the tents of Sem;
let Chanaan be his slave."
28 Noe lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood.

9, 19: The writer does not intend this as an historical fact but as a tradition found among his people.

9, 20-27: This story was written while the Israelites were subjugating the Promised Land of Chanaan (Palestine) in the twelfth century B.C. The author inserts the story here as though it happened at the beginning of the repopulation of the world. The tenth century writer wants to exhort the Israelites to avoid the lewd practices of the Chanaanite neighbors. Now the Israelites thought that every happening, e.g., their conquest of the Chanaanites, came about because God wanted it to happen from all eternity. To dramatize this the writer makes God bless the ancestor of his race, Sem, and curse the ancestor of Chanaan, Ham. This story does not say that the Negroes or the Africans are the slaves of the white men. To use this story as an argument from Scripture to uphold Apartheid or a segregationist policy is to interpret the text against the mind of the writer.

9, 27: One opinion of this very obscure verse is that the Gentiles represented by Japheth will participate in the happiness of the Israelites represented by Sem.


DAVIDIC DYNASTY
ASER
RUBEN
LEVI
JUDA
SIMEON
ISSACHAR
NEPHTHALI
BENJAMIN
GAD
JACOB
ZABULON
DAN
JOSEPH
ESAU
ISAAC
MADIAN
ISMAEL
ABRAHAM
JAPHETH
SEM
HAM
ADAM
EVE

The Forward Looking Concept of Biblical History

The Israelites were the only people in antiquity who wrote their history in a straight line. The other Orientals, e.g., the Greeks, wrote history "in circles," for it was their belief that kings, kingdoms and movements repeat themselves. The People of God were headed for a distinct goal which became clearer as they marched down the centuries toward it.

In the tenth century B.C. the first Messianic text (see Gn 3,15 n) narrates that the offspring of Eve, mankind, is vaguely promised a victory over the Devil and sin. After the Flood when Noe and his three sons, Sem, Ham, and Japheth repopulate the world, there is the "second Messianic prophecy" (see Gn 9,20-27 n). It is the call of the Semitic race. God promises Sem's race His protection and favor. After discarding Ham and Japheth with their descendants the narrative tapers its view down to the call of one man from the privileged Semites, and that man is Abraham. In Abraham "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gn 12,3). This Abrahamitic Promise, renewed in Gn 18,18 and 22,16-18, forecasts that the Gentile nations will somehow benefit from Abraham's line.

After discarding Ismael and Madian with their descendants, the narrative focuses on Abraham's descendants, Isaac and Jacob, with whom God renews the promise made to Abraham, i.e., with Isaac in Gn 26,4 and with Jacob in Gn 28,14. Jacob's brother, Esau, and his descendants are also discarded. The twelve tribes of Jacob (see Gn 49,3-27 for the meaning of the symbols) are now in the mainstream of the forward movement of Israel's history. There then follows the call and privilege of only one of these tribes, the tribe of Juda (see Gn 49,10 n). The next Messianic text of the forward thrust is 2 Sm 7,8-16 where the call of the Davidic dynasty of the tribe of Juda is indisputably more clearly indicated than in Gn 49,10. Although this chart ends here, it is only at the beginning of the historic journey to Christ in the New Testament.

29 The whole lifetime of Noe was nine hundred and fifty yea
then he died.

10

1 These are the descendants of the sons of Noe, Sem, Ha
and Japheth; sons were born to them after the flood.
2 The descendants of Japheth are Gomer, Magog, Madai, J
3 van, Thubal, Mosoch and Thiras. The descendants of Gom
4 are Aschenez, Riphath and Thogorma. The descendants of J
5 van are Elisa, Tharsis, Chetthim and Rodanim. | From thes
sprang the island-peoples. These are the descendants of Japhet
in their countries, according to their languages and their fam
lies, and by their nations.
6 The descendants of Ham are Chus, Mesraim, Phut and Cha
7 naan. The descendants of Chus are Saba, Hevila, Sabatha, Reg
ma and Sabathacha. The descendants of Regma are Saba an
8 Dedan. Chus was the father of Nemrod; he was the first to b
9 a conqueror on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before th
Lord. Hence the saying, "Like Nemrod, a mighty hunter befor
the Lord."

10 ***Nemrod the Empire Builder*** The beginning of his king
dom was Babylon, Arach and Acchad, all of them in the land o
11 Sennaar. From that region Assur went forth and built Nineve
12 and Rehoboth-Ir and Chale and Resen | between Nineve and
Chale [that is the great city].
13 Mesraim became the father of Ludim, Anamim, Laabim,
14 Nephthuhim, | Phethrusim, Chasluhim and Caphthorim -
15 from whom the Philistines sprang. Chanaan became the fa-
16 ther of Sidon his first-born, and Heth, | and the Jebusite, the
17 Amorrite, the Gergesite, | the Hevite, the Aracite, the Sinite,
18 | the Aradite, the Samarite and the Hamathite. Afterward,
19 the families of the Chanaanites spread abroad. And the bor-
der of the Chanaanite extended from Sidon, in the direction
of Gerara, as far as Gaza; in the direction of Sodom, Gomorra,
20 Adama and Seboim as far as Lesa. These are the descendants
of Ham according to their families and their languages, in their
countries, by their nations.
21 To Sem also, the father of all the descendants of Eber,

10: This table of the peoples of the world really represents a world map from the tenth to the seventh century B.C. It is written to show the common origin of all men, not national relationships.

10, 8-9: Nemrod is presented as a legendary founder of Assyria and Babylon.

the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. The descendants of Sem were Elam, Assur, Arphachsad, Lud and Aram.
The descendants of Aram were Us, Hul, Gether and Mes.
Arphachsad became the father of Sale; and Sale became the father of Eber. Two sons were born to Eber; the one was Phaleg—for in his time the world was divided—and his brother was Jectan. Jectan became the father of Elmodad, Saleph, Hasarmoth, Jare, | Adoram, Uzal, Decla, | Ebal, Abimael, Saba, | Ophir, Hevila and Jobab; all these were the sons of Jectan. Their settlements extended from Messa in the direction of Sephar, to the mountains of the East. These are the descendants of Sem according to their families and their languages, in their countries, by their nations.

These are the families of the sons of Noe according to their descent in their nations. From these the nations branched out over the earth after the flood.

11

The Tower of Babel The whole earth used the same language and the same speech. While men were migrating eastward, they discovered a valley in the land of Sennaar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them." They used bricks for stone and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered all over the earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which men had built. And the Lord said, "Truly, they are one people and they all have the same language. This is the beginning of what they will do. Hereafter they will not be restrained from anything which they determine to do. Let us go down, and there confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them from that place all over the earth; and they stopped

11, 1-9: The sacred writer found this Chanaanite story which explained how language began. The Chanaanites looked to Babylon as an ideal city for the setting of this story, for Babylon was ancient, wealthy, cosmopolitan, large, and studded with skyscraper ziggurats. (A ziggurat is a temple tower of the Babylonians consisting of a lofty pyramidal structure built in successive stages with outside staircases and a shrine at the top.) The writer was not thinking of one particular ziggurat but of *a* ziggurat. The Chanaanites and the Israelites thought that different languages caused different peoples. Today we know that the slow formation of peoples led to the formation of languages. The sacred writer recast this folklore with the light of his belief in one God to teach: when men become too concerned with material prosperity and act independently of God, He punishes them.

9 building the city. For this reason it was called Babel, beca
there the Lord confused the speech of all the earth. From th
the Lord scattered them all over the earth.

10 ***Sem's Descendants*** These are the descendants of Sem. Wh
Sem was one hundred years old he became the father
11 Arphachsad, two years after the flood. Sem lived five hundr
years after the birth of Arphachsad, and had other sons a
12 daughters. When Arphachsad was thirty-five years old he b
13 came the father of Sale. Arphachsad lived four hundred a
three years after the birth of Sale, and had other sons a
14 daughters. When Sale was thirty years old he became the fath
15 of Eber. Sale lived four hundred and three years after the bir
16 of Eber, and had other sons and daughters. When Eber w
17 thirty-four years old he became the father of Phaleg. Eber liv
four hundred and thirty years after the birth of Phaleg, and ha
18 other sons and daughters. When Phaleg was thirty years old h
19 became the father of Reu. Phaleg lived two hundred and nin
years after the birth of Reu, and had other sons and daughter
20 When Reu was thirty-two years old he became the father o
21 Sarug. Reu lived two hundred and seven years after the birt
22 of Sarug, and had other sons and daughters. When Sarug wa
23 thirty years old he became the father of Nahor. Sarug lived tw
hundred years after the birth of Nahor, and had other sons an
24 daughters. When Nahor was twenty-nine years old he becam
25 the father of Thare. Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen
years after the birth of Thare, and had other sons and daughters
26 When Thare was seventy years old he became the father of
Abram, Nahor and Aran.

II. THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM

27 ***Thare*** These are the descendants of Thare. Thare was the
28 father of Abram, Nahor and Aran. Aran became the father of
Lot. Aran died before his father Thare in the land of his birth,
29 in Ur of the Chaldees. Abram and Nahor married. Abram's
wife was Sarai and Nahor's wife was Melcha, the daughter of
30 Aran, father of Melcha and Jescha. Now Sarai was barren; she
31 had no children. Thare took his son Abram and his grandson

11, 10-26: The post-flood patriarchs in this list lived shorter lives than the pre-flood patriarchs in ch. 5. These direct forefathers of Abraham in ch. 11 are listed to connect the flood with the story of Abraham.

Lot, the son of Aran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of
his son Abram, and led them from Ur of the Chaldees toward
the land of Chanaan; but when they reached Haran, they set-
32 tled there. The lifetime of Thare was two hundred and five
years; and he died in Haran.

12

1 ***Abram's Call and First Blessing*** The Lord said to Ab-
ram: "Leave your country, your kinsfolk and your father's
2 house, for the land which I will show you; I will make a great
nation of you. I will bless you, and make your name great, so
3 that you shall be a blessing. I will bless them that bless you,
and curse them that curse you. In you shall all the nations of
the earth be blessed."

4 Abram went away as the Lord had commanded him, and
Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when
5 he left Haran. Abram took Sarai his wife, Lot his brother's son,
all the property they had acquired and the persons they had got
in Haran; and they departed for the land af Chanaan. When
6 they came to the land of Chanaan, Abram passed through the
land to the sacred place at Sichem, near the terebinth of More.
At that time the Chanaanite was in the land.

7 The Lord appeared to Abram, and said, "To your descend-
ants I will give this land." So Abram built an altar there to
8 the Lord, who had appeared to him. He moved from there to
the mountain region east of Bethel, and pitched his tent with
Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. He built an altar there to
9 the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. Then Abram
journeyed on toward the Negeb.

10 ***Abram in Egypt during a Famine*** Now there was a fam-
ine in the land and Abram went down to Egypt where he lived

12, 1-9: The sacred writer leaves us with a mystery as to exactly how God revealed Himself to Abraham, except that it was a personal encounter and that Abraham was most likely a polytheist before his conversion (at least this may be deduced from the context and from Josue 24, 2.) Abraham received his vocation in the nineteenth century B.C. when there were many other clans migrating at the same time and in the same direction as Abraham's.

12, 3: God will bring happiness through Abraham to the Israelites and to the Gentiles.

12, 10-20: The original intent of this story, before the sacred writer incorporated it, was to praise the beauty of Sarai, the ancestress of the Israelites, and the craftiness of Abraham. The writer included it in his history, since he found it useful to show that Abraham's God was able to work in a foreign land, Egypt, and that He had taken Abraham

11 as a stranger; for the famine in the land was severe. When
was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know t
12 you are a woman beautiful to behold. When the Egyptians
you, they will say, 'She is his wife'; then they will kill me,
13 will spare you. Therefore, say you are my sister so that I n
be treated well on your account, and my life may be spared
14 your sake." When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians s
15 that the woman was very beautiful. Pharao's princes saw
and they praised her to Pharao. And the woman was taken
16 Pharao's house. He treated Abram well on her account so that
received flocks, herds, he-asses, men-servants, maid-servants, sl
asses and camels.
17 But the Lord struck Pharao and his household with gr
18 plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. Then Pharao sum
moned Abram and said, "Why have you done this to me? W
19 did you not tell me she was your wife? | Why did you s
she was your sister and let me marry her? Here now is yo
20 wife; take her and go." Then Pharao gave his men orders co
cerning Abram; and they sent him away with his wife and a
that belonged to him.

13

1 ***Abram and Lot Part*** Abram went up from Egypt to th
Negeb, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lo
2 with him. Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver and gol
3 He journeyed by stages from the Negeb to Bethel to the plac
4 where his tent had been before, between Bethel and Ai. At th
place where the altar was which he had previously built there
Abram called on the name of the Lord.
5 Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks, herds and tents
6 so that the land would not support them dwelling together
for their possessions were so great that they could not dwel
7 together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram'
cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. At that time the Chana
8 anite and the Pherezite dwelt in the land. Then Abram saic
to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, nor be
tween my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are kinsmen
9 Does not the whole land lie before you? Withdraw from me
If you go to the left, I will go to the right; or if you take the

under His special protection. The story makes us see that at that time adultery and lying were justified to save the life of a husband. The writer knows that Abraham did wrong but he is telling the story as he found it at a time when God had not yet revealed that lying and adultery were wrong.

10 right, then I will go to the left." Then Lot looked about and saw
that the whole region of the Jordan toward Segor was well-
watered—this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Go-
11 morra—like the Lord's garden or like Egypt. So Lot chose
for himself the whole region of the Jordan and journeyed east-
12 ward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram dwelt in
the land of Chanaan, while Lot dwelt in the cities of the Jor-
13 dan region, pitching his tent near Sodom. Now the men of Sod-
om were wicked, and sinned exceedingly against the Lord.

14 ***Abram Moves to Hebron*** The Lord said to Abram, after
Lot had parted from him, "Raise your eyes, and from where you
are now look to the north and the south and the east and the
15 west. All the land which you see I will give to you and your
16 posterity forever. I will make your posterity as the dust of the
earth; if anyone can count the grains of dust, your posterity can
17 also be counted. Arise, walk the length and breadth of the land,
18 for to you I will give it." Abram moved his tent and came to
dwell by the terebinths of Mamre which are at Hebron; and he
built an altar there to the Lord.

14

1 ***Expedition of the Four Kings*** In the time of Amraphel
king of Sennaar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chodorlahomor king of
2 Elam, and Thadal king of Goyyim, | these kings waged war
against Bara king of Sodom, Bersa king of Gomorra, Sennaab
king of Adama, Semeber king of Seboim, and the king of Bala—
3 that is, Segor. These other kings formed an alliance in the valley
4 of Siddim—that is, the Salt Sea. Twelve years they had been
subject to Chodorlahomor, but in the thirteenth year they re-
5 belled. In the fourteenth year came Chodorlahomor and the
kings with him. They defeated the Raphaim in Astharoth-
carnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Save-cariathaim, |
6 the Horrites in the mountains of Seir, as far as El-Pharan, close
7 by the desert. Then they turned back and came to En-mesphat—
that is, Cades—and subdued all the country of the Amalecites,
8 and also the Amorrites, who dwelt in Hasason-thamar. Then
the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorra, the king of Adama,

14, 1-17: Five city-states south of the Dead Sea rebelled against Chodorlahomor of Elam and his four Mesopotamian vassals. Lot, living at Sodom, one of the five rebelling cities, was captured. Abraham with three allies recaptured him after several raids at night. The five kinglets of Mesopotamia are unknown outside the Bible account. The writer keeps this story, handed down orally for about 1,000 years, to depict Abraham as a good and brave uncle who rescued his nephew, Lot.

the king of Seboim and the king of Bala—that is, Segor—we
out, and they drew up in battle against them in the valley
9 Siddim: against Chodorlahomor king of Elam, Thadal king
Goyyim, Amraphel king of Sennaar, and Arioch king of Ellas:
10 four kings against five. Now the valley of Siddim was full
bitumen pits; and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorra fle
11 some fell there, but the rest fled to the mountain. The victo
took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorra and all their pro
12 sions, and went their way; they also took Lot, Abram's nephe
13 and his goods, for he had been living in Sodom. Then came
fugitive and reported to Abram the Hebrew, who was livir
near the terebinths of Mamre the Amorrite, a kinsman of Esch
and Aner; these were allies of Abram.

14 ***Abram Pursues and Defeats the Kings*** When Abra
heard that his kinsman had been taken prisoner, he called ou
three hundred and eighteen of his trained men, born in hi
15 house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He and his servant
formed parties against them by night, defeated them and pur
16 sued them as far as Hoba, north of Damascus. He recovered al
the goods; and his kinsman Lot and his goods he also recovered
17 besides the women and the people. When Abram returned fron
the defeat of Chodorlahomor and the kings with him, the kin
of Sodom went out to meet Abram in the valley Save, that is, i
the king's valley.

18 ***Melchisedec Blesses Abram*** Then Melchisedec, the king of
Salem, brought out bread and wine; for he was a priest of the
19 Most High God. He blessed Abram and said, "Blessed be
Abram by the Most High God, creator of heaven and earth.
20 Blessed be the Most High God, who has delivered your enemies
into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.
21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people,
22 keep the goods for yourself." But Abram answered him, "I
raise my hand to the Lord God Most High, creator of heaven
23 and earth, that I will not take thread or sandalstrap or any-

14, 18-24: When Abraham returned from victory, he stopped over at Salem (Jerusalem most probably) where Melchisedec, king and pagan priest of the city, showed hospitality by serving bread and wine. The Hebrew writer wants his readers to know that, although Melchisedec did not know it, there is only one God, the God of the Hebrews. St. Cyprian was the first to call this a true sacrifice of bread and wine and a prefigurement of the Eucharistic sacrifice of bread and wine. This is the interpretation in the canon of the Mass where Melchisedec is presented as a priest of the one true God.

thing that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram
24 rich'; nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the
share of those who accompanied me. Let Aner, Eschol and
Mamre take their share."

15

1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a
vision, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall
2 be very great." And Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you
give me? I am childless, and the steward of my house, Eliezer,
3 is my heir." Abram also said, "To me you have given no
4 descendants; the slave born in my house will be my heir." But
the word of the Lord came to him, "He shall not be your heir;
5 your heir shall be one of your own flesh." Then the Lord led
him outside and said, "Look at the heavens and, if you can, count
the stars." And he said to him, "So shall your posterity be."
6 Abram believed the Lord, who credited the act to him as justice.
7 He said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you from Ur in
8 Chaldea, to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord
God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

9 ***The Sign of the Covenant*** He answered him, "Bring me
a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three
10 years old, a turtledove and a young pigeon." He brought him
all these and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the
11 other; but the birds he did not cut in two. Birds of prey swooped
12 down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them off. As the sun
was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep; and terror came upon
13 him, a great darkness. The Lord said to Abram, "Know for
certain that your posterity will be strangers in a land not their
own; they shall be subjected to slavery and shall be oppressed
14 four hundred years. But I will judge that nation which they
shall serve, and afterward they shall go free with great pos-
15 sessions. And you shall go to your fathers in peace, and be

15, 6: Abraham's faith and justice here mean that he had confidence in God's promise which seemed humanly impossible. His faith was not a belief in a supernatural truth. His justice was not a passage from the state of sin to the state of grace (in the Catholic sense) nor was he "declared" just (in the Lutheran sense).

15, 9-20: God renews His covenant and promises of land and offspring with Abraham according to an ancient ceremonial. Both parties were supposed to pass between the sacrificed pieces of animals to signify willingness to die before breaking their pact. God is represented as the "fiery torch" passing between the pieces (v. 17).

15, 13-16: These verses interrupt the ceremonial to explain the bad omen of v. 11. God tells Abraham that his descendants will be slaves

16 buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation they sh
return here; for the wickedness of the Amorrites is not yet co
plete."
17 Now when the sun had set and it was dark, a smokir
18 oven and a fiery torch passed between the pieces. On that d
the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your po
terity I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to th
19 Great River [the Euphrates], the land of the Cinites, Cenc
20 ites, Cedmonites, | Hethites, Pherezites, Raphaim, Amorrite
Chanaanites, Gergesites and Jebusites."

16

1 ***Birth of Ismael*** Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no chi
2 dren. She had an Egyptian maid named Agar. Sarai said t
Abram, "The Lord has kept me from bearing; go in to my maid
perhaps I shall get children through her." Abram listened t
3 Sarai. | After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Cha
naan, Sarai his wife took Agar, her Egyptian maid, and gav
4 her to Abram, her husband, to be his wife. | And he went ir
to Agar, and she conceived. When she was aware that she hac
5 conceived, she looked with disdain on her mistress. Then Sara
said to Abram, "The injury done me is your fault! I gave my
maid to your embrace and when she was aware that she had
conceived she looked on me with disdain. The Lord judge be-
6 tween you and me!" Abram answered Sarai, "Your maid is in
your power; do to her what seems good to you." Then Sarai
7 humiliated her, and she fled from her. Afterward an angel of
the Lord found her beside a spring of water in the desert, the
8 spring on the road to Sur. He said, "Agar, maid of Sarai, where
have you come from and where are you going?" She answered,
9 "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the Lord
said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her au-
10 thority." The angel of the Lord added, "I will so multiply your
11 posterity that it shall be too many to count." The angel of the
Lord also said to her: "You are with child, and shall bear a
son; you shall call him Ismael, because the Lord has heard of

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in Egypt for about 400 years and then will be led to the Promised Land. Since God had not yet revealed the true nature of His justice and mercy the sacred writer describes them as he understands them. He pictures God waiting for the inhabitants of the Promised Land ("Amorrites") to sin some more till they deserved to be dispossessed of their land in favor of the Israelites.

16, 1-15: God's promise of the offspring must come through *Sarai.* Occasionally the angel of the Lord (v. 7) is used as a synonym for God under a visible form (v. 13).

12 your humiliation. He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand
against everyone, and everyone's hand against him; he shall
13 dwell apart, opposing all his kinsmen." She named the Lord,
who spoke to her: "You are the God of vision"; for she said,
"Have I really seen God and remained alive after my vision?"
14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi. It is between Cades
and Barad.
15 So Agar bore Abram a son; and Abram called his son
16 whom Agar bore, Ismael. Abram was eighty-six years old when
Agar bore him Ismael.

17

1 ***Covenant of Circumcision*** When Abram was ninety-nine
years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God the
2 Almighty. Walk in my presence and be perfect. I will make my
covenant between you and me, and will multiply you ex-
3 ceedingly." Abram fell prostrate, and God spoke to him thus,
4 "This is my covenant with you: You shall be the father of a
5 multitude of nations; you shall no longer be called Abram,
but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the
6 father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly
fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings shall descend
7 from you. I will establish my covenant between you and me
and your descendants after you throughout their generations,
as a perpetual covenant, that I may be a God to you and to
8 your descendants after you. I will give you and your descend-
ants after you this land in which you are immigrants, all the
land of Chanaan as a perpetual possession; and I will be their
God."
9 God also said to Abraham, "You shall keep my cove-
nant, you and your descendants after you throughout their
10 generations. This is my covenant which you shall keep, between
you and me and your descendants after you: Every male
11 among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh
of your foreskin; it shall be a token of the covenant between
12 you and me. He that is eight days old among you shall be
circumcised, every male throughout your generations, includ-
ing the slave born in your house, or bought with money from
13 any foreigner, not of your own race. Both he that is born in
your house and he that is bought with your money must be
circumcised. My covenant shall be in your flesh as a perpetual
14 covenant. If any male have not the flesh of his foreskin cir-

17, 1-14: A tradition of the sixth century B.C. presents another account of the Promise of the Covenant.

cumcised, that person shall be cut off from his people; he h
broken my covenant."

15 ***Isaac's Birth Promised*** God said to Abraham, "Sarai yo
16 wife you shall not call Sarai but Sara. I will bless her, and w
also give you a son by her; yes, I will bless her, and she shall b
the mother of nations; kings of peoples shall descend from her
17 And as Abraham fell prostrate, he laughed and said to him
self, "Shall a son be born to one who is a hundred years old
18 Shall Sara who is ninety bear a child?" Then Abraham said t
19 God, "Oh, that Ismael may live in your favor!" God answered
"No, but Sara your wife shall bear you a son, and you sha
call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as a per
petual covenant for his descendants after him.
20 "As for Ismael, I have heard you. I will bless him and mak
him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly. He shall becom
the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation
21 But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sara shal
22 bear to you at this time next year." And when he had finished
talking with him, God left Abraham.

23 ***Abraham and His Household Circumcised*** Then Abra-
ham took his son Ismael, and all who were born in his house,
and all who had been bought with his money, every male in
his household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins
24 on that very day, as God had commanded him. Abraham was
ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of
25 his foreskin. Ismael his son was thirteen years old when he was
26 circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abra-
27 ham and his son Ismael were circumcised. All the male mem-
bers of his household, including the slaves born in his house or
bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with
him.

18

1 ***Isaac's Birth Announced*** Now the Lord appeared to him

17, 15: According to the ancient Israelites a change of name meant a change of destiny. See also v. 5.

17, 17: Abraham laughed more out of surprise than of disbelief.

17, 23-27: God adopted the current existing rite of circumcision. It was practiced by several ancient peoples perhaps as an initiation to marriage and into the clan. Circumcision became a sign of recalling the covenant (as the rainbow in 9, 6-17). By the circumcision of her husband, the wife participated in the symbolic act of recalling the covenant.

18, 1-33: In this story of Abraham's hospitality, God appears with

by the terebinths of Mamre as he sat at the entrance of his tent
2 in the heat of the day. And when he raised his eyes he saw
three men standing at a distance from him. As soon as he saw
them, he ran from the entrance of the tent door to meet them,
3 and bowed down to the earth, | and said, "My Lord, if I find
4 favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water
be brought that you may wash your feet; and then rest your-
5 selves under the tree. Since you have come to your servant, I
will bring you a little food that you may refresh yourselves; then
you may go on." They replied, "Do as you have said."
6 Then Abraham hastened into the tent to Sara and said,
"Quick, three measures of fine flour! Knead it, and make
7 loaves." And he ran to the herd, picked out a good, tender
bullock, and gave it to the servant who hastened to prepare it.
8 Then he took curds and milk and the bullock which had been
prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under
9 the tree while they ate. They said to him, "Where is Sara your
10 wife?" He answered, "She is in the tent." | "I will surely
return to you at this time next year," he said, "and Sara your
wife shall have a son." Sara was listening inside the entrance of
11 the tent. Now Abraham and Sara were old, advanced in years;
and Sara no longer had periods as is customary with women.
12 So Sara laughed to herself and said, "Now that I am grown old
13 and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to
Abraham, "Why did Sara laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a
14 child, though I am old?' | Is anything too wonderful for the
Lord? At this time next year I will return to you, and Sara shall
15 have a son." But Sara denied it, saying, "I did not laugh"; for
she was afraid. But he said, "You did laugh."

16 ***Ruin of Sodom and Gomorra Foretold*** Then the men
set out from there and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham
17 walked with them to escort them on their way. The Lord said,
18 "Can I keep from Abraham what I am about to do? For Abra-
ham shall surely become a great and powerful nation, and all

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two angels (v. 2). God ("Lord") is expressly mentioned in vv. 1, 3, 13. He Himself speaks from v. 10 onward. In v. 22 the Lord is distinguished from the two accompanying "men" who are two angels according to 19, 1.

18, 12-15: Since Sara did not know the guest's identity, her laugh expressed pleasure at what she assumed to be a polite flattering wish made to an old lady. Her laugh indicates that she does not know of God's promise of an heir made to Abraham in 15, 4 and 17, 15f, since these three are narratives independent of each other. Therefore Sara's laugh was not one of disbelief in God's power.

19 the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. Indeed, I hav
chosen him, that he may charge his sons and his household
after him to observe the way of the Lord, doing what is goo
and right, so that the Lord may fulfill for Abraham what h
20 has promised him." Then the Lord said, "Because the outcr
against Sodom and Gomorra is great, and their sin is ver
21 grave, I will go down to see whether they have done all tha
the outcry which has come to me indicates; if not, I will know."
22 So they turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while
Abraham remained standing in the presence of the Lord.
23 Abraham drew near and said, "Will you destroy the good
24 with the wicked? If there be fifty just men in the city, will you
then destroy the place and not spare it for the sake of the fifty
25 just men within it? Far be it from you to do such a thing as kill
the just with the wicked, treating just and wicked alike! Far be
26 it from you! Shall not the judge of all the earth act justly?" And
the Lord said, "If I find that there are fifty just men in the city,
27 I will spare the whole place for their sake." Abraham answered,
"I have ventured to speak to the Lord though I am but dust and
28 ashes. What if there be five less than fifty just men? Will you
destroy the whole city on account of five?" He said, "I will not
29 destroy it if I find forty-five there." | And Abraham spoke to
him again, "What if forty be found there?" He said, "I will not
30 do it for the sake of the forty." Then he said, "O Lord, be not
angry if I speak; what if thirty be found there?" He answered,
31 "I will not do it if I find thirty there." Abraham said, "I have
ventured to speak to the Lord, what if twenty be found there?"
And he said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty."
32 Abraham said again, "O Lord, be not angry if I speak once
more; what if ten be found there?" He said, "I will not destroy
33 it for the sake of the ten." The Lord departed after he had
finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his
place.

19

1 ***Sinfulness of the Men of Sodom*** Now the two angels
came to Sodom in the evening, while Lot was sitting at the

18, 20: The outcry of divine justice.

18, 23-33: This anthropomorphic bargaining scene brings out how Abraham considered himself insignificant before God but yet loved by Him! This love gave him the boldness to intercede for Sodom and Gomorra. Although sinners do not know it, God tolerates them because of the few good. See especially v. 25.

19, 1: "The two angels" here are the "men" of 18, 16 who leave God in 18, 2. The "angels" are called "men" in ch. 19, except in v. 15.

gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and
2 falling prostrate to the earth, | he said, "Come aside, my lords,
into the house of your servant, stay overnight and bathe your
feet; then you may arise early, and go on your way." They said,
3 "No, we shall pass the night in the public square." But he urged
them so strongly that they turned aside and entered his house;
and he prepared a meal for them, and baked unleavened bread,
4 and they ate. They had not yet retired when the townsmen, the
men of Sodom, all the people from every quarter, both young
5 and old, surrounded the house, | and called Lot, and said to
him, "Where are the men who came to your house tonight?
6 Bring them out that we may abuse them." | Lot went out to
7 the men, and shut the door behind him, | and said, "I en-
8 treat you, brethren, do not act wickedly. I have two daughters
who have not known man. Let me bring them out to you; do
as you please with them. Only do nothing to these men, for
9 they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they said,
"Stand back! This fellow came in as a stranger, and he would
play the judge! Why, we will treat you worse than we will
them!" Then they pressed hard against Lot, and drew near
10 to break in the door. But the visitors reached out their hands,
and drew Lot back into the house with them, and closed the
11 door. Those who were at the door of the house they struck with
blindness, from the least to the greatest, so that they could not
find the door.

12 ***Instructions to Lot*** Then they said to Lot, "Have you any-
one else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you
13 have in the city, take them out of the place; for we are about
to destroy this place, because the outcry against them has be-
come so great before the Lord that he sent us to destroy it."
14 Lot went out therefore to speak to his intended sons-in-law, and
said, "Come, leave this place; for the Lord shall destroy the
city." But they thought he was jesting.
15 When morning came, the angels urged Lot on, saying, "Come,

They are referred to in the singular (v. 21) and plural as God's representatives.

19, 4: This shows that there were not even ten just men for whom Abraham asked in 18, 32. There was only one—Lot.

19, 5: The unnatural vice of sodomy receives its name from this account. It was punishable by death. See Lv 20, 13.

19, 7-8: The sacred writer is relating a story which reflects a time when hospitality among semi-nomads was valued higher than virginal honor. See 12, 10-20 n. The writer's repudiation of these sins underscores the Israelite religion's moral superiority to that of later classical authors who defended these acts as morally correct.

take your wife and your two daughters here, lest you perish
16 the punishment of the city." And as he lingered the visitors to
him, his wife and his two daughters by the hand, through t
mercy of the Lord toward him, and led him forth, and set hi
17 outside the city. When they had brought them forth, they sai
"Flee for your life; do not look behind you nor stop anywhere i
18 the valley; flee to the hills, lest you perish." But Lot said t
19 them, "No, my lords; surely, your servant has found favor wit
you, and great is the mercy which you have shown me in savin
my life. I cannot flee to the hills, lest the disaster overtake m
20 and I die. But there is a city nearby to which I can flee; it is
little one. Let me save myself there; it is a little one, is it not
21 So let me live." | He said to him, "I grant you this favor also
22 I will not destroy the city of which you speak. Make haste, sed
safety there; for I can do nothing till you arrive there." There
fore the city was called Segor.

23 ***Destruction of Sodom and Gomorra*** The sun had risen
24 on the earth when Lot entered Segor. The Lord poured down on
Sodom and Gomorra sulphur and fire from the Lord out of
25 heaven. He overthrew those cities and the whole region, all
the inhabitants of the cities and the plants of the soil.
26 But his wife who was behind him looked back, and became a
pillar of salt.
27 Early in the morning Abraham came to the place where he
28 had stood before the Lord. He looked toward Sodom and
Gomorra and toward the whole region and saw smoke rising
from the earth as though from a furnace.
29 While God destroyed the cities of the region, he remembered
Abraham, and led Lot away from the catastrophe, when the
cities where Lot lived were overthrown.

30 ***Origin of the Moabites and Ammonites*** Lot went up
from Segor, and lived in the hills with his two daughters; for

19, 24-25: The cities may have perished through an earthquake or fires ignited from bituminous gases. Archeologists believe that these cities now lie beneath the southern part of the Dead Sea.

19, 26: This is a popular explanation of the human-like salt formation. Lk 17, 32 shows that Lot's wife became a prototype of those who look behind because they are attached to earthly things.

19, 30-38: The Ammonites and Moabites may have told this story with pride because it illustrated the direct descent from the patriarchs. The Israelites could not deny the common descent from the patriarchs which they shared with their neighboring lifelong enemies. But the Israelites, since they outlawed and abhorred incest (Dt 27, 20. 23), tell the story here as a savage satire. In vv. 31-32 the daughters are not de-

he was afraid to live in Segor. He and his daughters lived in
31 a cave. Then the elder said to the younger, "Our father is old,
and there is no man in the land to marry us as is the custom
32 everywhere. Let us give our father wine to drink, then lie
33 with him, that we may have offspring by our father." So they
gave their father wine to drink that night, and the elder went
in, and lay with her father; but he did not know of it when she
34 lay down, or when she arose. The next day the elder said to
the younger, "Last night I lay with my father. Let us give him
wine to drink tonight also; then you go in, lie with him that
35 we may have offspring by our father." So they gave their fa-
ther wine to drink that night also, and the younger went and
lay with him; but he did not know of it when she lay down, or
36 when she arose. Thus both daughters of Lot were with child
37 by their father. The elder bore a son, and called him Moab.
38 He is the father of the Moabites of the present day. The young-
er also bore a son, and called him Ben-ammi. He is the father
of the Ammonites of the present day.

20

1 ***Abraham in Gerara*** Abraham journeyed from there toward
the land of the Negeb, and dwelt between Cades and Sur. While
2 he lived in Gerara, | Abraham said of Sara his wife, "She is
my sister." So Abimelech, king of Gerara, sent and took Sara.
3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to
him, "You shall die because of the woman you have taken;
4 for she is married." Now Abimelech had not approached her;
5 so he said, "Lord, will you slay the innocent? Did not he him-
self say to me, 'She is my sister'? and did not she herself say,
'He is my brother'? With a sincere heart and with clean hands
6 I have done this." Then God said to him in the dream, "I know
that you have done this with a sincere heart. It was I who
kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not allow
7 you to touch her. Therefore, restore the man's wife; since he is
a prophet he will pray for you that you may live. But if you
do not restore her, know that you will surely die, you and all
8 that are yours." So Abimelech rose early in the morning, and

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picted as lewd but as desirous of perpetuating the race. This was a sincere distinction for the ancient Orientals.

19, 37-38: The Hebrew puns support St. Jerome who said the Jewish interpreters, in his day (fourth century A.D.), did not believe that the Genesis writer meant the story historically.

20, 1-18: This is a repetitious story. See 12, 10-20 n. One minor difference is: Abraham's falsehood in the first story becomes a mental reservation here because Sara is his stepsister.

calling his servants, told them all these things. And the
were very much afraid.
9 Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, "What have
done to us? And how have I offended you that you sho
bring down on me and my kingdom a great sin? No one sho
10 be treated as you have treated me." Abimelech also said
11 Abraham, "What had you in mind in doing this thing?" Al
ham answered, "I thought, 'Surely there is no fear of Go
12 this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife!' Besi
she is indeed my sister, my father's daughter but not
13 mother's; and she became my wife. When God brought me
of my father's house, I said to her, 'This favor you must do
me: in every place to which we shall go, say of me that I
your brother.' "
14 Then Abimelech took flocks and herds and cattle, men
women servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored S
15 his wife to him, | and said, "My land is before you; se
16 wherever it pleases you." To Sara he said, "I am giving yo
brother a thousand pieces of silver; it is your compensation
the eyes of all who are with you; and before all men you
17 vindicated." Then Abraham prayed to God; and God cur
Abimelech and his wife and maid-servants, and they bore ch
18 dren. For the Lord had closed the wombs of Abimelech's hou
hold because of Sara, the wife of Abraham.

21

1 ***The Birth and Circumcision of Isaac*** The Lord look
after Sara as he had said; the Lord did to Sara as he had pro
2 ised. Sara conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age
3 the time which God had promised. And Abraham called the s
4 whom Sara bore him, Isaac. When his son Isaac was eight da
old, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded hi
5 Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac w
6 born to him. Sara said, "God has given me cause for laughte
7 and whoever hears of it will laugh with me." Again she sai
"Who would have said to Abraham that Sara would nur
children? Yet I bore him a son in his old age."

20, 12: Only after Abraham's time was marriage between stepbrothe and stepsisters forbidden by law (Lv 18, 9).

20, 16: Abimelech compensates for his misconduct even though h did not commit adultery because he had only taken Sara to his harer In ancient Hebrew thinking, however, this external act was viewed the beginning of the sin.

20, 17-18: According to the law of solidarity at this time, subjec were thought to share in the punishment of their king's sins.

8 The child grew and was weaned; and Abraham gave a great
feast on the day of his weaning.

9 ***Ismael and Agar Expelled*** Sara saw the son of Agar the
Egyptian, whom she bore to Abraham, playing with her son
10 Isaac. She said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave-girl with her
son; for the son of this slave-girl shall not be heir with my son
11 Isaac." The matter was very distressing to Abraham on ac-
12 count of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Be not distressed
on account of the boy and your slave-girl; heed all that Sara
says to you; for through Isaac shall your descendants be called.
13 But I will also make the son of the slave-girl a great nation
because he is your offspring."
14 Abraham rose early in the morning, took bread and a bottle
of water, and gave them to Agar, placing them on her shoulder.
Then he dismissed her with the child. She departed, and wan-
15 dered about in the desert of Bersabee. When the water in the
16 bottle was gone, she left the child under a bush. Then she went
and sat opposite the place at about the distance of a bowshot;
for she said, "Let me not see the child die." As she sat opposite
17 the spot, the child cried aloud. God heard the boy's cry, and the
angel of God called to Agar from heaven, and said to her, "What
is the matter, Agar? Fear not; for God has heard the boy's cry in
18 this plight of his. Rise up, take the boy, be assured in his regard;
for I will make him a great nation."
19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. She went and
20 filled the bottle with water and gave the boy a drink. | God was
with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the desert and became
21 an expert bowman. He lived in the desert of Pharan; and his
mother chose a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

22 ***Abraham in Bersabee*** At that time Abimelech and Phichol,
the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with
23 you in everything you do. Therefore, swear to me by God that
you will not deal falsely with me nor with my children nor
with my descendants. As I have treated you with kindness, so
must you treat me and the land in which you live as a stranger."
24.25 Abraham said, "I will swear." But he chided Abimelech
26 about a well which Abimelech's men had seized by force. Abim-

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21, 10: Abraham is reluctant to dismiss Agar and her child, Ismael, because Ismael enjoyed the right of inheritance since he had been legally adopted. See 16, 2. Archeologists have found examples of this law among other people existing at the time of Abraham.

21, 17: *Angel:* see 16, 1-15 n.

elech said, "I do not know who did this; you did not tell me,
did I hear of it till today."
27 Then Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them
28 Abimelech; and the two men made a covenant. Abraham
29 apart seven ewe lambs of the flock. But Abimelech said
Abraham, "What do these seven ewe lambs mean which
30 have set apart?" He said, "Take these seven ewe lambs fr
31 me, to be proof for me that I dug this well." Therefore t
place was called Bersabee, because both of them took an o
32 there. So they made a covenant at Bersabee. Then Abimel
and Phichol, the commander of his army, returned to the la
33 of the Philistines. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Bersal
where he called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting G
34 Abraham lived a long time in the land of the Philistines.

22

1 ***Sublime Obedience of Abraham*** After these events G
put Abraham to a test. He said to him, "Abraham." He a
2 swered, "Here I am." | God said, "Take your only son Isa
whom you love and go into the district of Moria, and the
offer him as a holocaust on the hill which I shall point out
3 you." Early in the morning Abraham harnessed his ass, to
with him two of his servants and his son Isaac, and cut wo
for the holocaust. Then he set out on his journey to the pla
4 which God had indicated to him. On the third day he looked u
5 and saw the place at a distance. He said to his servants. "Sta
here with the ass while the boy and I go there to worship; the
6 we shall come back to you." Abraham took the wood for t
holocaust and put it upon his son Isaac while he himself carrie
7 the fire and the knife. As they walked together, | Isaac said t
his father Abraham, "Father." He answered, "Yes, son!" H
said, "You have the fire and the wood, but where is the shee
8 for the holocaust?" Abraham replied, "God himself will provid
the sheep for the holocaust, my son." And they went on togethe

21, 32: Since the Philistines entered the land in the twelfth centur B.C., the place was not known as "the land of the Philistines" at the tim of Abraham in the nineteenth century B.C.

22, 1-19: Most modern Catholic biblical scholars say it is not abso lutely necessary to interpret this scene literally. They have arguments t show that, due to the influence of the neighboring Chanaanites wh practiced the sacrifice of the oldest son, Abraham may have *though* God wanted him to sacrifice his son. This thought was written up i the form of a command from God. Abraham ends up by sacrificing a ram in place of his son. Therefore the lesson is the rejection of chil sacrifice. The final editor places this story at the climax of Abraham's life to teach his great faith. See Heb 11, 17-20.

9 When they arrived at the place of which God had told him,
Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.
Then he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood upon
10 the altar. Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife
11 to kill his son. But an angel of the Lord called to him from
heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" He answered, "Here I am." |
12 He said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy; do nothing to him.
I know now that you fear God, since you have not withheld
13 your only son from me." Abraham looked about and saw a ram
caught by its horns in the bush. He went and took it, and
14 offered it as a holocaust in place of his son. Abraham named
the place, "Yahweh-yireh." Hence even to this day people say,
"On the mountain of the Lord provision will be made."
15 Again the angel of the Lord called from heaven to Abraham |
16 and said, "I swear by myself, says the Lord, since you have done
17 this and have not withheld your only son, | I will indeed bless
you, and will surely multiply your descendants as the stars of
the heavens, as the sands on the seashore. Your descendants
18 shall possess the gates of their enemies. In your descendants all
the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have
19 obeyed me." Abraham returned to his servants, and together
they went to Bersabee where Abraham made his home.

20 ***Abraham's Relatives*** After these events, Abraham was told,
21 "Melcha too has borne sons to your brother Nahor: Us, the
first-born, Buz, his brother, Camuel, the father of Aram, |
22.23 Chased, Hazau, Pheldas, Jedlaph, and Bathuel." [Bathuel
was the father of Rebecca.] Melcha bore these eight to Nahor,
24 Abraham's brother. As for his concubine, whose name was
Roma, she brought forth Tabee, Gaham, Thahas and Maacha.

23

1 ***Death and Burial of Sara*** Sara lived one hundred and
2 twenty-seven years. She died in Cariath-arbe, that is, Hebron,
in the land of Chanaan. Abraham prepared to mourn for Sara
3 and weep over her. He left the side of his dead wife and said to
4 the Hethites, "I am a stranger resident among you; give me
5 burial ground among you that I may bury my dead." The
6 Hethites answered Abraham, "Hear us, my lord, you are a
mighty prince among us. Choose any of our tombs to bury your
7 dead. None of us will refuse you a tomb for your dead." Abra-
ham rose and bowed low before the Hethites, the natives of
8 the land. He said to them, "If it is acceptable to you that I

22, 17: *Gates:* i.e., cities.

bury my dead, then hear me: ask Ephron, the son of Soh
9 in my behalf | to give me the cave of Machphela which he l
at the end of his field. Let him sell it to me in your presence
10 its full value, as a burial ground." Now the Hethite Ephr
sitting among the Hethites, answered Abraham in the hear
11 of all his fellow citizens, "No, my lord! Hear me: I give y
the field and the cave that is in it. In the presence of my peo
12 do I give it; bury your dead." Abraham bowed low before t
13 natives of the land, | and in their hearing said to Ephron, '
you are really willing, hear me. I will give you money for t
14 field; accept it from me that I may bury my dead there." Ep
15 ron answered Abraham, | "Hear me, my lord! A piece of la
worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwe
16 you and me? Bury your dead in it." Abraham came to ter
with Ephron and weighed out for him the sum he had me
tioned in the hearing of the Hethites, four hundred shekels
17 silver of commercial standard. Thus Ephron's field in Mac
phela, facing Mamre, that is, the field, the cave and all t
18 trees in the entire field, became | the property of Abraham
19 the presence of all the Hethites, his fellow citizens. After th
Abraham buried his wife Sara in the cave of the field at Mac
phela, facing Mamre, that is Hebron, in the land of Chanaa
20 Thus the field with its cave passed from the Hethites to Abr
ham for use as a burial ground.

24

1 ***A Wife Sought for Isaac*** Abraham was now an old ma
well advanced in years. The Lord had blessed him in ever
2 way. Abraham said to the oldest servant of his household
who had charge of all his possessions, "Put your hand unde
3 my thigh | that I may adjure you by the Lord, the God o
heaven and the God of earth, not to obtain a wife for my so
4 from the women of the Chanaanites among whom I live, but t
go to my land and kindred to obtain a wife for my son Isaac.
5 The servant answered, "Perhaps the woman will not wish t
follow me to this land; shall I then take your son back to th
6 land from which you came?" Abraham said to him, "Neve

23, 15: This is characteristic of protracted oriental business trans
actions. At first the land is offered for nothing (vv. 6, 11), and then
high price is asked.

23, 18: The author may have included this story here to illustrate tha
God's repeated promises of giving Chanaan to Abraham were slowly
materializing.

24, 2: This gesture of contacting the vital parts signified that th
oath was not to be broken.

7 take my son back there. The Lord, the God of heaven, who
took me from my father's house, from the land of my kindred,
who spoke to me and swore to me, 'I will give this land to
your descendants,' will send his angel ahead of you and you
8 will obtain a wife for my son there. If the woman does not
wish to follow you, you will be released from this oath; but do
9 not take my son back there." So the servant put his hand un-
der the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to
him in this matter.

10 The servant then took ten of his master's camels and a variety
of his master's treasures. He set out and journeyed to the city
11 where Nahor lived in Aram Naharaim. In the evening, at the
time when the women came out to draw water, he made the
12 camels kneel near the well outside the city. Then he said, "Lord,
God of my master Abraham, grant me success this day; be gra-
13 cious to my master Abraham. I stand here at the spring, and
the young women of the city are coming out to draw water.
14 Now if I say to a young woman, 'Lower your jar that I may
drink,' and she answers, 'Drink, and I will also water your
camels,' she it is whom you have chosen for your servant Isaac.
Thereby shall I know that you have shown your favor to my
15 master." He had not yet finished speaking when Rebecca came
out, the daughter of Bathuel, son of Melcha, wife of Abraham's
brother, Nahor. She came out with a jar on her shoulder.
16 The young woman was very beautiful, a virgin undefiled.
She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and as she came
17 up, the servant hastened to meet her and said, "If you please,
18 let me drink a little water from your jar." She answered,
"Drink, sir," and quickly lowered the jar to her hand and
19 gave him a drink. When she had given him the drink, she said,
"I will draw water also for your camels until they have finished
20 drinking." She quickly emptied her jar into the trough, has-
tened again to the well, and drew water for all the camels.
21 All the while the man was watching her, waiting to learn
whether or not the Lord had made his journey a success.
22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a
gold ring, a half shekel in weight, and he put on her wrists
23 two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels. He said to her, "Tell
me whose daughter you are! Is there room in your father's
24 house for us to stay overnight?" She answered him, "I am the
daughter of Bathuel, a son of Nahor whom Melcha bore to
25 him." She added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, and

24, 10: *Aram Naharaim* is on the border of modern southern Turkey and northern Syria, near Haran from which Abraham came. See 11, 31.

26 there is room to spend the night." Then the man bowed
27 worship to the Lord, | saying, "Blessed be the Lord, the G
of my master Abraham, whose constant favor to my mas
has not ceased. Me also the Lord has guided on my way
28 the house of my master's kinsmen." Meanwhile the maid
hastened to inform her mother's household of what had ha
pened.
29.30 Now Rebecca had a brother named Laban. As soon
he saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, a
heard his sister Rebecca say, "Thus the man spoke to me
Laban hastened to the man at the spring. When he reach
the man he found him standing by the camels near th
31 spring. | He said, "Come in, blessed of the Lord! Why shou
you stay outdoors when I have made ready the house, as we
32 as a place for the camels?" So the man went into the hous
Laban unloaded the camels, and provided them with straw an
fodder. Then he brought water for the man himself and fo
33 those who were with him, to wash their feet. Food was place
before the men, but he said, "I will not eat before I have de
livered my message." They answered, "Speak."

34 ***The Proposal of Marriage*** So he said, "I am Abraham'
35 servant. The Lord has blessed my master abundantly so tha
he has become a rich man. He has given him flocks, herds, sil
36 ver, gold, men and women servants, camels and asses. M
master's wife Sara bore a son to my master in her old age
37 and he has given him all his property. My master adjured
me, 'You must not choose a wife for my son from the women
38 of the Chanaanites in whose country I live, but you shall go
to my family and kindred to choose a wife for my son.
39 I answered my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow
40 me.' He said, 'The Lord in whose sight I have lived will send
his angel with you and make your journey a success. You will
41 choose a wife for my son from my kindred and family; then
will you be released from your oath to me. If you go to my
kindred and they refuse you, you will be free from your oath
to me.'
42 "Today when I came to the spring I said, 'Lord, God of
my master Abraham, may you prosper the journey I am making!
43 Here I stand at the spring; if I say to a girl coming out to
draw water: Give me a little water from your jar to drink,
44 | and she answers me: Drink, and I will also draw water for
your camels, she is the wife whom the Lord has chosen for my
master's son.'
45 "I had not yet finished planning this when Rebecca came

with her jar on her shoulder, went down to the spring, and
46 drew water. I said to her, 'Give me a drink, please.' She quickly
lowered her jar and said, 'Drink; and I will also water your
47 camels.' So I drank and she also watered the camels. Then I
asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?', and she replied, 'I am
the daughter of Bathuel, son of Nahor and his wife Melcha.'
Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her wrists.
48 And I bowed and worshiped the Lord, blessing the Lord, the
God of my master Abraham, who guided me along the right
road to choose the daughter of my master's kinsman for his
49 son. Now tell me whether my master can depend on your favor;
if not, let me know, that I may determine my course."

50 ***Rebecca's Kinsfolk Agree*** Laban and his family answered,
"This comes from the Lord. We can say nothing at all to you.
51 Here before you is Rebecca; take her and go. Let her be married
52 to your master's son as the Lord has decided." When Abraham's
servant heard their answer, he bowed to the ground before
53 the Lord. He brought out silver and gold jewelry, and clothing,
and gave them to Rebecca. He also gave costly presents to her
54 brother and mother. Then he and the men with him had food
and drink. They stayed overnight, and when they rose the next
55 morning he said, "Let me go to my master." Her brother and
mother answered, "Let the girl stay with us some days, say
56 ten, and then she may go." But he said to them, "Do not de-
tain me, because the Lord has prospered my journey; let me
57 go and return to my master." Then they said, "Let us call
the girl and ask her in person."
58 They called Rebecca and asked her, "Will you go with this
59 man?" And she answered, "I will." | So they let their sister
Rebecca and her nurse go with Abraham's servant and his men.
60 They blessed Rebecca and said, "May you, sister, become a
thousand times ten thousand, and may your descendants con-
61 quer the gates of their foes." Then Rebecca and her maids
mounted camels and followed the man. So the servant took Re-
becca and departed.
62 Isaac had gone to the desert of Beer-lahai-roi; he was living
63 in the district of the Negeb. One day toward evening, when he
went out in the field for a walk, he looked up and saw camels
64 approaching. Rebecca too looked up, and when she saw Isaac
65 she dismounted from the camel, | and asked the servant, "Who

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24, 60: See 22, 17 n.

24, 65: The veil was worn till the evening of the marriage. See 29, 23-25.

is the man coming through the field toward us?" The serv
said, "It is my master." Then she covered herself with her v
66.67 The servant told Isaac all he had done. Isaac led Rebe
into the tent and took her to wife. Because he loved her, Isa
was consoled for the loss of his mother.

25

1 ***Other Decendants of Abraham*** Abraham married anoth
2 wife whose name was Cetura. She bore him Zamran, Jecsa
3 Madian, Madan, Jesboc and Sue. Jecsan became the father
Saba and Dedan. The descendants of Dedan were the Assuri
4 the Latusim and the Loommim. The descendants of Madi
were Epha, Epher, Henoch, Abida and Eldaa. All these we
the descendants of Cetura.
5.6 Abraham gave Isaac everything he had. Abraham gave pre
ents to his children by his concubines, and while yet alive se
them away eastward, to the land of the East apart from Isaa
7 Abraham's life span was one hundred and seventy-five yea
8 when he expired. He died at a good old age, an old man, aft
9 a full life, and was gathered to his kinsmen. His sons Isa
and Ismael buried him in the cave of Machphela, facing Mamr
10 in the field of Ephron the Hethite, the son of Sohar. Abraha
was buried with his wife Sara in the field which he had boug
11 from the Hethites. After the death of Abraham, God blessed hi
son Isaac, who made his home near Beer-lahai-roi.
12 These are the descendants of Abraham's son Ismael, whon
13 Agar the Egyptian, Sara's maid, bore to Abraham. These ar
the names of Ismael's sons, in the order of their birth: Nabaioth
14 the first-born of Ismael, Cedar, Adbeel, Mabsam, | Masma
15 Duma, Massa, | Hadad, Thema, Jetur, Naphis and Cedma
16 These were the sons of Ismael and these are their names ac
cording to their villages and encampments; twelve princes ac
cording to their tribes.
17 The length of Ismael's life was one hundred and thirty-seve
years when he expired. He died, and was gathered to his kins
18 men. The Ismaelites dwelt from Hevila to Sur, on the border o
Egypt on the way to Assur. He died in conflict with all his kins
men.

25, 8: Gathered to his kinsmen in the family tomb. The same ex
pression follows in v. 17.
25, 12: The tribes of northern Arabia are listed as Ismael's offspring.

III. THE PATRIARCHS ISAAC AND JACOB

19 ***Birth of Esau and Jacob*** This is the family history of Isaac,
20 the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac
was forty years old when he married Rebecca, daughter of
Bathuel, an Aramean of Phaddan-Aram, and sister of Laban
21 the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife because
she was barren. The Lord answered Isaac and his wife Rebecca
22 conceived. The children jostled each other within her, and she
said, "If this be so, why am I pregnant?" Then she went to
23 consult the Lord. | He said to her, "Two nations are in your
womb; two peoples shall stem from your body. One people
shall be stronger than the other, and the elder shall serve the
younger."
24 When the time of her delivery came, there were indeed
25 twins in her womb. | The first to come forth was red. His
whole body was like a hairy garment, so they named him Esau.
26 Afterward his brother came forth, with his hand gripping
Esau's heel; so he was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old
when they were born.

27 ***Esau Sells His Birthright*** When the boys grew up, Esau
became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while
28 Jacob was a settled man who stayed among the tents. Isaac
preferred Esau because he was fond of game, but Rebecca pre-
ferred Jacob.
29 Once when Jacob was cooking some food, Esau came in
30 from the field famished. Esau said to Jacob, "Let me have
some of that red food, for I am famished." Hence he was
31 called Edom. But Jacob replied, "Sell me first your birth-
32 right." Esau said, "I am dying; of what use to me is the
33 birthright?" | Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore

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25, 20: *Phaddan-Aram* is practically the same place as Aram Naharaim. See 24, 10 n.

25, 22: *Why am I pregnant?:* literally in Hebrew: "Why this I?" It means: "Why does this happen to me?" *Consult the Lord:* probably at a sanctuary like Bersabee.

25, 23: The jostling is prophetically interpreted as the future enmity between the two brothers and their descendants. The Edomites will originate from Esau; the Israelites will originate from Jacob. David conquered the Edomites (2 Sm 8, 13-14).

25, 33: The oldest son had a claim to a double share of the inheritance from his father. This law (Dt 21, 15-17) was already a law in Mesopotamia at the time of the patriarchs.

34 to Jacob, and sold him his birthright. Then Jacob gave Es
some bread and lentils. He ate and drank and went his w
Thus lightly did Esau value his birthright.

26

1 ***Isaac in Gerara*** Now another famine occurred in the lar
besides the earlier famine of the days of Abraham. And Isa
went away to Gerara, to Abimelech, king of the Philistin
2 The Lord appeared to him and said, "Do not go down ir
3 Egypt, but dwell in the land which I shall point out to you. F
side as a stranger in this land and I will be with you and ble
you; for I will give all these lands to you and your descen
ants. I will fulfill the oath which I swore to your father Abr
4 ham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars
the heavens. I will give your descendants all these lands, an
in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blesse
5 for Abraham obeyed me and heeded my charge [my cor
mands, my ordinances and my laws]."
6.7 So Isaac dwelt in Gerara. When the men of the place i
quired about his wife, he said, "She is my sister"; for I
feared to call her his wife lest the men of the place shoul
kill him on Rebecca's account, as she was beautiful.
8 When he had been there a long time, Abimelech kin
of the Philistines happened to look out a window and sa
9 Isaac fondling his wife Rebecca. Abimelech summoned Isaa
and said, "It is evident that she is your wife; why did yo
say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac replied, "Because I feared tha
10 I should die on her account." Abimelech said, "Why did yo
do this to us? How easily someone could have lain with you
11 wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us!" Then Abime
lech warned all the people, saying, "Whoever touches thi
man or his wife shall be put to death."
12 Isaac sowed a crop in that land, and harvested a hundred
13 fold the same year. The Lord blessed him; | he became rich, and
14 increased in riches until he was very wealthy. He had flock
and herds and many beasts for plowing. The Philistines becam
15 envious of him. [They had stopped up and filled with dirt al
the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days o

25, 34: In this chapter the Israelite writer draws a sarcastic caricature of Esau, the ancestor of the proverbial neighboring enemy, the Edomites. Esau is red, hairy, a poor bargainer because he sacrifices his future for the immediate advantage of a meal.

26, 1-11: This is the third presentation of the same theme. See 12 10-20 n. In this section the stories related about Isaac resemble those previously narrated of Abraham.

16 his father Abraham.] So Abimelech said to Isaac, "Depart
17 from us, for you have become much too strong for us." Isaac
departed, camped in the valley of Gerara, and settled there.
18 [Isaac reopened the wells dug by the servants of his father
Abraham which the Philistines had filled up after the death
of Abraham. He called them by the same names which his
19 father had given them.] Isaac's servants dug in the valley and
20 found a well of running water, but the shepherds of Gerara
disputed with Isaac's shepherds and said, "The water belongs
to us." So he called the well Esec because they had wrangled
21 with him. They dug another well, but they quarreled over this
22 also, so he named it Sitna. He moved from there and dug
still another well over which they did not dispute. He called
it Rohoboth and said, "For now the Lord has made room for
us; we shall prosper in the land."

23 ***Isaac in Bersabee*** From there he went up to Bersabee.
24 The Lord appeared to him that very night and said, "I am the
God of your father Abraham; fear not, for I am with you. I will
bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of my
25 servant Abraham." He built an altar there, and invoked the
name of the Lord. Isaac pitched his tent there, and his serv-
26 ants dug a well. Then Abimelech came to him from Gerara with
27 Ochozath, his friend, and Phichol, the general of his army. Isaac
said to them, "Why do you come to me? You hate me and
28 have driven me away from you." They answered, "We see
clearly that the Lord is with you, so we say, let there be a sworn
29 agreement between you and us. Let us make a covenant with
you; you shall do us no harm, as we have not harmed you, but
have done only good to you and sent you away peacefully. You
30 are indeed the blessed of the Lord!" Isaac gave a feast for
31 them and they ate and drank. Early the next morning they
exchanged oaths. Isaac sent them away and they departed
32 from him in peace. That same day the servants of Isaac came
and informed him of the well they had dug. They said to him,
33 "We have found water." So he named it Siba. Therefore the
name of the city is Bersabee to this day.

34 ***The Wives of Esau*** When Esau was forty years old he
married Judith, daughter of Beeri the Hethite, and Basemath,

26, 23-25: One tradition related that Abraham founded the sanctuary of Bersabee (21, 25-33). According to this text, Isaac founded it. The final redactor wanted to preserve both traditions.

26, 34: The final redactor treasures all the scraps of traditions he can

35 daughter of Elon the Hethite. But they were a source of b
terness to Isaac and Rebecca.

27

1 ***Jacob Receives His Father's Blessing*** When Isaac w
old and his eyesight had failed, he called his elder son Esau, a
2 said to him, "Son!" | He replied, "Here I am!" He said, "Y
3 see I have grown old; I do not know when I may die. Ta
your weapons, quiver and bow; go out into the fields to hu
4 me some game. Prepare for me some savory food such as
like; bring it to me to eat, so that I may bless you before I di
5 Rebecca listened while Isaac was talking to his son Esau. Wh
Esau had gone out into the field to hunt some game for h
6 father, Rebecca said to her son Jacob, "I heard your fath
7 tell your brother Esau, 'Bring me some game; | prepare son
savory food for me to eat, and then I will bless you in th
8 sight of the Lord before I die.' Now my son, do what I tell yo
9 Go to the flock and bring me two choice kids that I may mak
10 of them savory food for your father, such as he likes. The
bring it to your father to eat, that he may bless you befor
11 he dies." Jacob said to his mother Rebecca, "But Esau m
12 brother is a hairy man, while I am smooth. If my fathe
touches me, it will seem to him that I am mocking him. Thu
I shall bring a curse on myself instead of a blessing." Hi
13 mother replied, | "Let the curse fall on me, my son! Do bu
listen to me; go, get them for me."
14 He went, selected them, and brought them to his mother
15 who prepared savory food such as his father liked. Then Re
becca took the best clothes of her elder son Esau, which she hac
16 in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She pu
the skins of the kids on his hands and over the smooth parts o
17 his neck. Then she gave her son Jacob the savory food and
18 bread she had prepared. He went to his father and said, "Fa
19 ther!" He answered, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" | And
Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your first-born. I have done
as you told me; sit up, please! Eat again of my game, that you
20 may bless me." Isaac replied, "How did you find it so quickly,
my son?" He answered, "The Lord your God let me come upon

find, without trying to reconcile the names of Esau's wives here with those on the genealogical tree of 36, 1-5.

27, 1-40: The inspired writer relates a story in which an unadorned falsehood is told, but he does not approve of it.

27, 20: It is characteristic and almost mechanical for the people of the Bible to attribute everything to God without realizing that in such attributions God may be cast in the role of a copartner in evil.

it." Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come close that I may touch you,
my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not."
Jacob went close to his father; Isaac touched him and said,
"The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of
Esau." (He did not recognize him because his hands were hairy
like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him.)
Isaac said, "Are you really my son Esau?" Jacob answered,
"Yes, I am." | Isaac continued, "Set your game near me, my
son, that I may eat it, and bless you." He set it before him
and he ate of it, and he brought him some wine, which he
drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come close and
kiss me, my son." He came close and kissed him. When he
smelled the fragrance of his garments, he blessed him and said:
"The fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field which
the Lord has blessed! God give you dew from heaven, and
fruitfulness of the earth, abundance of grain and wine. Let
nations serve you, peoples bow down to you. Be master of your
brothers; may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed
be those who curse you, blessed be those who bless you."
Isaac had pronounced the blessing and Jacob had just left
his father's presence, when his brother Esau returned from
hunting. He also prepared savory food and brought it to his
father, saying, "Sit up, father, and eat of your son's game, that
you may bless me." His father Isaac said to him, "Who are
you?" He answered, "I am Esau, your first-born son." Isaac
was greatly disturbed, and asked, "Who was it then, that
hunted game and brought it to me? Before you came I ate
heartily and then blessed him; and he shall be blessed." On
hearing his father's words, Esau uttered a very loud and bit-
ter cry, and said to him, "Father, bless me too." | But he an-
swered, "Your brother came deceitfully and received your
blessing." Then he said, "Must he, true to his name Jacob, sup-
plant me now a second time? He took my birthright and now
he has taken my blessing." He added, "Have you not re-
served a blessing for me?" Isaac answered Esau, "I have ap-
pointed him your lord, and have given him all his brothers as
servants. I have enriched him with grain and wine; what then
can I do for you, my son?" But Esau said to his father, "Have
you only one blessing, father? Bless me also, my father." And
Esau wept aloud.
His father Isaac answered him: "Without the fruitfulness of
the earth shall your dwelling be; without the dew of the heavens

27, 33b: Blessings (and curses) are irrevocable in Israelite thinking.

40 above. By your sword shall you live; you shall serve y
brother. But when you become restive you shall shake his y
from your neck."

41 ***Jacob Goes to Phaddam-Aram*** Esau bore Jacob a gru
because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to hi
self, "The time of mourning for my father is coming; the
42 will kill my brother Jacob." Rebecca was told of these wo
of her elder son, Esau. She summoned her younger son, Jac
and said to him, "Your brother Esau intends to revenge hi
43 self on you by killing you. Listen to me therefore, my son; f
44 to my brother Laban in Haran. Stay with him awhile un
your brother's fury subsides [until your brother's wrath agai
45 you relents], | and he forgets what you have done to him. Th
I will send for you and bring you back. Why should I be b
reaved of you both on the same day?"
46 Rebecca said to Isaac, "I am disgusted with life because
the Hethite women; if Jacob should marry a Hethite wom
like these, a native of the land, what would life mean to me

28

1 Isaac therefore called Jacob and having blessed him, charg
2 him, "Do not marry any Chanaanite woman; go then
Phaddan-Aram, the home of Bathuel, your mother's fathe
and there choose your wife from the daughters of your unc
3 Laban. May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitfu
may he multiply you so that you may become many nation
4 May he bestow on you, and your descendants also, the blessin
of Abraham that you may inherit this land in which you a
5 immigrants, which God gave to Abraham." Isaac sent fort
Jacob, who went to Phaddan-Aram to Laban, the son of th
Aramean Bathuel, and brother of Rebecca, mother of Jacob an
Esau.

6 ***Esau Marries a Descendant of Ismael*** Esau learned tha
Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Phaddan-Aram
to marry there, and while blessing him had charged him no

27, 40b: How different are the blessings of Isaac bestowed on Jaco
(vv. 28-29) and on Esau (vv. 39-40) when compared with the blessing
of offspring and land made by God to Abraham (12, 1-3) and renewe
to Jacob (28, 13-15). For this and other reasons scholars tend to dat
these blessings after the patriarchal age. V. 40b, e.g., was probabl
added when Esau's descendants, the Edomites, liberated themselve
from Jacob's descendants, the Israelites, in 4 Kgs 8, 20-22.

7 to marry a Chanaanite woman, and that Jacob had departed
for Phaddan-Aram in obedience to his father and mother.
8 Since he realized his father Isaac's displeasure with Chanaanite
9 women, Esau went to Ismael, | and in addition to the wives he
had, married Maheleth, daughter of Abraham's son Ismael
and sister of Nabaioth.

10 ***Jacob's Vision at Bethel*** Meanwhile, Jacob left Bersabee
11 and journeyed toward Haran. He came to a place where he spent
the night because the sun had set. He took one of the stones
of the place, put it under his head, and went to sleep there.
12 He dreamed that a ladder was set up on the ground with its
top reaching to heaven;' angels of God were ascending and
13 descending on it. The Lord stood beside him and said, "I am
the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of
Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which
14 you lie. They shall be as the dust of the earth. You shall spread
abroad to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south;
in you and in your descendants, all the nations of the earth
15 shall be blessed. I will be with you and protect you wherever
you go. I will bring you back to this land; indeed I will not
forsake you till I fulfill my promise."
16 When Jacob woke from his sleep he said, "Truly the Lord
17 is in this place and I did not know it." Reverently he continued,
"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house
18 of God; this is the gate of heaven." Jacob arose in the morning,
took the stone which he had placed under his head, set it up as
19 a memorial pillar and poured oil over it. He called the place
20 Bethel; formerly the name of the city was Luza. Jacob also
made a vow: "If the Lord is with me and protects me on my
present journey, and gives me food to eat and clothing to wear,
21 and a safe return to my father's house, the Lord shall be my
22 God; and this stone which I have set up as a memorial pillar
shall be the house of God. I will offer faithfully a tenth part
of everything you give me."

28, 10-22: The message of this story is that God always watches over His chosen ones, e.g., Jacob. The ladder intimates the nearness of God because it connects heaven with earth.

28, 16-17: For a long time the Old Testament people thought that God was only in certain places. The omnipresence of God was not yet known.

28, 18-19: Jacob rededicates the Chanaanite sanctuary, Bethel, to the true God, much as Christian churches were built over pagan shrines in Roman days.

29

1 ***Jacob Meets Rachel*** Then Jacob continued his journey
2 came to the land of the people of the East. Looking about
saw a well in the open country, and three flocks of sheep ly
nearby, for the flocks were watered from this well. But
3 stone over the mouth of the well was large. | After all
shepherds were gathered there, the stone was rolled back fr
the mouth of the well and the flocks were watered. Th
the stone was replaced over the mouth of the well.
4 Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from
5 And they answered, "We are from Haran." | Then he
6 quired, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And th
said, "We do." He asked further, "Is he well?" They replie
"He is, and here comes his daughter Rachel with his flock
7 Then he said, "Much of the day is left; it is not yet time t
the stock to be gathered; water the flock and lead them ba
8 to pasture." But they answered, "We cannot, until all t
shepherds have assembled; then they remove the stone fro
the mouth of the well and we water the flock."
9 While he was still talking with them, Rachel arrived wi
10 her father's flock; for it was her custom to tend them. Whe
Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban, with th
flock, he drew near, rolled the stone from the mouth of th
11 well, and watered his uncle's flock. Then Jacob kissed Rach
12 and wept aloud. Jacob told Rachel that he was her father
relative, a son of Rebecca, and she hastened to tell her fathe
13 When Laban heard about Jacob, his nephew, he hastened t
meet him, received him with embraces and kisses, and brough
14 him to his dwelling. Jacob told Laban all these things, and La
ban said to him, "You are indeed my flesh and bone." An
15 Jacob stayed with him a whole month. Then Laban said t
Jacob, "Should you serve me for nothing because you are
relative of mine? Tell me what your wages shall be."

16 ***Jacob Marries Lia*** Laban had two daughters. The elder wa
17 called Lia, and the younger Rachel. Lia's eyes were weak, but
18 Rachel was shapely and beautiful. | Jacob loved Rachel. He
said therefore, "I will serve you seven years for your younger
19 daughter Rachel." Laban answered, "It is better to give her to
20 you than to another man; stay with me." So Jacob served sev-
en years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days
21 because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give

29, 16b: In Arab countries down to the present day, eyes play a major role in judging feminine beauty.

me my wife; for the time has come for me to go in to her."
22 Laban gathered all the men of the place and gave a feast.
23 That night he brought Lia, his daughter, to Jacob, who had
24 relations with her. Laban gave his servant Zelpha to his daugh-
25 ter Lia to be her maid. In the morning, to Jacob's amazement, it
was Lia. Then he said to Laban, "What have you done to
me? Did I not serve you for Rachel? Why then have you
26 cheated me?" Laban replied, "It is not the custom in our country
27 to give the younger daughter before the first-born; complete the
week of this one's nuptials and I will give you the other in
return for another seven years of service with me."
28 Jacob did so; he completed her week. Then Laban gave
29 him his daughter Rachel in marriage. Laban gave his servant
30 Bala to his daughter Rachel to be her maid. So Jacob went in
to Rachel also; he loved her more than Lia, and served Laban
another seven years.
31 When the Lord saw that Lia was disliked, he made her
32 fruitful, while Rachel remained barren. Lia conceived and
bore a son, naming him Ruben; "For," she said, "the Lord
has had regard for my misery; now my husband will love me."
33 Again she conceived and bore a son saying, "The Lord has
heard that I am disliked; therefore he has given me this one
34 also." She named him Simeon. | She conceived again and bore
a son, saying, "This time my husband will become attached to
me, for I have borne him three sons." Therefore she named him
35 Levi. Once more she conceived and bore a son, saying, "Now I
will praise the Lord." Therefore she named him Juda. Then
she ceased bearing.

30
1 ***Rivalry of Rachel and Lia*** When Rachel saw that she was
not bearing children to Jacob, she became jealous of her sister
2 and said to Jacob, "Give me children or I shall die." Jacob
became impatient with Rachel and answered her, "Can I take
3 the place of God, who has made you barren?" She replied,
"Here is my slave-girl, Bala; go in to her that she may bear
4 on my knees, and I too may have children by her." She gave
him Bala, her maid, in marriage, and Jacob had relations with
5.6 her. Bala conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said,
"God has pronounced judgment in my favor, for he has heard
my prayer and given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan.

30, 3: *Bear on my knees:* see 16, 2. This expression refers to the rite of adoption according to which the babe is placed on or between the knees of the adopter.

7 Bala, Rachel's maid, conceived again and bore a second
8 to Jacob. Then Rachel said, | "I have used a clever de
against my sister, and I have indeed prevailed." So she ca
him Nephthali.
9 When Lia knew that she had ceased bearing, she
10 Zelpha her maid to Jacob in marriage. Zelpha, Lia's m
11 bore Jacob a son. | Lia said, "What good fortune!" And
12 named him Gad. Lia's maid Zelpha bore Jacob another
13 | And Lia said, "What happiness! Women will call me happ
So she named him Aser.
14 During the wheat harvest, Ruben went into the field, fo
some mandrakes, and brought them to his mother Lia. Ra
15 said to Lia, "Give me some of your son's mandrakes."
answered her, "Is it a trivial matter to have taken my husba
Will you also take my son's mandrakes?" Rachel said, "W
well! In exchange for your son's mandrakes, Jacob shall
16 with you tonight." As Jacob was returning from the field
evening, Lia went to meet him and said, "You are to come
me; for I have bargained for you with my son's mandrake
17 So he slept with her that night. God heard Lia's prayer,
18 she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Then she said, "G
has rewarded me because I gave my maid to my husban
19 She called him Issachar. Lia conceived again and bore a si
20 son to Jacob. She said, "God has made me an excellent g
Now my husband will honor me; for I have borne him
21 sons." Therefore she named him Zabulon. | Afterward s
bore a daughter whom she named Dina.

22 ***The Birth of Joseph*** But God remembered Rachel;
23 heard her prayer and made her fruitful. She conceived and bore
24 son, and she said, "God has taken away my reproach." S
named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord give me anoth
son."

25 ***Jacob Outwits Laban*** When Rachel had given birth
Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me return to my own hom
26 and country. Give me my wives for whom I served you, an
my children; let me depart. You know well the service I ha

30, 14: *Mandrakes:* still popularly believed to be an aphrodisiac.

30, 25-43: The text is not always clear but the general sense is th
the odd colored sheep and goats will belong to Jacob and the rest
Laban. The odd colored ones were usually fewer. Jacob's trick of pr
senting an object during conception to influence the color of the anima
altered the usual course of events. Pliny and others in antiquity knew th
stratagem.

27 given you." Laban said to him, "If you please, I surmise that
28 God blessed me because of you. Name your wages and I will
29 pay." He answered, "But you know well how I have served
30 you, how your stock fared under my care. Before I came you
had little indeed, but now it has greatly increased. The Lord
blessed you at my every step. And now, when shall I provide
31 for my own household?" He asked, "What shall I give you?"
But Jacob answered, "Give me nothing at all, if you agree to
32 this proposal: I shall again pasture and tend your flock, but
today go through your entire flock and separate every speckled
and spotted goat, and all black lambs; then every goat that is
33 spotted or speckled and every black lamb shall be my wages. In
the future, when the time comes, I will stand self-condemned
before you in the matter of my wages. Every goat that is not
speckled or spotted, and every lamb that is not black, shall be
34 considered stolen." Laban said, "Let it be as you say."
35 That day Laban separated the striped and spotted he-goats,
and all the speckled or spotted she-goats, every one with white
on it, and all the lambs that were black, and he gave them
36 into the care of his sons. He put a distance of three days'
journey between himself and Jacob, who had charge of the
37 rest of Laban's flock. Jacob took green boughs of poplar,
almond and plane and by laying bare the white in the boughs,
38 he peeled white stripes in them. Then he set the boughs he had
peeled in front of the flock in the watering troughs where they
came to be watered. And they mated when they came to be
39 watered. Since they mated in front of the boughs, they brought
40 forth young lambs that were striped, speckled and spotted. Jacob
set these lambs apart, and the young animals were all speckled
or black in a white flock. Thus he formed droves of his own
41 which he did not join to Laban's flock. Whenever the hardier
sheep were breeding, Jacob placed the boughs in the troughs in
front of the sheep so that they might mate in front of the
42 boughs, | but not so in the case of the weaker ones. The weaker
43 ones fell to Laban and the stronger to Jacob. Thus the man
became exceedingly rich and had large flocks, male and female
servants, camels and asses.

31

1 ***Jacob Leaves Phaddan-Aram*** Jacob learned that Laban's
sons were saying, "Jacob has taken all our father had, and he
has acquired all these riches from what belonged to our father."
2 Jacob perceived, too, that Laban's attitude toward him was
3 not what it had previously been. The Lord said to Jacob,

"Return to the land of your fathers and to your own
4 I will be with you." Jacob sent for Rachel and Lia, calling th
5 to his flock in the field, | and said to them, "I see that y
father's attitude toward me is not what it was previously;
the God of my father has been with me.
6 "You yourselves know that I have served your father w
7 all my strength, yet your father cheated me and changed
pay time after time; but God did not allow him to harm
8 Whenever he said, 'The spotted animals will be your pay,'
entire flock had spotted young; but whenever he said, 'T
striped ones will be your wages,' then the entire flock h
9 striped young. So God took away your father's stock and gav
10 to me. At breeding time of the flock, I saw in a dream that
11 he-goats mating were striped, spotted, and speckled. An an
of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob!' and I answered, 'H
12 I am!' | Then he said, 'Look and take note: all the he-go
mating are striped, spotted and speckled; I have seen all th
13 Laban has been doing to you. I am the God who appeared
you at Bethel, where you anointed the memorial pillar a
made a vow to me. Rise now, leave this land, and return
the land of your kin.' "
14 Rachel and Lia answered him, "Have we any share
15 heritage left in our father's house? Are we not regarded
strangers by him? For he has sold us, and entirely used u
16 the money he received through us. Surely all the property Go
has taken away from our father belongs to us and our childre
Do whatever God has told you."
17 Jacob began by mounting his children and wives on camel
18 Then he took away all his herds, all the property he had a
quired [the stock he had obtained] in Phaddan-Aram, to g
to his father Isaac in the land of Chanaan.
19 When Laban had gone to shear his flock, Rachel stole he
20 father's household idols; and Jacob outwitted Laban th
Aramean by not mentioning to him his intended flight, an
21 fled with all that belonged to him. Jacob set out, crossed th
River and made for the highlands of Galaad.
22 On the third day, Laban was informed of Jacob's flight
23 Taking his kinsmen with him, he pursued Jacob seven day

31, 8: The writer includes a tradition which is slightly different from the preceding one.

31, 11-13: To win over his wives against their father, Jacob claims that God sides with him. An "angel of God" (v. 11) is synonymous with God (v. 13). See 16, 1-15 n.

24 and overtook him in the highlands of Galaad. But God came
to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and cautioned him,
"Take care not to say anything at all to Jacob."

25 ***Compact of Jacob and Laban*** Jacob had pitched his tent
in the highlands when Laban overtook him. Having pitched
26 his tent on Mount Galaad, Laban said to Jacob, "Why have
you acted so, deceiving me and carrying off my daughters like
27 prisoners of war? Why did you flee secretly and steal away
from me? You did not let me know, so that I could send you
28 off with rejoicing and song, with tambourine and lyre. You
did not allow me to kiss my sons and daughters; you have
29 acted foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm; but last
night the God of your father said to me, 'Take care not to say
30 anything at all to Jacob.' | If you had to leave because you
longed so much for your father's home, why did you steal
31 my gods?" Jacob replied to Laban, "I was afraid, for I thought
32 you would take away your daughters from me by force. If you
find your gods in anyone's possession, he shall not live. In
the presence of our kinsmen, identify whatever of yours I
may have, and take it." But Jacob did not know Rachel had
stolen them.

33 Then Laban went through Jacob's tent, through Lia's and
through those of both the maids without finding them. From
34 Lia's tent he went to Rachel's; | but Rachel had taken the
household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and was sit-
ting on them. When Laban had felt around the whole tent
35 without finding them, | she said to her father, "Be not of-
fended, my lord, that I cannot rise in your presence; I am
having my periods." Though he searched, he did not find the
household gods.

36 Then Jacob became angry and remonstrated with Laban.
"What is my offense or my crime," he said, "that you have
37 pursued me, and have ransacked all my belongings? What
household article of yours have you found? Put it out here
in the presence of your kinsmen and mine that they may
38 decide between us two. Twenty years now I have been with
you; your ewes and your she-goats have never miscarried,
39 nor have I eaten the rams of your flock. I have not brought
to you any torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. You

31, 24: This and v. 29 are most likely part of the dramatic machinery to express God's protection over Jacob.

31, 30: *Why did you steal my gods?:* monotheism only gradually wiped away these pagan beliefs which Rachel also held (vv. 19 and 34).

held me responsible for anything stolen by day or nig
40 The heat wasted me by day, the cold by night; sleep fled fr
41 my eyes. This has been my twenty years with you: I serv
you fourteen years for your two daughters, six years for yo
42 flocks; you changed my pay time after time. If the God of
father, the God of Abraham, and the God whom Isaac fea
had not favored me, even now you would have sent me aw
empty-handed. God saw my affliction and my toil, and l
night he pronounced sentence."
43 Laban answered Jacob, "The daughters are mine, the gran
children are mine, the flocks are mine, indeed all that you s
is mine. What can I do today to these daughters of mine a
44 to the children they have borne? Come, then, let us make
covenant, you and I; then the Lord shall be a witness betwe
you and me."
45 Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a memorial pilla
46 Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather some stones." And the
gathered stones, made a heap, and ate there near the hea
47 Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha and Jacob named it Galaa
48 Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me toda
49 [Therefore he called it Galaad; | and Maspha, because he said
"May the Lord watch between you and me when we are awa
50 from each other."] You shall not mistreat my daughters, o
marry others besides them; even though there be no man nea
51 us, remember, God is witness between you and me." Laba
continued, "Note this heap and this memorial pillar I have se
52 up between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the me
morial is a witness that I will not go beyond this heap toward
you, and that you shall not go beyond this heap and me
53 morial toward me to do harm. The God of Abraham and the
gods of Nahor [the gods of their father] judge between us.'
Jacob swore by him whom his father Isaac revered.
54 Jacob offered sacrifice in the highlands and invited his kins-
men to take food. When they had eaten they spent the night
in the highlands.

32

1 Early in the morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and
2 daughters, bade them farewell, and returned to his home. Jacob

---

31, 53: *Gods of Nahor:* even though Nahor is not known, the expression clearly shows Laban is a polytheist.

32, 2-3: The etymology of Mahanaim is attributed to a vision of angels.

also resumed his journey and God's angels met him. When he saw them, Jacob said, "This is the encampment of God"; and he named that place Mahanaim.

Jacob Sends an Embassy to Esau Then Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau in the region of Seir in the country of Edom, commanding them, "Thus shall you say to my lord Esau: Your servant Jacob sends you this message: 'I have been dwelling with Laban and stayed till now. I have acquired cattle, asses, flocks, men and women servants; so I am sending word to my lord that I may find favor with you.' "

The messengers returned to Jacob and said, "We went to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you with four hundred men." Filled with fear and anxiety, Jacob divided into two camps the people with him, as well as the flocks, the cattle, and the camels. He said, "Should Esau come on one camp and attack it, the other will be saved." Jacob prayed, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, Lord who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your kin, and I will deal well with you': I am not worthy of all the kindnesses and the constant solicitude which you have shown your servant. With only my staff I crossed this Jordan; now I have grown into two camps.

"Save me from my brother Esau; for I fear that he is coming to kill me and all my family. You have promised, 'I will surely deal well with you. I will make your descendants as the sands of the sea, too numerous to count.' "

After sleeping there that night, he chose a present for his brother Esau from what he had with him: two hundred she-goats, twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes, twenty rams, | thirty milch camels with their young, forty cows, ten bullocks, twenty she-asses and ten foals. He delivered these to his servants, in separate droves, instructing them, "Go ahead of me, but leave a space between one drove and the next." He charged the leaders, "If my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'To whom do you belong? where are you going? and whose animals are these before you?', | you shall answer, 'They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and Jacob is just behind us.' " He also charged the second, the third and all who followed the droves, "Give this same message to Esau when you meet him, | and say also, 'Your servant Jacob is just behind us.' " He thought, "I will appease him with the gift that precedes me; then when I see him, perhaps he will be kind

22 ***Struggle with the Angel*** So the gifts went ahead of h
23 while he lodged that night in the camp. That same night
arose, took his two wives, the two maids and his eleven sor
24 and forded the Jaboc. He took them and sent them across t
25 stream, with everything that belonged to him; | but Jac
himself remained behind, all alone. Someone wrestled wi
him until the break of dawn.
26 When he saw that he could not overcome Jacob, he touch
the socket of Jacob's thigh so that it was dislocated while J
27 cob wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go; it is dawn
But Jacob answered, "I will not let you go till you bless me
28 Then he asked Jacob, "What is your name?" and he answere
29 "Jacob." | He said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, bu
Israel, because you have contended with God and men, an
30 have triumphed." Jacob asked, "What is your name?" H
answered, "Why do you ask my name?" But he blessed hir
31 there. | Jacob named the place Phanuel, saying, "I have see
a heavenly being face to face, yet my life has been spared.
32 The sun rose on him just as he passed Phanuel, limping be
33 cause of his thigh. To this day the Israelites do not eat the hip
muscle on the socket of the thigh, because he touched th
socket of Jacob's thigh on the hip-muscle.

32, 25-33: The meaning of this mysterious episode is: as Jacob pre pares to meet Esau, he fears that his brother may kill him. Then Jacol will not realize God's promises made to Abraham. The inspired write describes a physical wrestling match between Jacob and the angel synonymously used for God (v. 29). Jacob "triumphs." This is the turning point of Jacob's career. Up to now he relied on human sagacity: henceforth he will rely on divine help. Originally this old folklore spoke of the "genius" who guarded the ford (v. 23b). Our inspired story changed him to an angel of God. The anthropomorphism representing God or His angels overcome by a man is rare in the Bible.

32, 27: The storyteller has Jacob "force" God's blessing once Jacob recognized it was God. This is the symbolic way of saying that Jacob will be victorious in his forthcoming encounter with Esau.

32, 29: Henceforth the chosen people are no longer called Hebrews but Israelites, until only the tribe of Juda remains, after the exile in the sixth century B.C., when they will be called Jews.

32, 30: The being "before and after" refuses to give his name because man could not understand his nature.

32, 31: *Phanuel* means "face of God." The name of the place may be one reason why this story is told.

32, 31b: It is an often repeated biblical notion that one could not see God or His angel without dying. The origin of this belief was in the insignificance of man when compared with God.

32, 32: The limping proved to Jacob the reality of the event.

32, 33: An old dietary law not found elsewhere in the Scriptures.

33

1 ***Meeting of Jacob and Esau*** Jacob looked up and saw
Esau approaching with four hundred men. So he divided the
2 children among Lia, Rachel and the two maids, putting the
maids and their children in front, then Lia and her children,
3 with Rachel and Joseph in the rear. He himself went ahead
of them, bowing to the ground seven times, until he reached his
4 brother. Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, fell on his neck
and kissed him. And they wept.

5 When he looked up and saw the women and the children,
he said, "What relation are they to you?" Jacob answered,
"They are the children whom God has graciously given your
6 servant." Then the maids and their children drew near and
7 bowed down. Lia and her children also drew near, made their
bow, and lastly Joseph and Rachel drew near and bowed.
8 He said, "What do you mean by all this company which
9 I met?" Jacob answered, "To win favor with my lord." Esau
10 said, "I have plenty; keep what is yours, my brother." Jacob
replied, "No, I beg you; if only I find favor with you, accept the
gift from my hand, because I have come before you as before
11 God, and you have received me kindly. I beg you, accept the
gift I have brought you, for God has been good to me, and I
12 have all I need." When he urged him, Esau accepted. | Then
he said, "Let us break camp, and go on; I will march alongside
13 you." But Jacob replied, "My lord can see that the children
are young, and the flocks and herds giving suck are a care to
me; if overdriven for a single day, the whole flock will die.
14 Let my lord go on ahead of his servant and I shall proceed
slowly at the pace of the stock I am driving and the pace of
15 the children, until I come to my lord at Seir." Esau answered,
"Allow me to leave some of my men with you." But he said,
"Why all this trouble for me, my lord?"

16.17 That same day Esau started back on his way to Seir, | while
Jacob went to Socchoth, and built a home for himself and
made sheds for his stock. For this reason he named the place
Socchoth.

18 During his journey from Phaddan-Aram Jacob came safely
to the city of Sichem, in the land of Chanaan, and camped near
19 the city. For the price of one hundred pieces of money he
bought the plot of ground on which he had pitched his tent,

33, 10: A flattering hyperbole which means that his meeting with Esau is as profitable as meeting with God.

33, 12-16: Esau's offer, if accepted, could make Jacob his vassal. Jacob feigns that he will join his brother. Esau settles in Edom, and the account of their rivalries ends.

20 from the sons of Hemor, the father of Sichem. There
erected a memorial pillar and named it "El, God of Israel

34

1 ***Dina Is Violated*** Dina, the daughter whom Lia bore to J
cob, went to present herself among the women of the regio
2 When Sichem, son of Hemor the Hevite, prince of the regio
3 saw her, he took her, and lay with her by force. He became a
tached to Dina, Jacob's daughter, and fell in love with th
4 girl, speaking tenderly to her. Sichem said to his father Hemo
5 "Get me this girl as my wife." Now Jacob heard that Sichem
had defiled his daughter; but his sons were out in the fields wit
his stock, so he held his peace until their return.
6 Hemor, the father of Sichem, came out to Jacob to spea
7 with him. Now Jacob's sons came in from the field as soon a
they heard the news. They were aroused and very angry be
cause Sichem had committed a crime against Israel by lying
8 with Jacob's daughter—an intolerable crime. Hemor said t
them, "My son Sichem has set his heart on your daughter; giv
9 her to him as wife. Intermarry with us; give us you daughter
10 in marriage and marry ours. Live with us, and the land wil
11 be yours; dwell and trade and settle here." Sichem, too, saic
to her father and brothers, "Let me find favor with you;
12 will pay whatever you demand of me. Increase the marriage
price and gifts as you will. I will give you whatever you de
mand of me; only give me the girl as wife."

13 ***Revenge of Jacob's Sons*** The sons of Jacob answered Si-
chem, who had defiled their sister Dina, and his father Hemor
14 and they spoke deceitfully. They said to them, "We cannot do
this: give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised; for to
15 us that would be a disgrace. We will agree to you only on
condition that you become like us, by having every male
16 among you circumcised. Then we will give you our daughters
and take yours; we will live among you and become one peo-
17 ple. But if you refuse to be circumcised, we will take our
daughter and depart."
18.19 Their proposal pleased Hemor and his son Sichem. The
young man carried out the proposal without delay because
he was in love with Jacob's daughter; and he was the most

34, 1-31: Two accounts are woven together in this sordid story of a revenge exceeding the crime. The names represent collectivities, e.g., Sichem, the son, bears the name of the town. The story seems to come from an incident in patriarchal times when some Hebrews unsuccessfully tried to settle around Sichem.

20 distinguished member of his family. So Hemor and his son
Sichem went to the gate of their city and spoke to their fellow
21 citizens. "These men," they said, "are friendly; let them dwell
with us and trade in the land, since there is ample room for
them. Let us marry their daughters and give them our daugh-
22 ters to marry. Only on this condition will the men agree to live
with us and form one people: all the males among us must be
23 circumcised as they are. Will not their stock, their property
and all their beasts be to our advantage? Let us agree with
them, so that they may dwell with us."
24 All their fellow citizens were persuaded by Hemor and his
25 son Sichem, and all the males were circumcised. On the third
day, when they were in pain, the two sons of Jacob, Simeon
and Levi, Dina's brothers, took their swords, advanced boldly
26 against the city and slew all the males. They put Hemor and
his son Sichem to the sword, and took Dina from Sichem's
27 house. Then the sons of Jacob went out, attacked the sick men,
28 and sacked the city, because their sister had been defiled. They
took its flocks, herds and asses, whatever was in the city
29 and in the fields. All its wealth, its women and its children
they carried off; and they looted whatever was in the houses.
30 Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble
on me, making me loathsome to the inhabitants of the land,
the Chanaanites and the Pherezites. I have but few men; if they
unite against me and attack me, my family and I will be de-
31 stroyed." They answered, "Should our sister have been treated
as a harlot?"

35

1 ***Jacob again in Bethel*** God said to Jacob, "Rise and go up
to Bethel. Build there an altar to the God who appeared to
2 you as you fled from your brother Esau." So Jacob said to his
family and to all who were with him, "Do away with the
strange gods you have among you, purify yourselves, and
3 change your garments. Let us be on our way to Bethel, that I
may build an altar there to the God who helped me in my
4 distress and was with me on my journey. They handed over to
Jacob all the strange gods they had, with their earrings; Jacob

34, 20: *Gate of their city:* the favorite part of town for meeting strangers (19, 1), for the gathering of important townspeople and merchants, for discussing all types of affairs, for pleading cases, and for idling away the time.

35, 1-4: Instead of stating that the people fled to escape the revenge of the Sichemites and neighboring Chanaanites, the religious motive of a pilgrimage to Bethel is described.

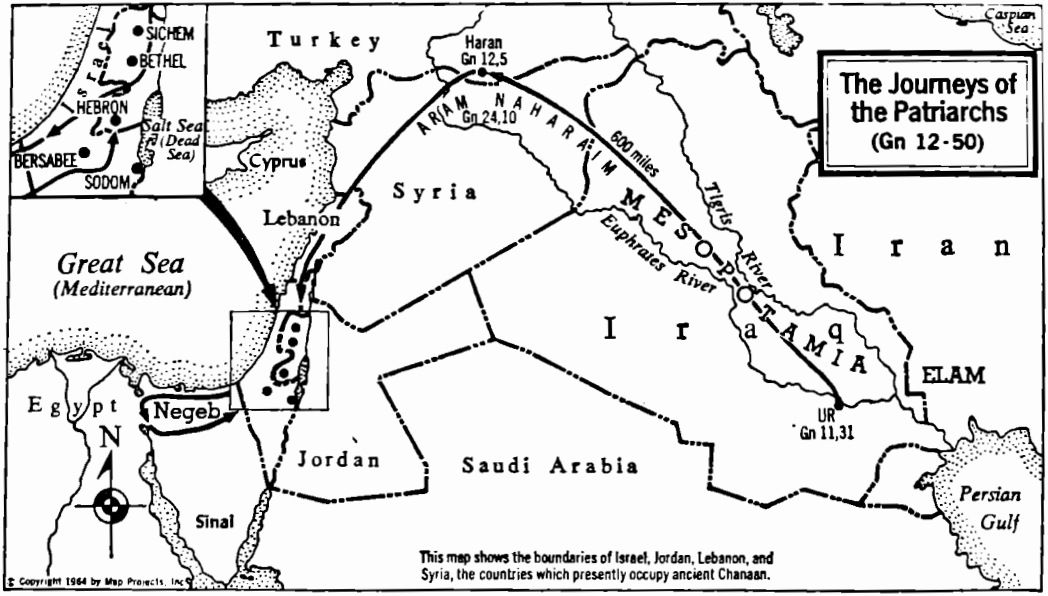
5 buried them under the terebinth near Sichem, | and they d
parted. But a great fear lay upon the cities in the vicinity,
that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.
6 So Jacob and all who were with him came to Luza [no
7 called Bethel] in the land of Chanaan. He built an altar the
and named the place Bethel, because God had appeared
8 him there when he was fleeing from his brother. Debora, R
becca's nurse, died and was buried below Bethel at the foot o
an oak tree, so the place was called Allon-Bachuth.

9 ***God Renews the Promises*** As Jacob returned from Pha
10 dan-Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. Go
said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall you b
called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." Thus he name
11 him Israel. | God said to him, "I am God Almighty. Be frui
ful and multiply; a nation and many nations shall spring fro
12 you; kings shall stem from you. I will give you the land whic
I gave to Abraham and Isaac; this land will I give also to you
13 descendants." Then God departed from him at the place wher
14 he had spoken to him. But Jacob erected a memorial pillar i
the place where God had spoken with him, a pillar of stone
15 and he poured out a libation and oil on it. The place wher
God had spoken to him, Jacob named Bethel.

16 ***Death of Rachel*** They journeyed from Bethel, and wher
they were still a distance from Ephratha, Rachel gave birth to a
17 child amid great pain. While she was in painful labor the mid
wife said to her, "Fear not; for this time also you have a son."
18 As her soul was departing her—for she was at the point of
death—she named him Benoni, but his father called him Ben-
19 jamin. Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephratha,
20 that is, Bethlehem. Jacob erected a memorial over her grave;
and this memorial marks Rachel's grave to this day.

21 ***Jacob's Children*** Israel moved on and pitched his tent be-
22 yond Magdal-eder. While Israel was living in that region, Ru-
ben went and lay with Bala, his father's concubine; and Israel
heard of it. . . .
23 The sons of Jacob were twelve: | the sons of Lia: Ruben,
Jacob's first-born, Simeon, Levi, Juda, Issachar and Zabulon;
24.25 | the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; | the sons of

35, 6: See 28, 19, where Bethel is named and repeated here and in the following v. 15.
35, 10: This is a doublet of 32, 29.


The Journeys of the Patriarchs (Gn 12-50)
Israel
SICHEM
BETHEL
HEBRON
Salt Sea (Dead Sea)
BERSABEE
SODOM
Turkey
Haran Gn 12,5
ARAM NAHARAIM Gn 24,10
600 miles
Cyprus
Syria
Lebanon
Great Sea (Mediterranean)
MESOPOTAMIA
Tigris River
Euphrates River
Iran
Iraq
ELAM
UR Gn 11,31
Egypt
Negeb
N
Jordan
Saudi Arabia
Sinai
Persian Gulf
Caspian Sea
This map shows the boundaries of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, the countries which presently occupy ancient Chanaan.
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26 Bala, Rachel's maid: Dan and Nephthali; | the sons of Zelph
Lia's maid: Gad and Aser. These were the sons of Jacob wl
were born to him in Phaddan-Aram.
27 Jacob went to his father Isaac at Mamre in Cariath-arb
28 that is, Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. Tl
29 lifetime of Isaac was one hundred and eighty years. Isa
breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his kin, a
old man who had lived a full life. His sons Esau and Jacc
buried him.

36

1 ***Résumé of Esau's History*** These are the descendants o
2 Esau, that is, Edom. Esau married the Chanaanite women, Ad
daughter of Elon the Hethite, and Oholibama, daughter o
3 Ana, son of Sebeon the Hevite; also Basemath, daughter o
4 Ismael and sister of Nabaioth. Ada bore Eliphaz to Esau, Base
5 math bore Raguel, | Oholibama bore Jehus, Jelom and Core
These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the lan
of Chanaan.
6 Esau took his wives, sons, daughters, and all the member
of his household, his stock, all his beasts, and all he had ac
quired in the land of Chanaan, and went to the land of Seir
7 out of the way of his brother Jacob; for their possessions were
too great for them to live together, and the land where they
sojourned could not support them because of their stock.
8 Esau settled in the highlands of Seir, that is, Edom.
9 These are the descendants of Esau, father of the Edomites in
the highlands of Seir.
10 These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, son of Ada,
Esau's wife, and Raguel, son of Basemath, the wife of Esau.
11 The sons of Eliphaz were Theman, Omar, Sepho, Gatham and
12 Cenez | [Thamna was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz and
bore Amalec to Eliphaz]; these are the descendants of Ada,
Esau's wife.
13 The sons of Raguel were Nahath, Zara, Samma and Meza.
These are the descendants of Basemath, Esau's wife.
14 The following are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibama, daugh-
ter of Ana, son of Sebeon: she bore Jehus, Jelom and Core to
Esau.
15 These are the chiefs of the descendants of Esau, the sons of
Eliphaz, the first-born of Esau: the chiefs Theman, Omar,

36, 1-43: A collection of traditions without making them agree among themselves or with previously stated traditions. The wives of Esau in vv. 2-3, e.g., do not correspond with those in 26, 34; 28, 9.

16 Sepho, Cenez | [Core], Gatham, Amalec. These are the chiefs
of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; they are the descendants of
Ada.
17 The following are the sons of Raguel, son of Esau: chiefs
Nahath, Zara, Samma, Meza. They are the chiefs of Raguel in
the land of Edom; they are the descendants of Basemath,
Esau's wife.
18 The following are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibama: chiefs
Jehus, Jelom and Core; these are the chiefs of Oholibama,
19 daughter of Ana, wife of Esau. These are the descendants of
Esau, and these are their chiefs. Esau is Edom.
20 The following are the descendants of Seir the Horrite, the
21 aborigines of the land: Lotan, Sobal, Sebeon, Ana, | Dison,
Eser and Disan. These are the chiefs of the Horrites, the de-
22 scendants of Seir in the land of Edom. The sons of Lotan were
23 Hori and Heman; Thamna was the sister of Lotan. The fol-
lowing are the sons of Sobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Sepho
24 and Onam. The following are the sons of Sebeon: Aia and
Ana. He is the Ana who discovered the hot springs in the desert
25 when he was pasturing the asses of his father Sebeon. The fol-
lowing are the children of Ana: Dison, the son of Ana, and
26 Oholibama, his daughter. The following are the sons of Dison:
27 Hamdan, Esban, Jethran and Charan. The following are the
28 sons of Eser: Balaan, Zavan and Acan. The sons of Disan
were Us and Aran.
29 The following are the chiefs of the Horrites: chiefs Lotan,
30 Sobal, Sebeon, Ana, | Dison, Eser, Disan. These are the chiefs
of the Horrites according to their clans in the land of Seir.
31 The kings who reigned in the land of Edom before they
32 had Israelite kings, were the following: Bala, son of Beor,
33 reigned in Edom and the name of his city was Denaba. When
34 Bala died, Jobab son of Zara of Bosra, succeeded him. When
Jobab died, Husam from the land of the Themanites succeeded
35 him. Husam died and Adad, son of Badad, succeeded him.
He overthrew the Madianites in the country of Moab, and the
36 name of his city was Avith. Adad died and Semla of Masreca
37 succeeded him. Semla died and Saul from Rohoboth-Nahar
38 succeeded him. When Saul died, Baalhanan, son of Achobor suc-
39 ceeded him. Baalhanan, son of Achobor, died and Adad suc-
ceeded him. The name of his city was Phau, and his wife's
name was Meetebel. She was the daughter of Matred, who was
the daughter of Mezaab.
40 These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to
their families or their dwelling places, namely: the chiefs of
41.42 Thamna, Alva, Jetheth, | Oholibama, Ela, Phinon, | Cenez,

43 Theman, Mabsar, | Magdiel, Iram. These are the chiefs
Edom, according to their settlements in the land they oc
pied. Esau was the father of the Edomites.

IV. THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH

37

1 ***Early History of Joseph*** Jacob lived in the land of Chana
2 where his father had dwelt as a stranger. This is his family h
tory. When Joseph was seventeen years old, still a mere you
he was pasturing the flock with his brothers, the sons of Ba
and Zelpha, his father's wives, and he brought a bad report
his father concerning them.
3 Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons because he was bo
4 in his old age. He made him a long tunic. | When his brothe
saw that their father loved him best of all his sons, they hat
him and could not even greet him.

5 ***Joseph's Dreams*** Now Joseph had a dream, and when I
6 told it to his brothers, they hated him the more. He said
7 them, "Listen to this dream I had. We were binding sheaves
the field: my sheaf rose up and remained standing, while you
8 sheaves gathered round and bowed down to my sheaf." H
brothers answered, "Are you to be our king? Are you to rul
over us?" And because of his dreams and words they hate
him the more.
9 He had another dream which he also told to his brother
"I had another dream," he said. "The sun, the moon an
10 eleven stars were worshiping me." When he told that t
his father and his brothers, his father reproved him. "Wha
is this dream that you have had?" he said. "Can it be that I an
your mother and your brothers will come to bow to the groun
11 before you?" So his brothers envied him, while his father pon
dered the matter.
12 When his brothers had gone to pasture their father's flock

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37: Chs. 37—50 are a biography of the patriarch Joseph, except fo
chs. 38 and 49.

The religious message is that of divine Providence. Men intend evi
(the killing of Joseph), but God turns it into good (the saving of th
family by Joseph). This Providence is explained in 45, 5-8; 50, 20.

37, 5: The many dreams in the Joseph story represent premonitions
(of the officers, ch. 40; of Pharao, ch. 41), not the divine apparitions
as in 20, 3; 28, 12f; and 31, 11 and 24.

37, 10: *Your mother:* according to another tradition (35, 19) Rachel
is already dead.

14 at Sichem, | Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing the flocks at Sichem; get ready, I will send you to them."
Joseph answered, "I am ready." | "Go then," said Israel, "and
see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks; and
bring back a report to me." So he sent him from the valley of
15 Hebron, and he came to Sichem. A man found Joseph wan-
dering about in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking
16 for?" | I am looking for my brothers," he answered. "Tell me,
17 please, where they are pasturing." The man said, "They have
moved on from here because I heard them say, 'Let us go to
Dothain.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them
18 in Dothain. They saw him in the distance, and before he drew
19 near them, they plotted to kill him. They said to one another,
20 "Here comes that dreamer! | Let us therefore kill him and
throw him into a cistern; we can say that a wild beast de-
voured him. Let us see then what becomes of his dreams."
21 But when Ruben heard of it, he tried to rescue him from
22 them saying, "We must not kill him." Then he continued, "Do
not shed blood. Throw him into the cistern there in the desert,
but do not lay a hand on him." His purpose was to rescue him
from them and restore him to his father.
23 When Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of
24 the long tunic he had on. They seized him and threw him in-
to the cistern, which was empty and dry.

25 *Joseph Sold into Egypt* Then they sat down to eat. Look-
ing up, they saw a caravan of Ismaelites coming from Galaad,
their camels laden with gum, balm, and myrrh, with which they
26 were on their way down to Egypt. Then Juda said to his brothers,
"What is to be gained by killing our brother and concealing his
27 blood? Let us sell him to the Ismaelites, and let us not lay
hands on him; for he is our brother, our own flesh." His
brothers agreed.
28 And when some Madianite traders passed by, they drew
Joseph up out of the cistern; they sold him to the Ismaelites
for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.
29 When Ruben went back to the cistern and saw that Joseph

37, 21-28: According to an eighth century tradition Ruben suggested that Joseph be thrown in a cistern (vv. 21-24). Some Madianite traders rescued him, without the brothers knowing it, and brought him to Egypt (v. 28a). According to a tenth century tradition Juda suggested that Joseph be sold to Ismaelite traders who were journeying to Egypt (vv. 25-27; v. 28b). *Concealing his blood* (v. 27): lest it cry out for vengeance. See 4, 10 n. *Twenty pieces of silver* (v. 28): the value of a boy from five to twenty years of age.

was not in it, he rent his garments, returned to his brothers
30 said, | "The boy is not there; and I, where shall I turn?"
31 Then they took Joseph's tunic and after killing a g
32 dipped the tunic in the blood. They sent someone who brou
the long tunic to their father with the message: "We h
33 found this; see whether it is your son's tunic or not."
recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast
34 devoured him; Joseph has been torn to pieces!" Then Ja
rent his garments, girded himself with sackcloth and mourn
35 his son many days. Though all his sons and daughters tried
comfort him, he refused to be consoled, and said, "I will
down mourning to my son in the nether world." So his fat
36 wept over him. Meanwhile the Madianites sold Joseph in Eg
to one of Pharao's officers, Phutiphar, captain of the guard.

38

1 ***Events from the History of Juda*** About that time Ju
went down from his relatives to tent near an Adullam
2 named Hiras. There Juda saw the daughter of Sue, a Char
3 anite. He married her and had relations with her. She conceiv
4 and bore a son, whom he named Her. Again she conceived a
5 bore a son, whom she named Onan. She bore still another s
and named him Sela; she was at Chezib when she gave bir
6 to him. Juda took a wife named Thamar for his first-born, He
7 But Juda's first-born, Her, was wicked in the sight of the Lor
so the Lord killed him.

8 ***The Sin of Onan*** Then Juda said to Onan, "Go to you
brother's wife, perform your duty as brother-in-law, and rais
9 up descendants for your brother." Onan knew that the descend
ants would not be his own, so whenever he had relations wit
his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground, in orde

38, 1: At an indefinite time in Juda's life, he separated from th
Israelites and married among the Chanaanites west of the Dead Sea.

38, 7: *The Lord killed him:* most probably the writer is expressing th
belief of ancient Israelites that an early death means God's punishmen
for a sin of some kind.

38, 8: Among the ancient Israelites, and other Orientals, the brothe
of a man who died without children had to marry the widow to per
petuate his dead brother's posterity and name. This levirate law wa
later mitigated when codified (Dt 25, 5-10). See Mt 22, 24.

38, 9a: The first born of a levirate marriage was the legal heir of th
dead father's inheritance (Dt 25, 5).

38, 9b-10: God condemns Onan's selfishness, and his sin against the
natural and divine law of marriage. The contraception called onanism
receives its name from Onan. At this undeveloped stage of the moral

10 not to raise up descendants for his brother. What he did was
11 evil in the sight of the Lord, and he killed him also. Then Juda
said to his daughter-in-law Thamar, "Remain a widow in your
father's house until my son Sela grows up"; for Juda feared
that Sela too would die as his brothers had. So she went away
and dwelt in her father's house.
12 After a long time Juda's wife, the daughter of Sue, died. Af-
ter the time of mourning, Juda went to Thamna with his
friend Hiras, the Adullamite, to superintend the shearing of
13 his flock. When Thamar learned her father-in-law was on his
14 way up to Thamna to shear his flock, | she put off her widow's
garments, put on a veil, wrapped herself up and sat at the gate-
way of Enaim on the road to Thamna; for she was aware that
Sela had grown up, yet she had not been given to him in mar-
riage.
15 When Juda saw her, he thought she was a harlot; for she
16 had covered her face. He went over to her at the roadside and
said, "Come, let me have intercourse with you," not knowing
that she was his daughter-in-law. She asked, "What will you
17 give me to have intercourse with me?" | He answered, "I will
send you a kid from the flock." She responded, "Provided you
18 give a pledge until you send it." | Juda said, "What pledge
shall I give you?" She replied, "Your signet and cord, with the
staff that you are carrying." He gave them to her, and had re-
19 lations with her, and she conceived by him. Afterward she
arose and went away. She took off her veil and put on her
widow's garments.
20 When Juda sent the kid by his friend, the Adullamite, to
21 recover the pledge from the woman, he did not find her. So he
asked the men of the place, "Where is the témple-prostitute
who was by the roadside at Enaim?" They answered, "No
temple-prostitute has been here."

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conscience, the people were more horrified at the sin against the family than against purity.

38, 14: *Wrapped herself up:* may mean: put on perfume.

38, 18: *Signet and cord:* an incised cylindrical seal imprinted a man's signature when rolled across a clay tablet. The cylinder was suspended from the neck by a cord which made it handy for immediate use.

38, 19: Thamar was motivated not so much by lust as by a typical savage desire of wanting a child from her defunct husband's line. According to the levirate law, and at the risk of death (v. 24), even though she was wrong in deceiving and seducing, Juda admits her claim (v. 26) and so does posterity (Ru 4, 12).

38, 21: *Temple-prostitute:* this is Chanaanite territory where relations with these women was considered a religious act honoring the goddess of fertility. Juda was moved more by lust than by idolatry.

22 He returned to Juda, saying, "I did not find her; moreo
the men of the place told me, 'No temple-prostitute has b
23 here.' " Juda replied, "Let her keep the things; otherwise
shall be ridiculed. I sent this kid, but you could not find he
24 About three months later Juda was told, "Your daught
in-law, Thamar, has played the harlot and is pregnant as
25 result." Juda said, "Bring her out to be burned." But as s
was being brought, she sent word to her father-in-law, "I a
with child by the man to whom these things belong; look whe
26 signet, cord and staff these are." Juda recognized them a
said, "She is more in the right than I; for I did not give her
my son Sela!" But he had no further relations with her.
27 When the time of her delivery came, there were twins in h
28 womb. During the delivery one put out a hand. The midwi
took a scarlet thread, tied it on his hand and said, "This one
29 born first." But as he drew back his hand, his brother w
born. Then the woman said, "How have you made your wa
30 forth?" For this reason he was called Phares. Afterward h
brother with the scarlet thread on his hand was born, and h
was named Zara.

39

1 ***Joseph's Virtue in Temptation*** When Joseph was take
down to Egypt, Phutiphar, an Egyptian, one of Pharao's of
ficers, the captain of his bodyguard, bought him from th
2 Ismaelites who had taken him down there. The Lord was with
Joseph so that he was successful. He lived in the house of hi
3 master, the Egyptian. When his master saw that the Lord wa
4 with him and prospered all his undertakings, | Joseph found
favor with him and became his attendant. He placed him in
charge of his household, and entrusted all his property to him
5 From the time he placed him in charge of his household and
over all his property, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house on
account of Joseph. The Lord's blessing rested on everything
6 that was his, in house and field. He left everything he had in
Joseph's charge, and having him, was concerned about nothing
except the food he ate.
7 Now Joseph was well formed and handsome. | Some time
afterward, the wife of his master cast her eyes on Joseph and
8 said, "Lie with me." But he refused, saying, "Because of me, my

38, 24: *To be burned:* the penalty was later changed to stoning (Dt 22, 23f; Jn 8, 5) except for daughters of priests (Lv 21, 9).

38, 29-30: *Phares . . . Zara:* Thamar and her two sons are listed as ancestors of Christ (Mt 1, 3; see Lk 3, 33).

master is not concerned about anything in the house, but has
9 put all that he owns in my care. He exercises no greater au-
thority in this house than I, nor has he withheld a single thing
from me, except yourself, because you are his wife. How then
10 can I commit this great crime, and sin against God?" She urged
Joseph day after day, but he would not consent to lie with her,
11 or to be with her. On one such day, Joseph went into the house
to do his work, while none of the household servants was at
12 hand. She seized him by his garment and said, "Lie with me."
But Joseph left his garment in her hand, and fled outdoors.

13 ***Joseph Cast into Prison*** When she saw that he had left
14 his cloak in her hand and had fled outside, she summoned the
servants of her house and said to them, "Look! My husband has
brought in a Hebrew to us to insult us. He came in to lie with
15 me but I screamed. When he heard me raise my voice and call
16 out, he left his garment beside me, and fled outdoors." She kept
17 the garment beside her until his master came home; | then she
told him the same story: "The Hebrew slave whom you brought
18 to us came in to insult me, | but when I raised my voice and
called out, he left his garment beside me and fled outside."
19 When the master heard his wife's story about how his slave had
20 treated her, he became angry. Then Joseph's master took him
and committed him to the prison where the king's prisoners
were kept; so he remained there in prison.

21 ***Joseph Put in Charge of the Prison*** But the Lord was
with Joseph. He showed kindness to him and gave him favor
22 with the warden, | who put him in charge of all prisoners; and
everything that was done there was done under his manage-
23 ment. The warden did not concern himself with anything in
Joseph's charge because the Lord was with him and prospered
all that he did.

40

1 ***Joseph Interprets Two Dreams*** Some time after this the
royal butler and baker both offended their lord, the king of
2 Egypt; and Pharao became angry with his two officials, the
3 chief butler and the chief baker, and had them put in custody
in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where

39, 12: Joseph, a model of purity in face of trial, is a theme common to popular literature.

39, 23: A constant theme in the story is that God blesses all those who love Joseph.

4 Joseph was confined. The captain of the guard assigned Jose
to them and he became their attendant. They remained
custody for some time.
5 On one and the same night, the royal butler and baker
Egypt, confined in prison, each had a dream of peculiar s
6 nificance to himself. When Joseph came to them in the morni
7 he saw they were disturbed; | so he asked Pharao's officials,
custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look s
8 today?" They answered him, "We each had a dream, but th
is no one to interpret them." Joseph said to them, "Does r
interpretation belong to God? Tell them to me, please."
9 So the chief butler told Joseph his dream. "In my drean
10 he said, "there was a vine in front of me. | Three branc
were on the vine. It budded and blossomed, and its clusters
11 pened into grapes. Pharao's cup was in my hand and I took t
grapes, squeezed them into his cup, and placed it in his hand
12 Joseph said to him, "This is its meaning: the three branches a
13 three days. Within three days Pharao will take up your case a
restore you to your office. You will present Pharao's cup
14 him as formerly, when you were his butler. So if you think
me when good fortune comes to you, do me the favor of me
15 tioning me to Pharao, and get me out of this house. I was ki
naped from the land of the Hebrews, and here I have dor
nothing for which I should have been put into a dungeon
16 When the chief baker saw that he had given a favorab
interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream: I ha
17 three wicker baskets on my head. In the top basket was ever
kind of baked food for Pharao, but the birds were eatin
18 it out of the basket on my head." Joseph answered, "This is it
19 meaning: the three baskets are three days. Within three day
Pharao will take up your case and hang you on a gibbet; an
the birds will eat the flesh off your body."
20 On the third day, which was Pharao's birthday, he made
feast for all his courtiers, and in their presence took up th
21 cases of the chief butler and the chief baker. He reinstated th
chief butler in his office of presenting the cup into his hand
22 but the chief baker he hanged, as Joseph had interpreted t
23 them. The chief butler did not think of Joseph, but forgot him

41

1 ***Pharao's Dreams*** Two full years afterward, Pharao had
2 dream. He was standing by the Nile. Seven cows, sleek and fat
came up out of the Nile and were browsing in the reed grass

40, 22: Joseph's interpretations are riddled with puns which are lost

3 After them, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of
4 the Nile, and stood beside those on the bank of the Nile. The
ugly, thin cows devoured the seven sleek, fat ones. Then
5 Pharao awoke. | But he fell asleep again and had another
dream. Seven ears of grain, fat and fine, were growing on a
6 single stalk. After them sprouted seven other ears, thin and
7 blasted by the east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the seven
fat, full ears. Then Pharao awoke to find it was a dream.
8 When morning came he was troubled; so he summoned all
the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharao related his dream
to them, but there was no one who could interpret it for him.
9 Then the chief butler said to Pharao, "Today I must recall my
10 offenses. When Pharao was angry with his servants, and put
me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of
11 the guard, on the one same night he and I each had a dream of
12 peculiar significance to himself. A Hebrew youth was there with
us, a slave of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams
and he interpreted them for us. He gave each the proper inter-
13 pretation of his dream; and it turned out just as he had in-
terpreted to us: I was reinstated in my office, but the other was
hanged."

14 ***Joseph Interprets the Dreams*** Then Pharao sent for Jo-
seph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon. After
he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came into Pharao's
15 presence. Pharao said to Joseph, "I had a dream which no one
can interpret; but I have heard it said of you that you know how
16 to interpret a dream." Joseph answered Pharao, "Who but God
17 shall give Pharao a favorable response!" Then Pharao said to
Joseph, "I dreamed I was standing on the bank of the Nile, |
18 when seven cows, fat and sleek, came out of the Nile, and were
19 browsing in the reed grass. After them, seven other cows came
up, lean, very ugly and scrawny. I have never seen such poor
20 cows as these in all the land of Egypt. The scrawny, ugly cows
21 devoured the first seven fat cows. But when they had consumed
them, it was not apparent that they had done so, because they
22 were as ugly as before. Then I awoke. | Again I dreamed I
saw seven ears of grain, full and fine, growing on a single stalk.
23 After them sprouted seven withered, thin ears, blasted by the
24 east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the seven fine ears. I
told the magicians, but no one could explain it to me."

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in English. A recently discovered Egyptian papyrus exemplifies this type of interpretation.

41, 17: The long repetitions are a clue to a previous stage when this story was told orally.

25 Joseph said to Pharao: "Pharao's dream is but one. God
26 has revealed to Pharao what he is about to do. | The seven fine
cows are seven years, and the seven fine ears are seven years;
27 it is but one dream. The seven thin, ugly cows which came up
after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted
by the east wind are seven years. There will be seven years of
28 famine. It is as I told Pharao: God has revealed to Pharao what
29 he is about to do. Seven years of great plenty will come through
30 the land of Egypt, but there will follow seven years of famine,
and then all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt.
31 The famine will devastate the land, and the plenty will not be
discernible in the land, because of the famine which is to fol-
32 low; for it will be very severe. The reason the dream was sent
twice to Pharao is that the matter is determined by God, and
33 God will soon bring it about. Let Pharao select an intelligent
and prudent man, and give him charge of the land of Egypt.
34 Let Pharao take action, appoint officials over the land, and
prepare the land of Egypt through the seven years of plenty.
35 And let them collect all the food of these good years to come,
and store up under the authority of Pharao food in the cities,
36 and preserve it. The food shall be a reserve for the land against
the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt,
so that the land will not perish by the famine."

37 ***Joseph Is Exalted*** The advice pleased Pharao and all his
38 courtiers; | so Pharao said to his court, "Can we find another
39 like him in whom is the spirit of God?" Then Pharao said to
Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no
40 one as intelligent and prudent as you; you shall be in charge
of my palace and all my people shall obey your commands;
only as regards the royal throne will I be greater than you."
41 Pharao continued, "I give you charge of the whole land of
42 Egypt." Taking the signet-ring from his own hand, he put it on
Joseph's. He dressed him in linen robes, and put a chain of
43 gold around his neck. | He had him ride in his second chariot.
And they cried out before him, "Bow down." In this way he
44 put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Pharao said to
Joseph, "I am Pharao; without your command, no one shall
move hand or foot in the whole land of Egypt."
45 Then Pharao changed Joseph's name to Saphaneth-phanee,
and gave to him in marriage Aseneth, daughter of Phutiphare,
the priest of On. [Joseph made a tour of the land of Egypt.]
46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of

41, 45: *Priest of On:* i.e., of Heliopolis, a holy city of the sun god.

Pharao, king of Egypt. He left Pharao and traversed the whole land of Egypt.

47 ***The Years of Plenty and of Famine*** During the seven
48 years of plenty the land produced abundant crops. So he collected all the food of the seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt, and stored it in the cities, placing in each city the food
49 from the neighboring fields. Joseph heaped up grain in great quantities like the sands of the sea until he ceased measuring it, for it could not be measured.

50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Aseneth, daughter of Phutiphare, the priest of On.
51 Joseph named the first-born Manasse; "Because," he said, "God has made me forget entirely my sufferings and my family."
52 He named the second one Ephraim and said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

53 When the seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt had
54 passed, | the seven years of famine began, as Joseph had foretold. There was famine in all other countries, while in all Egypt
55 there was food. But when the whole land of Egypt also was famished, the people cried to Pharao for food. Pharao said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."
56 When the famine had spread throughout the land, Joseph opened all the store-houses and sold grain to the Egyptians;
57 for the famine gripped the land of Egypt. And all peoples came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, for the famine was grievous everywhere.

42

1 ***First Visit of Joseph's Brothers*** When Jacob learned that
2 there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, | "Why do you look at one another? I have heard there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, that we may live
3 and not perish." So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy
4 grain in Egypt; but Benjamin, Joseph's full brother, Jacob did not send with his brothers, for he thought some harm might
5 befall him. Thus the sons of Israel went with the other purchasers, because of the famine in the land of Chanaan.

6 Now Joseph was the governor of the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the land. Joseph's brothers also came
7 and prostrated themselves before him. Though Joseph saw his brothers, and recognized them, he acted as a stranger toward

41, 54: Egypt's proverbial fertility and wealth made it the "America of antiquity," but even Egypt suffered from famine at times.

them and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?
he asked. They replied, "From the land of Chanaan, to bu
food."
8 Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not recognize hin
9 Remembering the dreams he had once had about them, he saic
"You are spies; you have come to discover the weak spots o
10 the land." But they said to him, "No, my lord; your servant
11 have come to buy food. We are all sons of the same man. W
12 are honest; your servants are not spies." But he said to them
"Not so, but you have come to discover the weak spots of th
13 country." They replied, "We, your servants, were twelve broth
ers, the sons of the same man in the land of Chanaan. The
youngest is at present with our father; another is no more."
14.15 As for my saying you are spies," Joseph rejoined, | "this shall
be your test: as Pharao lives, you shall not leave this place until
16 your youngest brother comes here! Send one of your number to
bring your brother while you others remain in bonds. Thus
shall your statements be tested for their truth; if they are
17 untrue, as Pharao lives, you are spies!" Then he consigned them
to custody for three days.

18 ***Simeon Kept as Hostage*** On the third day Joseph said to
them, "If you do this, you shall live. I am a God-fearing man.
19 If you are honest, let one of your brothers remain confined in
your prison, while the rest go and carry food for the needs of
20 your families. You shall bring me your youngest brother. Thus
your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they
21 agreed. | They said to one another. "Alas! we are guilty re-
garding our brother, whose anguish of heart we witnessed.
When he pleaded with us we did not heed; therefore this
22 anguish has come upon us." Ruben remarked, "Did I not say
to you, 'Do not sin against the boy'? But you would not listen.
23 Now comes the reckoning for his blood!" They did not know
that Joseph understood them, for an interpreter was employed.
24 Then Joseph withdrew from them and wept. When he returned
he spoke with them; and taking Simeon from them, he bound
him before their eyes.
25 When their bags were filled with grain, Joseph gave orders
to put back every man's money in his sack, and to give them
26 provisions for the journey. After this was done for them, | they
27 loaded their asses with their grain, and departed. At the
stopping-place, when one of them opened his sack to give fod-
der to his ass, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack, and
28 said to his brothers, | "My money has been returned! Here it is

in my sack!" Mystified, they turned to one another trembling and said, "What has God done to us!"

29 When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Chanaan,
30 they told him all that had happened to them. "The man who is lord of the land," they said, "spoke harshly to us and regarded
31 us as spies of the country. But we said to him, 'We are honest
32 men, not spies; | we were twelve brothers, sons of the same father. One is no more, and the youngest is at present with our
33 father in the land of Chanaan.' Then this man who is lord of the land said to us, 'Hereby I shall know whether you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, take grain for the
34 needs of your families, and go your way. Bring your youngest brother to me, that I may know you are not spies but honest men. Then I will restore your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.' "

35 ***Jacob's Grief*** When they were emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his own purse! At the sight of their
36 purses, they and their father were dismayed. Their father, Jacob, said to them, "It is I whom you bereave. Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin.
37 It is I upon whom all this falls!" | Ruben said to his father, "Put him in my charge and I will bring him back to you. You
38 may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you." But Jacob said, "My son shall not go down with you. His brother is dead, and he alone remains. If any harm should befall him on the journey you must make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

43

1.2 Now the famine in the land was severe, so when they had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said
3 to them, "Go back and buy us some food." But Juda answered, "The man strictly warned us, 'You shall not appear in my
4 presence unless your brother is with you.' If you will let our brother accompany us, we will go down to buy food for you.
5 But if you do not let him, we will not go, because the man said to us, 'You shall not appear in my presence unless your
6 brother is with you.' " Israel replied, "Why did you wrong me
7 by telling the man you had another brother?" They answered, "The man questioned us in detail about ourselves and our

42, 38b: A common belief was that one's disposition in the afterlife would be just as it was at the moment of death. Jacob would be in perpetual mourning. See 37, 35.

family: 'Is your father still living? Have you another brother
What we told him was in response to these questions. Cou
we possibly know that he would say, 'Bring your broth
down'?"

8 Then Juda said to his father Israel, "Let the boy go wit
me, that we may begin our journey and save from death bot
9 you and ourselves, as well as our children. I will be surety fo
him. Hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back t
you and place him before you, I shall be guilty of a crim
10 against you all my life. Had we not delayed, we could by no
11 have made the journey twice." Their father Israel said to them
"If it must be so, then do this: take some of the country's bes
products in your bags and bring them down to the man for
gift: some balsam, syrup, gum, laudanum, pistachio nuts an
12 almonds. Also take double the money along; for you must re
turn the money placed in the mouths of your sacks, in case
13 mistake was made. Take your brother too, and go back to the
14 man. May Almighty God give you favor with the man so tha
he will release to you your other brother as well as Benjamin
As for me, if I must be bereft, let me be bereft."

15 ***Second Visit to Egypt*** So the men took their gift, and
taking double the money with them, they went with Benjamin
16 to Egypt and came before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin
with them, he said to his steward, "Bring the men into the
house, and have an animal slaughtered and made ready, for
17 the men are to dine with me at noon." He did as Joseph
18 ordered, bringing the men to Joseph's house. They became
frightened on being led to Joseph's house, and said, "It is on
account of the money put back in our sacks the first time
that we are brought in, so that he may seek an excuse to
19 enslave us by treachery, and take our asses." So they went
to Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the entrance of
20 the house. "If you please, sir," they said, "once before we came
21 down to buy food; but when we reached the stopping-place
and opened our sacks, there in the mouth of his sack was each
one's money in full. But we have brought it back with us,
22 and also other money to buy food. We do not know who put
23 the money in our sacks." "Be calm," he replied; "have no fear.
Your God, the God of your father, put treasure in your sacks
for you. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out
to them.

24 ***Joseph's Brothers Dine with Him*** The man brought them
into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet,

25 and fodder for their asses. Then they set out the present for
Joseph's arrival at noon; for they had heard that they were to
dine there.
26 When Joseph came home, they presented him with the gift
they had with them in the house, and prostrated themselves
27 before him. He inquired about their health, and said, "Is your
father, the old man of whom you spoke, in good health? Is he
28 still living?" | "Your servant, our father, is well; he is still
29 living," they said, bowing low to him. Then Joseph looked up
and saw his brother Benjamin, the son of his own mother, and
said, "So this is your youngest brother of whom you spoke to
30 me? God be gracious to you, my son," he continued. Thereupon
Joseph broke off and was on the verge of tears, for his heart
yearned for his brother. He retired to his room and wept.
31 Then he bathed his face and came out. Restraining himself,
32 he said, "Serve the meal." It was served separately for him, for
them, and for his Egyptian guests, because the Egyptians may
not eat with the Hebrews; this is abhorrent to the Egyptians.
33 They were seated in his presence in the order of age, from the
oldest to the youngest; and at this they looked at one another
34 in amazement. Joseph had portions brought to them from his
own table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as
any other's. They drank and became merry with him.

44

1 ***The Cup Found in Benjamin's Sack*** Joseph gave orders
to his steward, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with as much
food as they will hold, and put each one's money in the mouth
2 of his sack; but in that of the youngest put my cup, the silver
3 cup, together with his money for the grain." The steward car-
ried out Joseph's instructions. At daybreak the men were sent
4 off together with their asses. They had not gone far out of the
city when Joseph said to his steward, "Go, follow the men,
and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you
5 returned evil for good? | Why have you stolen the silver cup
from me? It is the very one from which my master drinks. He
will certainly guess where it is. This is an evil thing that you
have done.' "
6,7 When he overtook them he repeated these words; but they
replied, "Why does my lord speak this way? Far be it from
8 your servants to do such a thing! We even brought back to you
from the land of Chanaan the money we found in the mouths
of our sacks. Would we then steal silver or gold from your
9 master's house? If it is found with any one of us, he shall die,
10 and we will be my lord's slaves." He replied, "Though it ought

to be as you suggest, the one with whom it is found shall be m
slave; and the rest of you shall go free."
11 Then each one of them quickly lowered his sack to the groun
12 and opened it. A search was made beginning with the oldes
and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Ben
13 jamin's sack. Then they tore their garments, and having re
14 loaded the asses, returned to the city. Juda and his brother
arrived at Joseph's house while he was still there, so they fel
15 to the ground before him. Joseph said to them, "What is thi
you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I would
guess correctly?"
16 Juda replied, "What can we say to my lord? How can we
explain matters so as to clear ourselves? God has discovered the
guilt of your servants. We are indeed the slaves of my lord,
17 both we and the one with whom the cup was found." "Far be
it from me to act thus," said Joseph. "The one with whom the
cup was found shall be my slave; as for the rest, go in peace to
your father."
18 Then Juda approached him and said, "I beg you, my lord,
let your servants speak to my lord, and let not your anger
be aroused against your servants; you are as Pharao him-
19 self. My lord asked his servants, 'Have you a father or a
20 brother?' And we answered my lord, 'We have an aged father,
and a young brother, a child of his old age; his brother is
dead, so that he is the only one left of his mother's children,
21 and his father loves him.' Then you said to your servants, 'Bring
22 him to me that I may look after him.' We told my lord, 'The
boy cannot leave his father; his father would die if he were to
23 leave him.' But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest
brother comes with you, you shall not come into my presence
24 again.' When we returned to your servant, my father, we re-
25 ported to him the words of my lord. Later our father said, 'Go
26 back and buy some food for us.' But we answered, 'We cannot
go. If our youngest brother is with us, we will go down; for we
may not see the man unless our youngest brother is with us.'
27 Then your servant, my father, said to us, 'You know that my
28 wife bore me two sons; | one is gone from me, and I said: He
29 has surely been torn to pieces; I have not seen him since. If
you take this one also from me, and some harm befalls him, you

44, 13: *Tore their garments:* a gesture of grief.
44, 16: *God has discovered the guilt of your servants:* according to the mentality of the times, this misfortune happened because they were in a state of sin. They are not thinking of the sin of having sold their brother.

30 will bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave.' Now
if I go to your servant, my father, and the boy is not with us—
his life is so bound up with the life of the boy—he will die as
31 soon as he sees that the boy is not with us; and your servants
will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our father, in
32 sorrow to the grave. However, your servant became surety for
the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you,
33 I will be guilty of a crime against you all my life.' Therefore,
let your servant remain in place of the boy as a slave of my lord,
34 but let the boy return with his brothers. How can I return to
my father without the boy? Never could I witness the anguish
that would come to my father!"

45

1 ***Joseph Makes Himself Known*** Joseph could not control
himself before all his attendants, so he exclaimed, "Let everyone
withdraw from me." No one was with Joseph when he made
2 himself known to his brothers. He wept aloud so that the Egyp-
3 tians heard it, and the household of Pharao heard it. | Joseph
said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?"
But his brothers could not answer him because they were terri-
4 fied in his presence. Then he said to them, "Come closer to me."
When they drew near, he continued, "I am your brother Joseph,
5 whom you sold into Egypt. Do not be distressed nor angry
with yourselves that you sold me here; for God sent me before
6 you to save life. For two years now the famine has been in the
land, and for five more years there will be neither plowing nor
7 reaping. God sent me before you to preserve a remnant for you
8 in the land, and to deliver you in a striking way. Not you but
God sent me here, and made me a father to Pharao, lord of all
his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

9 ***Joseph's Message to Jacob*** "Go quickly to my father and
say to him, 'Your son Joseph sends you this message: God has
made me master of all Egypt; come down to me, and do not
10 delay. You shall live in the land of Gesen and be near me, you,
your sons, your grandsons, your flocks, your herds, and all
11 that belongs to you. Five years of famine are still to come. I will
provide for you there, that you, and your household, and all
12 who belong to you may not be impoverished.' You yourselves
see, and my brother Benjamin sees, that it is I who speak to you.
13 Tell my father of my splendor in Egypt, and of all that you
14 have seen. Hurry now and bring my father here." | Then

45, 5-8: See 37 n.

Joseph fell on the neck of his brother Benjamin and wept; ar
15 Benjamin wept on his neck. Joseph kissed all his brother
weeping over each, and after that his brothers conversed wi
him.
16 When the news was received at Pharao's house that Joseph
brothers had arrived, Pharao and his court were please
17 Pharao said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: loa
18 your animals, be off to the land of Chanaan; | then come to m
with your father and your families, and I will give you the be
of the land of Egypt so that you shall eat the fat of the land
19 Give them this command also: 'Take carts from the land o
Egypt for your little ones and your wives. Bring your fathe
20 and come. | Do not be concerned about your goods, for th
best of the whole land of Egypt is yours.' "
21 The sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts as Pharao
22 had commanded, and provisions for the journey. He gave each
of them one festal garment, but to Benjamin he gave three
23 hundred pieces of silver and five festal garments. Likewise to
his father he sent ten asses loaded with the good things of
Egypt, and ten she-asses loaded with grain, bread and provi-
24 sions for his father on the journey. Then he sent his brothers on
their way; and as they departed he said to them, "Do not
25 quarrel on the way." So they went up from Egypt and came to
26 their father Jacob in the land of Chanaan. They told him, "Jo-
seph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt."
27 But he was unmoved because he did not believe them. However,
when they related to him all that Joseph had said to them, and
when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to convey him, their fa-
28 ther Jacob revived. | "It is enough," said Israel. "My son Joseph
is still alive; I will go and see him before I die."

46

1 ***Jacob Goes to Egypt*** Israel set out with all that belonged
to him; and when he arrived at Bersabee he offered sacrifices
2 to the God of his father Isaac. At night in a vision God said to
3 Israel, "Jacob, Jacob." And he answered, "Here I am." | Then
he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not fear to go
4 down to Egypt, for there I will make you a great people. I will
go down to Egypt with you, and will surely bring you up again,
after Joseph's hand has closed your eyes."
5 Jacob departed from Bersabee. The sons of Israel conveyed
their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives in the carts
6 Pharao had sent to transport him. They also took their stock
and the goods they had got in the land of Chanaan; and Jacob
7 and all his descendants migrated to Egypt. With him were his

sons and grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters; with
all his descendants Jacob migrated to Egypt.
8 These are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his descend-
9 ants, who migrated to Egypt: Ruben, Jacob's first-born, | and
10 the sons of Ruben: Henoch, Phallu, Hesron and Charmi; | the
sons of Simeon: Jamuel, Jamin, Ahod, Jachin, Sohar and Saul,
11 the son of a Chanaanite woman; | the sons of Levi: Gerson,
12 Caath and Merari; | the sons of Juda: Her, Onan, Sela, Phares
and Zara, of whom Her and Onan, however, died in the land
of Chanaan; and the sons of Phares were Hesron and
13 Hamul. The sons of Issachar: Thola, Phua, Jasub and Semron;
14.15 | the sons of Zabulon: Sared, Elon and Jahelel. These are the
sons whom Lia bore to Jacob in Phaddan-Aram, together with
his daughter Dina. The total number of these descendants, male
and female, was thirty-three.
16 The sons of Gad: Sephon, Haggi, Suni, Esebon, Heri, Arodi
17 and Ariel. The sons of Aser: Jemna, Jesua, Jesui and Baria,
with their sister Sara; and Baria's sons were Heber and
18 Melchiel. These are the descendants of Zelpha, whom Laban
gave to his daughter Lia; these she bore to Jacob, sixteen per-
sons in all.
19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.
20 Sons were born to Joseph in the land of Egypt, Manasse and
Ephraim, whom Aseneth, the daughter of Phutiphare, the priest
21 of On, bore to him. The sons of Benjamin: Bala, Bechor, Asbel,
22 Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Ros, Mopphim, Hopphim and Ared. These
are the descendants of Rachel who were born to Jacob, fourteen
persons in all.
23.24 The son of Dan: Husim. The sons of Nęphthali: Jaseel,
25 Guni, Jeser and Sellum. These were the descendants of Bala,
whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel; these she bore to
Jacob, seven persons in all.
26 The total number of persons belonging to Jacob (except his
sons' wives) who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, was
27 sixty-six. The sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt
were two; the total number of Jacob's household who migrated
to Egypt was seventy.

28 ***Meeting of Jacob and Joseph*** Israel sent Juda ahead of
him to Joseph, so that he would meet him in Gesen. On their
29 arrival in the land of Gesen, | Joseph made ready his chariot

46, 8ff: This is not a list of those who actually came down to Egypt with Jacob because, e.g., the sons of Juda—Her and Onan in v. 12—had already died. This list draws from older lists, especially Nm 26.

and rode to meet his father Israel in Gesen. When he met hi
30 he fell on his neck, weeping long in his arms. Israel said to J
seph, "Now I can die, after seeing you still alive."
31 Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, '
shall go and inform Pharao, and say to him, 'My brothers an
my father's household, who lived in the land of Chanaan, hav
32 come to me. The men are shepherds, for they breed livestocl
They have brought their flocks and herds and all their po
33 sessions.' Accordingly, when he summons you and asks, 'Wh
34 is your occupation?' | you must answer, 'We your servant
have bred livestock from our youth until now, both we an
our ancestors,' in order that you may sojourn in the land o
Gesen." For shepherds are all repugnant to the Egyptians.

47

1 ***Settlement in Gesen*** Joseph came and told Pharao, "M
father and brothers have come from the land of Chanaan with
their flocks and herds and all their possessions, and they ar
2 now in the land of Gesen." He had selected five of his brothers
3 whom he presented to Pharao. When Pharao asked them
"What is your occupation?" they answered, "Your servants,
4 both we and our ancestors, are shepherds. We have come to
sojourn in your land, for there is no pasture for your servants'
flocks, and the famine is severe in the land of Chanaan. Permit
5 your servants to settle in the land of Gesen." Pharao said to
6 Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The
land of Egypt is at your disposal. Settle your father and your
brothers in the choicest section of the land. Let them live in the
land of Gesen, and if you know of any able men among them,
place them in charge of my own stock."
7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob, and presented him to
8 Pharao. Jacob greeted Pharao, | who said to him, "How old
9 are you?" | Jacob answered Pharao, "The length of my pilgrim
age has been one hundred and thirty years; short and wretched
has been my life, nor does it compare with the years my
10 fathers lived during their pilgrimage." Then Jacob bade Pharao
good-by and left his presence.
11 Joseph settled his father and brothers in the land of Egypt,
giving them property in the choicest section of the land, in the
12 district of Rameses, as Pharao had ordered. Joseph provided
his father and brothers and all his father's household with
13 food, according to the number of their dependents. There was
no food in the entire land, for the famine was very severe;

47, 11: *Rameses:* this name originated at a later date.

Egypt and Chanaan were languishing because of the famine.
14 Joseph collected all the money he found in Egypt and in
Chanaan as payment for the grain that was bought, and he
brought it to Pharao's palace.

15 *The People Become Slaves* When there was no more
money in Egypt and Chanaan, all the Egyptians came to Jo-
seph clamoring, "Give us food lest we die in your presence;
16 we have no money." Joseph replied, "If you have no money
bring me your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange
17 for it." So they brought their stock to Joseph, who bartered
18 food for horses, flocks, herds and asses. The year ended, and
they came again the next year and said: "We cannot hide from
my lord that our money is gone, and our livestock has come
into the possession of my lord. There is nothing left for my
19 lord but our bodies and our land. Why should we and our land
perish before your eyes? Buy us and our land in exchange for
food, and we and our land will be the property of Pharao. Give
us seed that we may live and not perish, and the land may
not become a waste."
20 Joseph therefore bought all the land of Egypt for Pharao, for
everyone of the Egyptians sold his field because the famine was
21 unbearable for them. Thus the land became Pharao's, | and
from one end of Egypt to the other Joseph made the people
22 slaves. But the priests' lands he did not buy, because they had a
stated allowance from Pharao, and lived on the allowance
which Pharao granted them. Therefore they did not sell their
land.
23 Joseph said to the people: "Today, indeed, I have bought
you and your land for Pharao. Here is your seed to sow the
24 land. Of the produce you must give a fifth part of the crops to
Pharao; four fifths are for yourselves for seeding and for food
25 for yourselves, your families and your dependents." They an-
swered, "You have kept us alive; let us win the favor of my
26 lord, and we will be slaves of Pharao." So Joseph made it an
ordinance for the land of Egypt, which holds to this day, that
one fifth is Pharao's. Only the land of the priests did not become
Pharao's.

27 *Jacob's Death Approaches* Now Israel dwelt in Egypt, in

47, 15-26: This tradition attributes the nationalized economy of Egypt to Joseph. We may think Joseph was a tyrant but the freedom-loving nomadic Israelites telling the story see humor in their Joseph being responsible for the Egyptian slave state.

the land of Gesen. They acquired property there, were fruitf
28 and became very numerous. Jacob lived seventeen years in
land of Egypt, and the length of his life was one hundred a
29 forty-seven years. As the time approached for Israel to die,
summoned his son Joseph and said to him, "If I find favor w
you, put your hand under my thigh, and act kindly and fai
30 fully toward me. Do not bury me in Egypt, | but let me r
with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in th
31 sepulcher." He answered, "I will do as you say." Then Jac
said, "Swear to me"; and Joseph swore to him. Then Isr
bowed toward the head of the bed.

48

1 ***Jacob Adopts Joseph's Sons*** After these events it was r
ported to Joseph, "Your father is ill." So he came to see Jaco
2 bringing along his two sons, Manasse and Ephraim. Whe
Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to see you," Isra
3 rallied his strength and sat up in bed. Jacob said to Josep
"God Almighty appeared to me at Luza in the land of Chanaa
4 He blessed me | and said, 'I will make you fruitful and nume
ous; I will make you many nations, and I will give this land t
5 your descendants after you as a possession for all time.' Ther
fore I adopt your two sons who were born to you in the lan
of Egypt before I joined you here. Ephraim and Manasse sha
6 be mine even as Ruben and Simeon. The children born to yo
after them shall be yours, and they shall be named after thei
7 brothers and included in their inheritance. And as for me, whe
I was returning from Phaddan, to my sorrow Rachel die
during the journey in the land of Chanaan, a short distanc
from the environs of Ephratha. And I buried her there on th
road to Ephratha, that is, Bethlehem."
8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons and asked, "Who are these?"
9 | Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God ha
given me here." Then he said, "Bring them to me that I may
10 bless them." Now Israel's eyes were dim from old age so that h
could not see. Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed and
11 embraced them. Then Israel said to Joseph, "I had no hope o

47, 29: *Under my thigh:* see 24, 2 n.

47, 31: *Toward the head of the bed:* in an act of thanksgiving.

48, 1-22: The repetitions and abrupt breaks in this chapter indicate that this is a small mosaic of several different traditions. They want to explain why Joseph's two sons became fathers of two tribes thus acquiring the same dignity as Jacob's other sons, and why Ephraim surpassed Manasse in becoming the most important northern tribe.

48, 7: *Phaddan:* see 25, 20 n.

ever seeing you, and now God has allowed me to see your children as well."

Joseph took them away from his knees, and prostrated himself before him with his face to the ground. Afterward Joseph took the two of them, Ephraim on his right at Israel's left, Manasse on his left at Israel's right, and led them to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand and placed it on the head of Ephraim, though he was the younger, and his left hand on Manasse's head—thus crossing his hands—although Manasse was the first-born. Blessing Joseph, he said, "May the God in whose presence my fathers Abraham and Isaac lived, the God who had been my shepherd all my life until this day, | the angel who has delivered me from all evil, bless the boys; that my name and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac be preserved through them; and may they grow in numbers on the earth.

When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, he was displeased, so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to that of Manasse. He said to his father, "That is not right, father, for this one is the first-born; put your right hand on his head." | But his father refused. "I know, my son, I know," he said. "He too shall become a people; he too shall be great; but his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." So he blessed them that day and said, "By you shall the people of Israel pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you like Ephraim and Manasse' "; thus placing Ephraim ahead of Manasse.

Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die. But God will be with you, and will lead you back to the land of your fathers; I give you one more portion than your brothers, which I captured from the Amorrites with my sword and bow."

49

Jacob Prophesies of His Sons Then Jacob summoned his sons and said: "Come together, I will tell you what shall befall you in days to come.

48, 12: *From his knees:* see 30, 3 n.
48, 16: *The angel:* see 16, 1-15 n.
48, 22: *One more portion:* the tradition here pictures Jacob portioning the Promised Land. *Which I captured:* not mentioned elsewhere in Genesis. *Amorrites:* a synonymn for Chanaanites.
49, 1-33: The final edition dates from king David's time (1000-961 B.C.), about 700 years after Jacob died. There are uncertain meanings in this chapter because of archaic Hebrew words, because of enigmas

2 "Gather together and listen, you sons of Jacob, listen
3 Israel your father. | Ruben, you are my first-born, my stren
the first-fruit of my manhood, exceedingly proud, exceedin
4 fierce. | Unstable as water, never first shall you be, for y
father's bed you did ascend; him have I degraded who w
up to my couch.
5 "Simeon and Levi, brothers indeed, weapons of violence
6 their swords. | My soul, never enter their company, never
in their assembly, my spirit! Because in their fury they sl
7 men, in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen. | Cursed
their fury because it is violent, their rage because it is cruel
will disperse them in Jacob, I will scatter them in Israel.
8 "Juda, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall
on the neck of your enemies; the sons of your father shall b
9 down to you. | A lion's whelp is Juda; from the prey you ha
gone up, my son. He crouches and couches as a lion; as
lioness, and who will disturb him?
10 "The sceptre shall not depart from Juda, nor the staff fro
between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs. To hi
11 shall be the obedience of nations. | He tethers his ass to t
vine; his ass's colt to the choicest vine. He washes his garment
12 wine, his robe in the blood of grapes. | His eyes are dark
than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

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characteristic of this prophetic type of literature, and because th
Hebrew has not been well preserved. This chapter is often compare
with the tribal lists in Jgs 5, 14-18, and especially Dt 33. See map
The Allotment of Chanaan to the Twelve Tribes, p. 381.

49, 4: See 35, 22.

49, 5-6: See 34, 25-31.

49, 7: The Simeon tribe was soon absorbed by Juda. The Levi trib
dispersed as priests among the other tribes.

49, 8-9: These Hebraisms announce the superiority of the Juda trib

49, 10: This is a traditional Messianic text held by Christians an
Jews. *Nor the staff from between his feet:* the ruler held the staff o
authority in front of himself as he sat on his throne. *Until he come*
Juda's power will not end when he, i.e., king David comes, but it wi
continue after him. *To whom it belongs:* the political power belongs t
David. On the occasion of David's rising ascendancy over the othe
tribes and the increasing importance among surrounding nations, he i
here referred to as a type of the Messia. The prophecy does not refe
directly to Christ the Messia of one thousand years later. It refers t
Christ only insofar as He is prefigured in the David from whose lin
Christ will descend.

49, 11: Grapevines will be so abundant that they will be used to tie
beast. Wine will be so plentiful that it will be used to wash clothes. Th
material abundance of Messianic times is described by wine and milk

13 "Zabulon shall dwell by the seashore; and he shall be by
the shore of ships, with his flank toward Sidon.
14 "Issachar is a sturdy ass, among the stock-pens he lies. |
15 He saw that settled life was good, and that the land was pleas-
ant; he bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, and became a
slave under taskwork.
16 "Dan shall achieve justice for his people, like any tribe of
17 Israel. | Dan shall be a serpent by the road, a viper by the path;
biting at the hoofs of the horse, so that the rider tumbles back-
ward.
18 "[Thy salvation, O Lord, I wait for!]
19 "Gad, raiders shall raid him; but he shall raid their rear.
20 "Aser, his food shall be rich; he shall provide dainties for
kings.
21 "Nephthali is a deer set free, [that bears fair fawns].
22 "Joseph is a young fruit tree, a young fruit tree near the
23 spring, with branches climbing over the wall. | Against him in
24 bitterness they fought; archers assailed him. | but his bow re-
mained firm, his strong arms supple, by the strength of the
Mighty One of Jacob; by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock
25 of Israel; | by the God of your father, may he help you; by
the God, the Omnipotent, may he bless you, with the blessings
of the skies above, the blessings of the abyss couching beneath,
26 the blessings of the breasts and womb; | the blessings of your
father surpass the blessings of my forebears to the limit of the
timeless hills. May they rest on the head of Joseph, and on the
brow of the prince among his brothers.
27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; devouring prey in the morn-
ing, and at evening dividing spoil."

28 ***Jacob's Last Words: His Death*** All these are the twelve
tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them. He
29 blessed them, and gave each his proper blessing. He gave them

49, 13: This is not a prophecy about Zabulon because only its geographical site is mentioned.
49, 14-15: *Issachar* fell captive to the soft Chanaanite way of life.
49, 16: *Dan* obtained its independence through craftiness.
49, 19: *Gad* had to defend itself against the raids of the nomads.
49, 20: *Aser:* this tribe is situated in fertile territory.
49, 21-24: The Hebrew text and its meanings are uncertain. *Joseph:* represents the two tribes Ephraim and Manasse. *Shepherd, the Rock of Israel:* epithets of Yahweh, God.
49, 25: *Blessings of the abyss couching beneath:* the fertility of the waters beneath the earth are represented as a couched monster.
49, 27: *Benjamin:* was a warlike tribe.

this charge, "I am about to be gathered to my people. B
me with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Ephr
30 the Hethite, | the cave in the field of Machphela, facing Ma
in the land of Chanaan. Abraham bought it from Ephron,
Hethite, together with the field, for use as a burial grou
31 There Abraham and his wife Sara are buried; there Isaac
his wife Rebecca are buried; and it was there I buried Li
32 [The field with its cave was purchased from the Hethites.]
33 When Jacob had finished giving directions to his sons,
drew up his feet into the bed and expired. And he was gathe
to his people.

50

1 ***Jacob Mourned in Egypt*** Joseph fell on his father's fa
2 weeping over him and kissing him. Then he ordered
3 physicians among his servants to embalm his father. Th
embalmed Israel, spending forty days at it, for it takes th
much time to embalm. And the Egyptians mourned Israel
seventy days.

4 ***Buried in Chanaan*** When the days of mourning him h
passed, Joseph said to Pharao's household, "If I find favor wi
5 you, say to Pharao | that my father at the point of dea
made me promise on oath to bury him in the sepulcher that
dug for himself in the land of Chanaan. Now therefore I b
6 to go up to bury my father, and I will return." Pharao replie
"Go up, and bury your father as he made you swear."
7 So Joseph went up to bury his father, and all Pharao's ser
ants, the elders of his household and all the elders of the lan
8 of Egypt went with him, together with all of Joseph's hous
hold, his brothers, and all his father's household. They le
only their children, their flocks and their herds in the land
9 Gesen. Chariots and charioteers too went up with him, so th
there was a very large caravan.
10 When they arrived at Goren-Atad, which is beyond th
Jordan, they held an exceedingly great lamentation ther
11 And Joseph mourned his father for seven days. | When th
inhabitants of the land, the Chanaanites, noticed the mourn
ing at Goren-Atad, they said, "That is a solemn mournin
the Egyptians are observing." Therefore it was named Abel
12 Mesraim, which is beyond the Jordan. Jacob's sons did fo
13 him what he had commanded them. They carried him into th
land of Chanaan, and buried him in the cave in the field o
Machphela, facing Mamre. Both the cave and the field Abra

ham had bought from Ephron, the Hethite, for use as a burial ground.

14 ***Joseph Reassures His Brothers*** After Joseph had buried his father, he returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who
15 had gone up with him to bury his father. Joseph's brothers were fearful after their father's death, and said, "What if Joseph should hate us, and pay us back for all the harm we
16 did him!" So they sent this message to Joseph, "Before he
17 died, your father gave us this command, | 'Thus shall you say to Joseph: Jacob begs you to forgive your brothers' crime, and the sin they committed in doing you harm.' Now we also pray that you forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your
18 father." Joseph wept over their message to him. Then his brothers came to him in person and prostrated themselves be-
19 fore him, saying, "We are your slaves." | But Joseph said to
20 them, "Do not fear; can I take the place of God? You intended evil against me, but God intended it for good, to do as he has done today, namely, to save the lives of many people.
21 Therefore do not fear. I will provide for you and your dependents." Thus he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

22 ***Last Days and Death of Joseph*** Joseph remained in Egypt with all his father's household. He lived one hundred and ten
23 years. He saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The sons of Machir too, the son of Manasse, were born on Joseph's knees.

24 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will certainly come to you and lead you up from this land to the land which he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and
25 Jacob." Joseph made the sons of Israel swear that, when God should come to them, they would carry his bones with them from that place.

26 Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years. He was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

50, 20: See 37 n.

50, 22: *One hundred and ten years:* the Egyptian expression for a very happy life.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

INTRODUCTION

Exodus owes its name to the first main theme of the book, tl Israelites' exit from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. The se ond theme is the making of the Covenant between God and H people at Mount Sinai.

The Book of Exodus is not compiled from eyewitness reports, nc from written accounts. The writers do not intend a verbatim repo when they put words on the Pharao's lips (1, 9-10) nor when the "quote" a conversation between Pharao and Moses. This is a dramati technique to enliven the narrative. Furthermore, Catholic scholars ar gradually rallying to the opinion that Ex 1—15 were written accordin to the way the liturgy commemorated the Exodus from Egypt.

Exodus is a knitting together of the Yahwist tradition (tenth cen tury B.C.), the Elohist tradition (eighth century B.C.), and th Priestly tradition (sixth century B.C.). See: Introduction to th Pentateuch. The Book of Exodus itself probably came together i the sixth century B.C. The events described happened in the thir teenth century B.C. Therefore the oldest account was written abou three hundred years after the event. The writer of this religious epi assembled his material guided by one all-surpassing idea—God savec His people. Although we can not prove the events of Exodus di rectly by showing the same events mentioned in writings other than the Bible, we do have indirect proof. First: we know that the events narrated in Exodus fit in very well with the contemporary customs and secular history of Egypt and Palestine of the thirteenth century B.C. Secondly, if these events and the existence of Moses were de nied, how could it be explained, then, why the people remained faithful to God through the law of Moses?

The events of Exodus made a deep impression on the Old Testa ment writers. Many New Testament writers interpreted the Exodus events as types of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. The Fathers of the Church followed the New Testament leads in their catechetical instructions. Finally, the liturgy of the Church continues this tradition by using the Exodus theme, especially during the Easter season.

Main divisions of the Book of Exodus are:

1. The Israelites in Egypt,
   1, 1—12, 36
2. The Exodus from Egypt and the Journey to Sinai,
   12, 37—18, 27
3. The Covenant at Mount Sinai,
   19, 1—24, 18
4. The Dwelling and Its Furnishings,
   25, 1—40, 38

I. THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

1

1 ***Jacob's Descendants in Egypt*** These are the names of
the sons of Israel who, accompanied by their households, mi-
2 grated with Jacob into Egypt: | Ruben, Simeon, Levi and
3-4 Juda; | Issachar, Zabulon and Benjamin; | Dan and Neph-
5 thali; Gad and Aser. The total number of direct descendants
6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and that whole generation
of Jacob was seventy. Joseph was already in Egypt.
7 died. But the Israelites were fruitful and prolific. They became
so numerous and strong that the land was filled with them.

8 ***The Oppression*** Then a new king, who knew nothing of
9 Joseph, came to power in Egypt. He said to his subjects, "Look
how numerous and powerful the Israelite people are growing,
10 more so than we ourselves! Come, let us deal shrewdly with
them to stop their increase; otherwise, in time of war they too
may join our enemies to fight against us, and so leave our
country."
11 Accordingly, taskmasters were set over the Israelites to op-
press them with forced labor. Thus they had to build for
12 Pharao the supply cities of Phithom and Rameses. Yet the more
they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread.
13 The Egyptians, then, dreaded the Israelites | and reduced them
14 to cruel slavery, making life bitter for them with hard work in
mortar and brick and all kinds of field work—the whole cruel
fate of slaves.

15 ***Command to the Midwives*** The king of Egypt told the
Hebrew midwives, one of whom was called Sephra and the
16 other Phua, "When you act as midwives for the Hebrew women
and see them giving birth, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is
17 a girl, she may live." The midwives, however, feared God;
they did not do as the king of Egypt had ordered them, but
18 let the boys live. So the king summoned the midwives and

1, 8-10: The Semitic Hyksos people ruled Egypt from 1720 to 1560 B.C. It is generally believed among present-day scholars that the Hyksos were not a foreign unknown nation but that they were Palestinian petty chiefs seeking new lands who slowly infiltrated the Egyptian Delta. The Joseph story (Gn 37—50) fits in well during this period. But after Joseph's time, the Egyptians' hatred of the foreign Hyksos may have easily extended to the Israelites who lived in the northeastern Delta, the land of Gesen.

asked them, "Why have you acted thus, allowing the boys
19 live?" The midwives answered Pharao, "The Hebrew wom
are not like the Egyptian women. They are robust and g
20 birth before the midwife arrives." Therefore God dealt w
with the midwives. The people, too, increased and grew strong
21 And because the midwives feared God, he built up families f
22 them. Pharao then commanded all his subjects, "Throw in
the river every boy that is born to the Hebrews, but you may
all the girls live."

2

1 ***Birth and Adoption of Moses*** Now a certain man of t
2 house of Levi married a Levite woman, who conceived a
bore a son. Seeing that he was a goodly child, she hid him f
3 three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took
papyrus basket, daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and puttir
the child in it, placed it among the reeds on the river ban
4 His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out wh
would happen to him.
5 Pharao's daughter came down to the river to bathe, whi
her maids walked along the river bank. Noticing the baske
6 among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it. On oper
ing it, she looked, and lo, there was a baby boy, crying! Sh
was moved with pity for him and said, "It is one of the He
7 brews' children." Then his sister asked Pharao's daughter
"Shall I go and call one of the Hebrew women to nurse th
8 child for you?" "Yes, do so," she answered. So the maider
9 went and called the child's own mother. Pharao's daughter sai
to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will repa
10 you." The woman therefore took the child and nursed it. Wher
the child grew, she brought him to Pharao's daughter, wh
adopted him as her son and called him Moses; for she said, "
drew him out of the water."

11 ***Moses' Flight to Madian*** On one occasion, after Mose
had grown up, when he visited his kinsmen and witnessed
their forced labor, he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one
12 of his own kinsmen. Looking about and seeing no one, he slew
13 the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he went
out again, and now two Hebrews were fighting! So he asked

1, 22: According to another better opinion, the Pharao of the oppression was Sethi I (1308-1290 B.C.).

2, 1-10: There is a similar account of the birth of Sargon of Akkad about 2400 B.C. However, the Moses account does not seem to depend on it.

14 the culprit, "Why are you striking your fellow Hebrew?" But
he replied, "Who has appointed you ruler and judge over us?
Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?"
Then Moses became afraid and thought, "The affair must
certainly be known."
15 Pharao, too, heard of the affair and sought to put him to
death. But Moses fled from him and stayed in the land of
16 Madian. As he was seated there by a well, | seven daughters
of a priest of Madian came to draw water and fill the troughs
17 to water their father's flock. But some shepherds came and
drove them away. Then Moses got up and defended them
18 and watered their flock. When they returned to their father
Raguel, he said to them, "How is it you have returned so
19 soon today?" They answered, "An Egyptian saved us from
the interference of the shepherds. He even drew water for us
20 and watered the flock!" "Where is the man?" he asked his
daughters. "Why did you leave him there? Invite him to have
21 something to eat." | Moses agreed to live with him, and the
22 man gave him his daughter Sepphora in marriage. She bore
him a son, whom he named Gersam; for he said, "I am a
stranger in a foreign land."

23 ***The Burning Bush*** A long time passed, during which the
king of Egypt died. Still the Israelites groaned and cried out
because of their slavery. As their cry for release went up to
24 God, he heard their groaning and was mindful of his cove-
25 nant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He saw the Israelites
and knew. . . .

3

1 Meanwhile Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law
Jethro, the priest of Madian. Leading the flock across the desert,
2 he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There an angel of the
Lord appeared to him in fire flaming out of a bush. As he
3 looked on, he was surprised to see that the bush, though on fire,
was not consumed. So Moses decided, "I must go over to look at
this remarkable sight, and see why the bush is not burned."

4 ***The Call of Moses*** When the Lord saw him coming over
to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the

2, 15: *Madian:* near the Gulf of Aqaba, a refuge for outlaws.

3, 1: *Jethro:* according to 2, 18, his name is Raguel. The five thousand Druses, Islamic sectarians, of present-day Israel regard him as their ancestor.

3, 2: *An angel of the Lord:* the Lord. See Gn 16, 1-15 n.

bush, "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." God s
"Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for
place where you stand is holy ground. I am the God of y
father," he continued, "the God of Abraham, the God
Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he was afr
to look at God. But the Lord said, "I have witnessed the aff
tion of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of co
plaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they
suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them fr
the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that la
into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk a
honey, the country of the Chanaanites, Hethites, Amorrit
Pherezites, Hevites and Jebusites. So indeed the cry of t
Israelites has reached me, and I have truly noted that t
Egyptians are oppressing them. | Come, now! I will send you
Pharao to lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."
But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go
Pharao and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" He answered,
will be with you; and this shall be your proof that it is I wh
have sent you: when you bring my people out of Egypt, yo
will worship God on this very mountain." "But," said Mos
to God, "when I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The Go
of your fathers has sent me to you,' if they ask me, 'What
his name?' what am I to tell them?" | God replied, "I a
who am." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell th
Israelites: I AM sent me to you."
God spoke further to Moses, "Thus shall you say to th
Israelites: The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God o
Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me t
you. This is my name forever; this is my title for all generat
tions.
"Go and assemble the elders of the Israelites, and tell them

3, 8: *Milk and honey:* this frequent expression means that in com
parison with the rigid living conditions inflicted on them in Egyp
Chanaan will give liberty and especially an abundance of good
Hethites: the biblical term for Hittites.

3, 14: *I am who am:* there is no agreement among scholars on th
meaning of the divine name Yahweh. One opinion is that the wor
means "He who causes to be." Another opinion holds that God is reall
saying "Never mind what my name is—I am Who am." When Go
speaks of Himself He says "I am"; when others use His name it is in th
third person—"He is" or in Hebrew YaHWeH. The four consonants i
capital letters have become known as the Tetragrammaton (a Greek wor
meaning four letters). The correct pronunciation is "Yahweh." Hebrew
scholars agree that the mistaken pronunciation "Jehovah" erroneousl
used by Jehovah's Witnesses dates from the early Middle Ages.

The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac
and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I am concerned about
you and about the way you are being treated in Egypt;
17 so I have decided to lead you up out of the misery of Egypt into
the land of the Chanaanites, Hethites, Amorrites, Pherezites,
Hevites and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.
18 "Thus they will heed your message. Then you and the
elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him:
'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent us word. Permit us,
then, to go a three days' journey in the desert, that we may
offer sacrifice to the Lord, our God.
19 "Yet I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to
20 go unless he is forced. I will stretch out my hand, therefore, and
smite Egypt by doing all kinds of wondrous deeds there. After
21 that he will send you away. | I will even make the Egyptians
so well-disposed toward this people that, when you leave, you
22 will not go empty-handed. Every woman shall ask her neighbor
and her house guest for silver and gold articles and for clothing
to put on your sons and daughters. Thus you will despoil the
Egyptians."

4

1 ***Confirmation of Moses' Mission*** "But," objected Moses,
"suppose they will not believe me, nor listen to my plea? For
2 they may say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.' " The Lord
therefore asked him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he
3 answered. The Lord then said, "Throw it on the ground." When
he threw it on the ground it was changed into a serpent, and
4 Moses shied away from it. "Now, put out your hand," the
Lord said to him, "and take hold of its tail." So he put out his
hand and laid hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand.
5 "This will take place so that they may believe," he continued,
"that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, did appear to you."

3, 18-20: Pharao will be asked by Moses for permission to lead the people *"a three days' journey,"* i.e., a considerable march in the desert to sacrifice in thanksgiving for this visit of God to Moses as chief of the people. The request will ultimately be for a permanent leave.

4, 1-9: The best proof to the Israelites that their God sent Moses was to have Moses perform the same "tricks" as the Egyptian magicians, at least relative to the staff changed into a serpent. This trick will later be performed for the benefit of the Egyptians in 7, 8-13. This sign would convince the Israelites, according to the mentality of the day, that their God was not inferior to the Egyptian gods. Vv. 30-31 tell that the people did believe in these signs.

6 Again the Lord said to him, "Put your hand in your boson
He put it in his bosom, and when he withdrew it, to his su
7 prise his hand was leprous, like snow. The Lord then sai
"Now, put your hand back in your bosom." Moses put his hai
back in his bosom, and when he withdrew it, to his surprise
8 was again like the rest of his body. "If they will not believe yo
nor heed the message of the first sign, they should believe th
9 message of the second. And if they will not believe even the
two signs, nor heed your plea, take some water from the riv
and pour it on the dry land. The water you take from th
river will become blood on the dry land."

10 ***Aaron's Office as Assistant*** Moses, however, said to th
Lord, "If you please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither i
the past, nor recently, nor now that you have spoken to you
11 servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue." The Lord sai
to him, "Who gives one man speech and makes another dea
and dumb? Or who gives sight to one and makes another blind
12 Is it not I, the Lord? | Go, then! It is I who will assist you i
13 speaking and will teach you what you are to say." Yet he in
14 sisted, "If you please, Lord, send someone else!" Then the Lor
became angry with Moses and said, "Have you not you
brother, Aaron the Levite? I know that he is an eloquent
15 speaker. Besides, he is now on his way to meet you. You are to
speak to him, then, and put the words in his mouth. I will as-
sist both you and him in speaking and will teach the two of
16 you what you are to do. He shall speak to the people for you;
he shall be your spokesman, and you shall be as God to him.
17 Take this staff in your hand; with it you are to perform the
signs."

18 ***Moses' Return to Egypt*** After this Moses returned to his
father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Let me go back, please,
to my kinsmen in Egypt, to see whether they are still living."
19 Jethro replied, "Go in peace." In Madian the Lord said to
Moses, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who sought your life
20 are dead." So Moses took his wife and his sons, and started
back to the land of Egypt, with them riding the ass. The staff of
21 God he carried with him. The Lord said to him, "On your re-
turn to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharao all the won-
ders I have put in your power. I will make him obstinate, how-
22 ever, so that he will not let the people go. So you shall say to
23 Pharao: Thus says the Lord: Israel is my son, my first-born.

4, 6-7: *Leprous:* in Hebrew the word may also mean a skin disease.

Hence I tell you: Let my son go, that he may serve me. If you
refuse to let him go, I warn you, I will kill your son, your first-
born."
24 On the journey, at a place where they spent the night, the
25 Lord came upon Moses and would have killed him. But Sep-
phora took a piece of flint and cut off her son's foreskin and
touching his feet, she said, "You are a spouse of blood to me."
26 | Then God let Moses go. At that time she said, "A spouse of
blood," in regard to the circumcision.
27 The Lord said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses."
So he went, and when they met at the mountain of God, Aaron
28 kissed him. Moses informed him of all the Lord had said in
sending him, and of the various signs he had enjoined upon
29 him. Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders
30 of the Israelites. Aaron told them everything the Lord had said
31 to Moses, and he performed the signs before the people. The
people believed, and when they heard that the Lord was con-
cerned about them and had seen their affliction, they bowed
down in worship.

5

1 ***Pharao's Obduracy*** After that, Moses and Aaron went to
Pharao and said, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Let
my people go, that they may celebrate a feast to me in the des-
2 ert." Pharao answered, "Who is the Lord, that I should heed his
plea to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord; even if I did, I
3 would not let Israel go." They replied, "The God of the He-
brews has sent us word. Let us go a three days' journey in the
desert, that we may offer sacrifice to the Lord, our God; other-
wise he will punish us with pestilence or the sword."
4 The king of Egypt answered them, "What do you mean,
Moses and Aaron, by taking the people away from their work?
5 Off to your labor! | Look how numerous the people of the land
are already," continued Pharao, "and yet you would give them
rest from their labor!"
6 That very day Pharao gave the taskmasters and foremen
7 of the people this order: "You shall no longer supply the peo-
ple with straw for their brickmaking as you have previously

4, 24-26: This obscure episode may mean that God was going to kill Moses because he was not circumcised. *You are a spouse of blood to me:* i.e., in contrast to my son whom I really circumcised, you are circumcised through blood. Sepphora says this because she administered a substitute circumcision to Moses by touching his "feet" with the foreskin of her son. ("Feet" is a euphemism for the male organ.) *Then God let Moses go:* i.e., Moses' life was spared.

8 done. Let them go and gather straw themselves! Yet y
shall levy upon them the same quota of bricks as they ha
previously made. Do not reduce it. They are lazy; that is w
9 they are crying, 'Let us go to offer sacrifice to our God.' I
crease the work for the men, so that they keep their mind on
and pay no attention to lying words."
10 So the taskmasters and foremen of the people went out a
told them, "Thus says Pharao: I will not provide you wi
11 straw. Go and gather the straw yourselves, wherever you c
find it. Yet there must not be the slightest reduction in yo
12 work." The people, then, scattered throughout the land
13 Egypt to gather stubble for straw, while the taskmasters ke
driving them on, saying, "Finish your work, the same dai
amount as when your straw was supplied."

14 ***Complaint of the Foremen*** The foremen of the Israelite
whom the taskmasters of Pharao had placed over them, wer
beaten, and were asked, "Why have you not completed you
prescribed amount of bricks yesterday and today, as before?
15 Then the Israelite foremen came and made this appeal t
16 Pharao: "Why do you treat your servants in this manner? N
straw is supplied to your servants, and still we are told t
make bricks. Look how your servants are beaten! It is yo
17 who are at fault." Pharao answered, "It is just because yo
are lazy that you keep saying, 'Let us go and offer sacrifice t
18 the Lord.' | Off to work, then! Straw shall not be provide
for you, but you must still deliver your quota of bricks."
19 The Israelite foremen knew they were in a sorry plight, havin
20 been told not to reduce the daily amount of bricks. When
therefore, they left Pharao and came upon Moses and Aaron
21 who were waiting to meet them, | they said to them, "The
Lord look upon you and judge! You have brought us into bad
odor with Pharao and his servants and have put a sword in
their hands to slay us."

22 ***Renewal of God's Promise*** Moses again had recourse to
the Lord and said, "Lord, why do you treat this people so
23 badly? And why did you send me on such a mission? Ever since
I went to Pharao to speak in your name, he has maltreated
this people of yours, and you have done nothing to rescue
them."

6
1 Then the Lord answered Moses, "Now you shall see what I
will do to Pharao. Forced by my mighty hand, he will send

them away; compelled by my outstretched arm, he will drive them from his land."

2 1 God also said to Moses, "I am the Lord. As God the Al-
mighty I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but my name,
4 Lord, I did not make known to them. I also established my
covenant with them, to give them the land of Chanaan, the
5 land in which they were living as aliens. And now that I have
heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are
6 treating as slaves, I am mindful of my covenant. Therefore, say
to the Israelites: I am the Lord. I will free you from the forced
labor of the Egyptians and will deliver you from their slavery.
I will rescue you by my outstretched arm and with mighty acts
7 of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and you shall
have me as your God. You will know that I, the Lord, am
your God when I free you from the labor of the Egyptians
8 and bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abra-
ham, Isaac and Jacob. I will give it to you as your own posses-
9 sion—I, the Lord!" But when Moses told this to the Israelites,
they would not listen to him because of their dejection and
hard slavery.

10 11 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go and tell Pharao, king
12 of Egypt, to let the Israelites leave his land. But Moses pro-
tested to the Lord, "If the Israelites would not listen to me,
how can it be that Pharao will listen to me, poor speaker
13 that I am!" Still, the Lord, to bring the Israelites out of Egypt,
spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them his orders regarding
both the Israelites and Pharao, king of Egypt.

Genealogy of Moses and Aaron These are the heads of
14 the ancestral houses. The sons of Ruben, the first-born of Israel,
were Henoch, Phallu, Hesron and Charmi; these are the clans
15 of Ruben. The sons of Simeon were Jamuel, Jamin, Ahod, Ja-
chin, Sohar and Saul, who was the son of a Chanaanite woman;
16 these are the clans of Simeon. The names of the sons of Levi,
in their genealogical order, are Gerson, Caath and Merari.
Levi lived one hundred and thirty-seven years.

17 These sons of Gerson, as heads of clans, were Lebni and
18 Semei. The sons of Caath were Amram, Isaar, Hebron and

6, 1-13: This is another account of Moses' vocation, parallel to chs. 3 and 4. One difference is that in this text the purpose of the Exodus is not to offer sacrifice in the desert (3, 18), but to lead the people to the Promised Land (v. 8.).

6, 7: *My own people . . . your God*: this touching phrase is frequently found in the Pentateuch and in some later biblical prophets.

6, 14-27: See Gn 46, 8ff n.

19 Oziel. Caath lived one hundred and thirty-three years. | T
sons of Merari were Moholi and Musi. These are the clans
Levi in their genealogical order.
20 Amram married his aunt Jochabed, who bore him Aaro
Moses and Mariam. Amram lived one hundred and thirt
21 seven years. The sons of Isaar were Core, Napheg and Zech
22 The sons of Oziel were Misael, Elisaphan and Sethr
23 Aaron married Amminadab's daughter, Elisabe, the sister
Nahasson; she bore him Nadab, Abiu, Eleazar and Ithama
24 The sons of Core were Asir, Elcana and Abiasaph. These are th
25 clans of the Corites. Aaron's son, Eleazar, married one of Phu
tiel's daughters, who bore him Phinees. These are the heads
26 the ancestral clans of the Levites. This is the Aaron and th
the Moses to whom the Lord said, "Lead the Israelites fro
27 the land of Egypt, company by company." These are the one
who spoke to Pharao, king of Egypt, to bring the Israelites ou
of Egypt—the same Moses and Aaron.

28 ***Moses and Aaron before Pharao*** On the day the Lor
29 spoke to Moses in Egypt | he said, "I am the Lord. Repeat t
30 Pharao king of Egypt, all that I tell you." But Moses protested
to the Lord, "Since I am a poor speaker, how can it be tha
Pharao will listen to me?"

7

1 The Lord answered him, "See! I have made you as God t
Pharao, and Aaron your brother shall act as your prophet
2 You shall tell him all that I command you. In turn, your
brother Aaron shall tell Pharao to let the Israelites leave his
3 land. Yet I will make Pharao so obstinate that, despite the
many signs and wonders that I will work in the land of Egypt,
4 | he will not listen to you. Therefore I will lay my hand on
Egypt and by great acts of judgment I will bring the hosts of
5 my people, the Israelites, out of the land of Egypt, so that the
Egyptians may learn that I am the Lord, as I stretch out my
hand against Egypt and lead the Israelites out of their midst."
6 Moses and Aaron did as the Lord had commanded them.
7 Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they
spoke to Pharao.

8 ***The Staff Turned into a Snake*** The Lord told Moses and
9 Aaron, "If Pharao demands that you work a sign or wonder,

7, 8-13: Even today Egyptian snake charmers can still "charm" snakes into rigidity and release them. See 4, 1-9 n.

you shall say to Aaron: Take your staff and throw it down
10 before Pharao, and it will be changed into a snake." Then
Moses and Aaron went to Pharao and did as the Lord had
commanded. Aaron threw his staff down before Pharao and
11 his servants, and it was changed into a snake. Pharao, in turn,
summoned wise men and sorcerers, and they also, the magi-
12 cians of Egypt, did likewise by their magic arts. Each one
threw down his staff, and it was changed into a snake. But
13 Aaron's staff swallowed their staffs. Pharao, however, was
obstinate and would not listen to them, just as the Lord had
foretold.

14 ***First Plague: Water Turned into Blood*** Then the Lord
said to Moses, "Pharao is obdurate in refusing to let the people
15 go. Tomorrow morning, when he sets out for the water, go
and present yourself by the river bank, holding in your hand
16 the staff that turned into a serpent. Say to him: The Lord, the
God of the Hebrews, sent me to you with the message: Let
my people go to worship me in the desert. But as yet you have
17 not listened. | The Lord now says: This is how you shall know
that I am the Lord. I will strike the water of the river with the
18 staff I hold, and it shall be changed into blood. The fish in the

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7, 14—12, 36: Since this section is composed from three different traditional ways of narrating these plagues, each with the number of plagues differing, it is difficult to know their number and how they occurred. The authors knew that, historically, something extraordinary happened. Of absorbing interest, however, was the lesson or meaning of the plagues, namely, that they speak God's irresistible power and irresistible will in His favorable intervention to save His people. With this absorbing interest they cared precious little about evident discrepancies that inevitably resulted from the interweaving of three similar accounts. Examples are 7, 14-18, 20-21, 24; these verses say it was only the Nile River that turned into blood, yet v. 19 says *all* the water in Egypt turned into blood. A similar discrepancy is found in 9, 6, if compared with 9, 20. The biblical authors never distinguished between a natural phenomenon and a miracle, as we do. They would not have cared if told that all the plagues, except the last, were more or less natural phenomena. The first plague, e.g., refers to the Nile becoming red in July every year because it brings with it particles of the sediment rock from the Abyssinian Lake. The "darkness" of the ninth plague results from desert sandstorms. Moreover, the biblical author readily admitted the naturalness of at least some of these plagues by saying that even the Egyptian magicians reproduced them (7, 22; 8, 3). The people of God interpreted these plagues as extraordinary "miraculous" events because of their intensity and because they began and stopped precisely as Moses predicted. The story of these plagues was to be embellished more, e.g., in the Pss 77, 104.

river shall die, and the river itself shall become so polluted
that the Egyptians will be unable to drink its water."
19 The Lord then said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Take your
staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt,
their streams and canals and pools, all their supplies of water,
that they may become blood. Throughout the land of Egypt
there shall be blood, even in the wooden pails and stone jars."
20 Moses and Aaron did as the Lord had commanded. Aaron
raised his staff and struck the waters of the river in full view
of Pharao and his servants, and all the water of the river was
21 changed into blood. The fish in the river died, and the river
itself became so polluted that the Egyptians could not drink
22 its water. There was blood throughout the land of Egypt. But
the Egyptian magicians did the same by their magic arts. So
Pharao remained obstinate and would not listen to Moses and
23 Aaron, just as the Lord had foretold. He turned away and
24 went into his house, with no concern even for this. All the
Egyptians had to dig in the neighborhood of the river for drinking water, since they could not drink the river water.

25 ***Second Plague: the Frogs*** Seven days passed after the Lord
26 had struck the river. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharao and tell him: Thus says the Lord: Let my people go to wor-
27 ship me. If you refuse to let them go, I warn you, I will send
28 a plague of frogs over all your territory. | The river will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and into your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your servants, too, and your subjects, even into your ovens and your kneading
29 bowls. The frogs will swarm all over you and your subjects and your servants."

8

1 The Lord then told Moses, "Say to Aaron: Stretch out
your hand and your staff over the streams and canals and
2 pools, to make frogs overrun the land of Egypt." Aaron
stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the
3 frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. But the magicians did the same by their magic arts. They, too, made frogs overrun the land of Egypt.
4 Then Pharao summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray
the Lord to remove the frogs from me and my subjects, and
5 I will let the people go to offer sacrifice to the Lord." Moses
answered Pharao, "Do me the favor of appointing the time when I am to pray for you and your servants and your subjects, that the frogs may be taken away from you and your

houses and be left only in the river." | "Tomorrow," said
Pharao. Then Moses replied, "It shall be as you have said, so
that you may learn that there is none like the Lord, our God.
The frogs shall leave you and your houses, your servants and
your subjects; only in the river shall they be left."
After Moses and Aaron left Pharao's presence, Moses im-
plored the Lord to fulfill the promise he had made to Pharao
about the frogs; and the Lord did as Moses had asked. The
frogs in the houses and courtyards and fields died off. Heaps
and heaps of them were gathered up, and there was a stench in
the land. But when Pharao saw that there was a respite, he
became obdurate and would not listen to them, just as the Lord
had foretold.

Third Plague: the Gnats Thereupon the Lord said to
Moses, "Tell Aaron to stretch out his staff and strike the dust
of the earth, that it may be turned into gnats throughout the
land of Egypt." | They did so. Aaron stretched out his hand,
and with his staff he struck the dust of the earth, and gnats
came upon man and beast. The dust of the earth was turned
into gnats throughout the land of Egypt. Though the magicians
tried to bring forth gnats by their magic arts, they could not
do so. As the gnats infested man and beast, | the magicians
said to Pharao, "This is the finger of God." Yet Pharao re-
mained obstinate and would not listen to them, just as the Lord
had foretold.

Fourth Plague: the Flies Again the Lord told Moses,
"Early tomorrow morning present yourself to Pharao when he
goes forth to the water, and say to him: Thus says the Lord: Let
my people go to worship me. If you will not let my people go,
I warn you, I will loose swarms of flies upon you and your
servants and your subjects and your houses. The houses of the
Egyptians and the very ground on which they stand shall be
filled with swarms of flies. But on that day I will make an ex-
ception of the land of Gesen: there shall be no flies where my
people dwell, that you may know that I am the Lord in the
midst of the earth. I will make this distinction between my
people and your people. This sign shall take place tomorrow."
| This the Lord did. Thick swarms of flies entered the house
of Pharao and the houses of his servants; throughout Egypt
the land was infested with flies.
Then Pharao summoned Moses and Aaron and said to
them, "Go and offer sacrifice to your God in this land." But
Moses replied, "It is not right to do so, for the sacrifices we

offer to the Lord, our God, are an abomination to the Egyptians
If before their very eyes we offer sacrifices which are an abom-
23 ination to them, will not the Egyptians stone us? We must go
a three days' journey in the desert to offer sacrifice to the Lord
24 our God, as he commands us." "Well, then," said Pharao, "I
will let you go to offer sacrifice to the Lord, your God, in the
desert, provided that you do not go too far away and that you
25 pray for me." Moses answered, "As soon as I leave your pres-
ence I will pray to the Lord that the flies may depart tomorrow
from Pharao and his servants and his subjects. Pharao, how-
ever must not play false again by refusing to let the people
26 go to offer sacrifice to the Lord." When Moses left Pharao's
27 presence, he prayed to the Lord; and the Lord did as Moses
had asked. He removed the flies from Pharao and his servants
28 and subjects. Not one remained. | But once more Pharao be-
came obdurate and would not let the people go.

9

1 ***Fifth Plague: the Pestilence*** Then the Lord said to Moses,
"Go to Pharao and tell him: Thus says the Lord, the God of the
2 Hebrews: Let my people go to worship me. If you refuse to let
3 them go and persist in holding them, I warn you, the Lord will
afflict all your livestock in the field—your horses, asses, camels,
4 herds and flocks—with a very severe pestilence. But the Lord
will distinguish between the livestock of Israel and that of
5 Egypt, so that none belonging to the Israelites will die." And
setting a definite time, the Lord added, "Tomorrow the Lord
6 shall do this in the land." And on the next day the Lord did
so. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one beast
7 belonging to the Israelites. But though Pharao's messengers
informed him that not even one beast belonging to the Israelites
had died, he still remained obdurate and would not let the
people go.

8 ***Sixth Plague: the Boils*** Then the Lord said to Moses and
Aaron, "Take a double handful of soot from a furnace, and in
9 the presence of Pharao let Moses scatter it toward the sky. It
will then turn into fine dust over the whole land of Egypt and
cause festering boils on man and beast throughout the land."
10 So they took soot from a furnace and stood in the presence
of Pharao. Moses scattered it toward the sky, and it caused
11 festering boils on man and beast. The magicians could not
stand in Moses' presence, for there were boils on the magicians
12 no less than on the rest of the Egyptians. But the Lord made

Pharao obstinate, and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had foretold to Moses.

13 ***Seventh Plague: the Hail*** Then the Lord told Moses, "Early tomorrow morning present yourself to Pharao and say to him: Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: Let my
14 people go to worship me, or this time I will hurl all my blows upon you and your servants and your subjects, that you may
15 know that there is none like me anywhere on earth. For by now I would have stretched out my hand and struck you and your subjects with such pestilence as would wipe you from the earth.
16 But this is why I have spared you: to show you my power
17 and to make my name resound throughout the earth! Will you still block the way for my people by refusing to let them go?
18 I warn you, then, tomorrow at this hour I will rain down such fierce hail as there has never been in Egypt from the day the
19 nation was founded up to the present. Therefore, order all your livestock and whatever else you have in the open fields to be brought to a place of safety. Whatever man or beast remains in the fields and is not brought to shelter shall die
20 when the hail comes upon them." Some of Pharao's servants feared the warning of the Lord and hurried their servants and
21 livestock off to shelter. Others, however, did not take the warning of the Lord to heart and left their servants and livestock in the fields.

22 The Lord then said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that hail may fall upon the entire land of Egypt, on man and beast and every growing thing in the land of
23 Egypt." When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the Lord sent forth hail and peals of thunder. Lightning flashed toward the earth, and the Lord rained down hail upon the
24 land of Egypt: and lightning constantly flashed through the hail, such fierce hail as had never been seen in the land since
25 Egypt became a nation. It struck down every man and beast that was in the open throughout the land of Egypt; it beat down every growing thing and splintered every tree in the fields.
26 Only in the land of Gesen, where the Israelites dwelt, was there no hail.

27 Then Pharao summoned Moses and Aaron and said to them, "I have sinned again! The Lord is just; it is I and my subjects
28 who are at fault. Pray to the Lord, for we have had enough of God's thunder and hail. Then I will let you go; you need
29 stay no longer." Moses replied, "As soon as I leave the city I will extend my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail. Thus you shall learn that the earth

30 is the Lord's. But you and your servants, I know, do not ye
fear the Lord God."
31 Now the flax and the barley were ruined, because the barle
32 was in ear and the flax in bud. But the wheat and the spel
were not ruined, for they grow later.
33 When Moses had left Pharao's presence and had gone ou
of the city, he extended his hands to the Lord. Then the thun
der and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured dow
34 upon the earth. But Pharao, seeing that the rain and hail an
thunder had ceased, sinned again: he with his servants becam
35 obdurate, and in his obstinacy he would not let the Israelite
go, as the Lord had foretold through Moses.

10

1 ***Eighth Plague: the Locusts*** Then the Lord said to Moses,
"Go to Pharao, for I have made him and his servants obdurate
in order that I may perform these signs of mine among them |
2 and that you may recount to your son and grandson how ruth-
lessly I dealt with the Egyptians and what signs I wrought
among them, so that you may know that I am the Lord."
3 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharao and told him, "Thus
says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: How long will you re-
4 fuse to submit to me? Let my people go to worship me. If
you refuse to let my people go, I warn you, tomorrow I will
5 bring locusts into your country. They shall cover the ground,
so that the ground itself will not be visible. They shall eat up
the remnant you saved unhurt from the hail, as well as all
6 the foliage that has since sprouted in your fields. They shall
fill your houses and the houses of your servants and of all the
Egyptians; such a sight your fathers or grandfathers have not
seen from the day they first settled on this soil up to the pres-
ent day." With that he turned and left Pharao.
7 But Pharao's servants said to him, "How long must he
be a menace to us? Let the men go to worship the Lord, their
God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is being destroyed?"
8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharao, who said to
them, "You may go and worship the Lord, your God. But how
9 many of you will go?" | "Young and old must go with us,"
Moses answered, "our sons and daughters as well as our flocks
and herds must accompany us. That is what a feast of the Lord
10 means to us." | "The Lord help you," Pharao replied, "if I
ever let your little ones go with you! Clearly, you have some evil
11 in mind. | No, no! Just you men can go and worship the Lord.
After all, that is what you want." With that they were driven
from Pharao's presence.

12 The Lord then said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over
the land of Egypt, that locusts may swarm over it and eat up
15 all the vegetation and whatever the hail has left." So Moses
stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord
set an east wind blowing over the land all that day and all that
14 night. At dawn the east wind brought the locusts. They
swarmed over the whole land of Egypt and settled down on
every part of it. Never before had there been such a fierce
15 swarm of locusts, nor will there ever be. They covered the sur-
face of the whole land, till it was black with them. They ate up
all the vegetation in the land and the fruit of whatever trees
the hail had spared. Nothing green was left on any tree or
plant throughout the land of Egypt.
16 Hastily Pharao summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "I
17 have sinned against the Lord, your God, and against you. But
now, do forgive me my sin once more, and pray the Lord,
18 your God, to take at least this deadly pest from me." When
19 Moses left the presence of Pharao, he prayed to the Lord, and
the Lord changed the wind to a very strong west wind, which
took up the locusts and hurled them into the Red Sea. But
though not a single locust remained within the confines of
20 Egypt, the Lord made Pharao obstinate, and he would not let
the Israelites go.

21 ***Ninth Plague: the Darkness*** Then the Lord said to Moses,
"Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that over the land of
Egypt there may be such intense darkness that one can feel it."
22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was
dense darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days.
23 Men could not see one another, nor could they move from where
they were, for three days. But all the Israelites had light where
they dwelt.
24 Pharao then summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go
and worship the Lord. Your little ones, too, may go with you.
25 But your flocks and herds must remain." Moses replied,
"You must also grant us sacrifices and holocausts to offer up to
26 the Lord, our God. Hence, our livestock also must go with us.
Not an animal must be left behind. Some of them we must
sacrifice to the Lord, our God, but we ourselves shall not know
which ones we must sacrifice to him until we arrive at the place
27 itself." But the Lord made Pharao obstinate, and he would not
28 let them go. "Leave my presence," Pharao said to him, "and see
to it that you do not appear before me again! The day you ap-
29 pear before me you shall die!" Moses replied, "Well said! I
will never appear before you again."

11

1 ***Tenth Plague: the Death of the First-born*** Then t
Lord told Moses, "One more plague will I bring upon Pharao a
upon Egypt. After that he will let you depart. In fact, he w
2 not merely let you go; he will drive you away. Instruct yo
people that every man is to ask his neighbor, and every wom
her neighbor, for silver and gold articles and for clothing
3 The Lord indeed made the Egyptians well-disposed toward t
people; Moses himself was very highly regarded by Pharac
servants and the people in the land of Egypt.
4 Moses then said, "Thus says the Lord: At midnight I w
5 go forth through Egypt. Every first-born in this land shall d
from the first-born of Pharao on the throne to the first-bo
of the slave-girl at the handmill, as well as all the first-born
6 the animals. Then there shall be loud wailing throughout th
land of Egypt, such as has never been, nor will ever be agai
7 But among the Israelites and their animals not even a dog sha
growl, so that you may know how the Lord distinguish
8 between the Egyptians and the Israelites. All these servants
yours shall then come down to me, and prostrate before m
they shall beg me, 'Leave us, you and all your followers!' Onl
then will I depart." With that he left Pharao's presence in h
anger.
9 The Lord said to Moses, "Pharao refuses to listen to yo
that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.
10 Thus, although Moses and Aaron performed these variou
wonders in Pharao's presence, the Lord made Pharao obstinate
and he would not let the Israelites leave his land.

11, 1—13, 16: Long before the Exodus the Hebrews and other no
madic peoples celebrated a passover feast. It was an evening sacrific
offered when they were about to go on a pilgrimage. The other feast
that of unleavened bread (or feast of Azymes), originally may hav
been a harvest feast. At the time of the Exodus and after it the Israe
lites most probably joined these two feasts and reinterpreted the Exodu
events as God's acts intervening to save His people. The biblica
accounts here give evidence of added prescriptions after Exodus. Fo
example, the time of sacrifice, the number of participants, the ritua
garments, and the Exodus events are here retold as they were narrate
in the liturgical celebration.

Besides, the Exodus is envisioned as a past event at the time of th
writing. V. 19 speaks of Israelites born in the Promised Land. Similarly
12, 43-49, refer to the celebration of the feast when the people wer
settled in Chanaan. Sts. Paul and John were to speak of Christ as th
paschal lamb. Jn 19, 36 sees the prescription of 12, 46, or Nm 9, 12
applied to the treatment of Christ's body.

12

1 ***The Passover Ritual Prescribed*** The Lord said to Moses
4 and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall stand at the
head of your calendar; you shall reckon it the first month of the
3 year. Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth of this
month every one of your families must procure for itself a lamb,
4 one apiece for each household. If a family is too small for a
whole lamb, it shall join the nearest household in procuring
one and shall share in the lamb in proportion to the number of
5 persons who partake of it. The lamb must be a year-old male
and without blemish. You may take it from either the sheep or
6 the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this
month, and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present,
7 it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight. They shall
take some of its blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the
8 lintel of every house in which they partake of the lamb. That
same night they shall eat its roasted flesh with unleavened
9 bread and bitter herbs. It shall not be eaten raw or boiled, but
10 roasted whole, with its head and shanks and inner organs. None
of it must be kept beyond the next morning; whatever is left
over in the morning shall be burned up.

11 "This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals
on your feet and your staff in hand, you shall eat like those who
12 are in flight. It is the Passover of the Lord. For on this same
night I will go through Egypt, striking down every first-born of
the land, both man and beast, and executing judgment on all
13 the gods of Egypt—I, the Lord! But the blood will mark the
houses where you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over you;
thus, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will
come upon you.

14 "This day shall be a memorial feast for you, which all your
generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the Lord, as a
15 perpetual institution. For seven days you must eat unleavened
bread. From the very first day you shall have your houses clear
of all leaven. Whoever eats leavened bread from the first day
16 to the seventh shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you
shall hold a sacred assembly, and likewise on the seventh. On
these days you shall not do any sort of work, except to prepare
the food that everyone needs.

17 "Keep, then, this custom of the unleavened bread. Since it
was on this very day that I brought your ranks out of the land
of Egypt, you must celebrate this day throughout your genera-
18 tions as a perpetual institution. From the evening of the four-
teenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty-
19 first day of this month you shall eat unleavened bread. For

seven days no leaven may be found in your houses. Anyone,
he a resident alien or a native, who eats leavened food shall
20 cut off from the community of Israel. Nothing leavened n
you eat; wherever you dwell you may eat only unleaver
bread."

21 ***Promulgation of the Passover*** Moses called all the eld
of Israel and said to them, "Go and procure lambs for yc
22 families, and slaughter them as Passover victims. Then tak
bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood that is in the bas
sprinkle the lintel and the two doorposts with this blood. I
23 none of you shall go outdoors until morning. For the Lord w
go by, striking down the Egyptians. Seeing the blood on t
lintel and the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that dc
and not let the destroyer come into your houses to strike y
down.
24 "You shall observe this as a perpetual ordinance for you
25 selves and your descendants. Thus, you must also observe tl
rite when you have entered the land which the Lord will gi
26 you as he promised. When your children ask you, 'What dc
27 this rite of yours mean?' | you shall reply, 'This is the Passov
sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelit
in Egypt; when he struck down the Egyptians, he spared o
houses.' "
28 Then the people bowed down in worship, and the Israelit
went and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaro

29 ***Death of the First-born*** At midnight the Lord slew eve
first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Phar
on the throne to the first-born of the prisoner in the dungeo
30 as well as all the first-born of the animals. Pharao arose in tl
night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and the
was loud wailing throughout Egypt, for there was not a hou
without its dead.

31 ***Permission to Depart*** During the night Pharao sun
moned Moses and Aaron and said, "Leave my people at onc
you and the Israelites with you! Go and worship the Lord
32 you said. Take your flocks, too, and your herds, as you d
manded, and begone; and you will be doing me a favor."
33 The Egyptians likewise urged the people on, to hasten the
departure from the land; they thought that otherwise the
34 would all die. The people, therefore, took their dough before
was leavened, in their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloal
35 on their shoulders. The Israelites did as Moses had commandec

they asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for
36 clothing. The Lord indeed had made the Egyptians so well-
disposed toward the people that they let them have whatever
they asked for. Thus did they despoil the Egyptians.

II. THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT AND THE JOURNEY TO SINAI

37 ***Departure from Egypt*** The Israelites set out from Rameses
for Socchoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, not
38 counting the children. A crowd of mixed ancestry also went up
with them, besides their livestock, very numerous flocks and
39 herds. Since the dough they had brought out of Egypt was
not leavened, they baked it into unleavened loaves. They had
been rushed out of Egypt and had no opportunity even to pre-
pare food for the journey.

40 The time the Israelites had stayed in Egypt was four hundred
41 and thirty years. At the end of four hundred and thirty years,
all the hosts of the Lord left the land of Egypt on this very date.
42 This was a night of vigil for the Lord, as he led them out of
the land of Egypt; so on this same night all the Israelites must
keep a vigil for the Lord throughout their generations.

43 ***Passover Regulations*** The Lord said to Moses and Aaron,
"These are the regulations for the Passover. No foreigner may
44 partake of it. | However, any slave who has been bought for
money may partake of it, provided you have first circumcised
45 him. But no transient alien or hired servant may partake of it.
46 It must be eaten in one and the same house; you may not take
any of its flesh outside the house. You shall not break any of
47 its bones. | The whole community of Israel must keep this
48 feast. If any aliens living among you wish to celebrate the Pass-
over of the Lord, all the males among them must first be cir-
cumcised, and then they may join in its observance just like the
49 natives. But no man who is uncircumcised may partake of it.

12, 37: *About six hundred thousand men on foot, not counting the children:* if taken literally this number would amount to two and a half or three millions when the number of women and children are estimated in proportion to the number of men. Not even at that time could Sinai supply enough food and water for so many. Between two thousand and six thousand people is a more reasonable number.

12, 38: *Mixed ancestry:* various Semitic peoples, some discontented Egyptians, and other peoples, joined the Israelites.

12, 40: *Four hundred and thirty years:* as with many figures in the Bible, scholars cannot fit this number in a biblical chronology. Often biblical numbers had symbolical meanings now lost.

The law shall be the same for the resident alien as for
native."
50 All the Israelites did just as the Lord had commanded Mo
51 and Aaron. On that same day the Lord brought the Israeli
out of Egypt company by company.

13

1 ***Consecration of the First-born*** The Lord spoke to Mo
2 and said, "Consecrate to me every first-born that opens t
womb among the Israelites, both of man and beast, for it l
longs to me."
3 Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which y
came out of Egypt, that place of slavery. It was with a stro
hand that the Lord brought you away. Nothing made wi
4 leaven must be eaten. | This day of your departure is in t
5 month of Abib. Therefore, it is in this month that you mu
celebrate this rite, after the Lord, your God, has brought yo
into the land of the Chanaanites, Hethites, Amorrites, Hevit
and Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers he would gi
6 you, a land flowing with milk and honey. For seven days yo
shall eat unleavened bread, and the seventh day shall also be
7 festival to the Lord. Only unleavened bread may be eaten du
ing the seven days; no leaven and nothing leavened may l
8 found in all your territory. On this day you shall explain t
your son, 'This is because of what the Lord did for me when
9 came out of Egypt.' It shall be as a sign on your hand and as
reminder on your forehead; thus the law of the Lord will ev
be on your lips, because with a strong hand the Lord brough
10 you out of Egypt. Therefore, you shall keep this prescribed rit
at its appointed time from year to year.
11 "When the Lord, your God, has brought you into the lan
of the Chanaanites, which he swore to you and your fathers h
12 would give you, you shall dedicate to the Lord every son tha
opens the womb; and all the male firstlings of your animal
13 shall belong to the Lord. Every first-born of an ass you shal
redeem with a sheep. If you do not redeem it, you shal
14 break its neck. Every first-born son you must redeem. If you
son should ask you later on, 'What does this mean?' you shal
tell him, 'With a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt
15 that place of slavery. When Pharao stubbornly refused to let u
go, the Lord killed every first-born in the land of Egypt, ever
first-born of man and of beast. That is why I sacrifice to th
Lord everything of the male sex that opens the womb, and wh
16 I redeem every first-born of my sons.' Let this, then, be as

sign on your hand and as a pendant on your forehead: with a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt."

17 ***Toward the Red Sea*** Now, when Pharao let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the Philistines' land, though this was the nearest; for he thought, should the people see that they would have to fight, they might change their minds and
18 return to Egypt. Instead, he rerouted them toward the Red Sea by way of the desert road. In battle array the Israelites marched
19 out of Egypt. Moses also took Joseph's bones along, for Joseph had made the Israelites swear solemnly that, when God should come to them, they would carry his bones away with them.
20 Setting out from Socchoth, they camped at Etham near the edge of the desert.
21 The Lord preceded them, in the daytime by means of a column of cloud to show them the way, and at night by means of a column of fire to give them light. Thus they could travel
22 both day and night. Neither the column of cloud by day nor the column of fire by night ever left its place in front of the people.

14

1.2 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to turn about and camp before Phi-hahiroth, between Magdol and the sea. You shall camp in front of Baal-Saphon, just opposite, by
3 the sea. Pharao will then say, 'The Israelites are wandering about aimlessly in the land. The desert has closed in on them.'
4 Thus will I make Pharao so obstinate that he will pursue them. Then I will receive glory through Pharao and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord."

13, 21-22: In the Pentateuch, God's protecting and saving presence is symbolized differently according to three distinct traditions. The column of cloud and the pillar of fire are according to the Yahwist tradition, in vv. 21-22. Chapter 14, 19b and 24, also speak of the column of cloud and pillar of fire hiding and protecting the Israelites. The Elohist tradition (20, 21) speaks of a dark cloud (Araphel in Hebrew). The Priestly tradition (24, 15-18) speaks of a cloud together with the glory of God (Kabod), a devouring fire which moves about like God Himself.

14, 4: The author constantly attributes Pharao's obstinacy to God because, in Semitic thinking, God is responsible for everything, but not to the extent that He forced Pharao to be so obstinate that the ruler lost his freedom of choice and therefore was not guilty. But, in fact, Pharao admits his sin in 9, 27. Thus the author considers him to be free. It also shows that the author does not see any apparent conflict between God's omnipotence and man's free will—a problem often discussed by modern thinkers.

5 This the Israelites did. | When it was reported to the k
of Egypt that the people had fled, Pharao and his serva
changed their minds about them. "What have we done!" t
6 exclaimed. "Why, we have released Israel from our service!"
7 Pharao made his chariots ready and mustered his soldiers—
hundred first-class chariots and all the other chariots of Egy
8 with warriors on them all. So obstinate had the Lord ma
Pharao that he pursued the Israelites even while they w
9 marching away in triumph. The Egyptians, then, pursued the
Pharao's whole army, his horses, chariots and charioteer
caught up with them as they lay encamped by the sea, at Pi
hahiroth, in front of Baal-Saphon.

10 ***Crossing of the Red Sea*** Pharao was already near wh
the Israelites looked up and saw that the Egyptians were on t
march in pursuit of them. In great fright they cried out to t
11 Lord. And they complained to Moses, "Were there no buri
places in Egypt that you had to bring us out here to die in t
desert? Why did you do this to us? Why did you bring us o
12 of Egypt? Did we not tell you this in Egypt, when we sai
'Leave us alone. Let us serve the Egyptians'? Far better for us t
13 be the slaves of the Egyptians than to die in the desert." Bu
Moses answered the people, "Fear not! Stand your ground, an
you will see the victory the Lord will win for you today. Thes
14 Egyptians whom you see today you will never see again. Th
Lord himself will fight for you; you have only to keep still.
15 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out t
16 me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. | And you, lift up you
staff and, with hand outstretched over the sea, split the sea i
17 two, that the Israelites may pass through it on dry land. But
will make the Egyptians so obstinate that they will go in afte
them. Then I will receive glory through Pharao and all hi
18 army, his chariots and charioteers. The Egyptians shall know

14, 10: The better opinion holds that Rameses II (1290-1224 B.C.) was the Pharao of the Exodus.

14, 11-31: Since different traditions are artistically fused here in re counting the crossing of the sea, it is difficult to know exactly wha happened historically. Perhaps the clogging of the chariot wheel (v. 25) caused the defeat. The main point of the narrative is that Goc intervened to help His people at a critical moment. Divine Providence may have used the natural phenomenon of the wind lashing the water to a shallow depth allowing a fording. A similar natural phenomenon occurred to Scipio during his capture of New Carthage. The crossing of the sea left an indelible stamp on the pages of later Old Testament history. Paul (1 Cor 10, 1f) sees this crossing as a figure of Christian Baptism since both events are God's saving acts.

that I am the Lord, when I receive glory through Pharao and his chariots and charioteers."

19 The angel of God, who had been leading Israel's camp, now moved and went around behind them. The column of cloud
20 also, leaving the front, took up its place behind them, so that it came between the camp of the Egyptians and that of Israel. But the cloud now became dark, and thus the night passed without the rival camps coming any closer together all night long.
21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord swept the sea with a strong east wind throughout the night and so turned it into dry land. When the water was thus di-
22 vided, | the Israelites marched into the midst of the sea on dry land, with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.

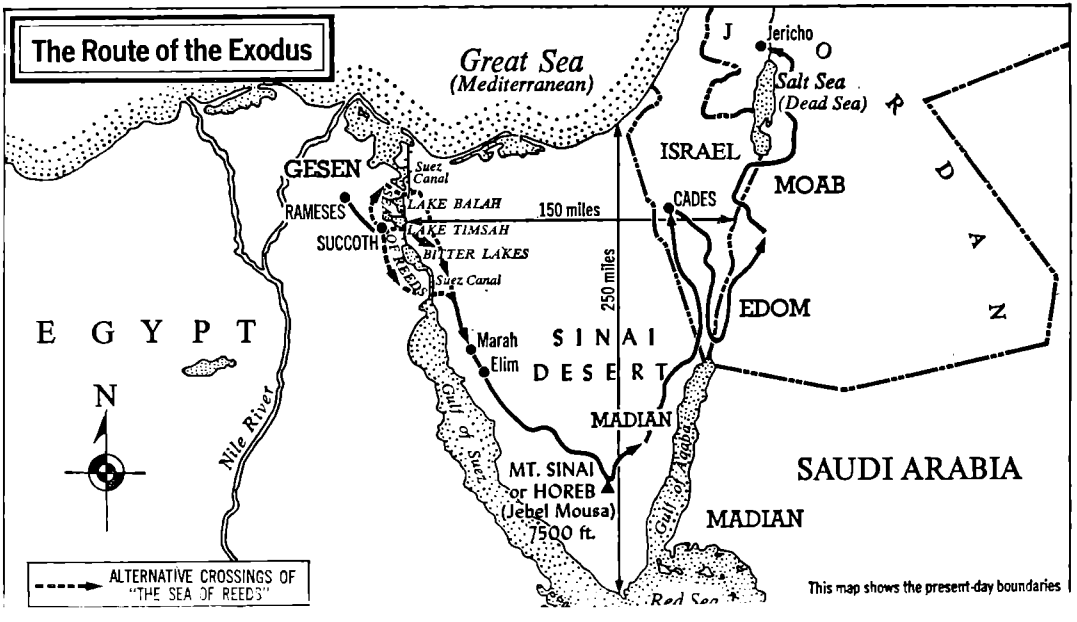
23 ***Destruction of the Egyptians*** The Egyptians followed in pursuit; all Pharao's horses and chariots and charioteers went
24 after them right into the midst of the sea. In the night watch just before dawn the Lord cast through the column of the fiery cloud upon the Egyptian force a glance that threw it into a
25 panic; and he so clogged their chariot wheels that they could hardly drive. With that the Egyptians sounded the retreat before Israel, because the Lord was fighting for them against the Egyptians.

26 Then the Lord told Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may flow back upon the Egyptians, upon
27 their chariots and charioteers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea flowed back to its normal depth. The Egyptians were fleeing head on toward the
28 sea, when the Lord hurled them into its midst. As the water flowed back, it covered the chariots and charioteers of Pharao's whole army which had followed the Israelites into the sea.
29 Not a single one of them escaped. But the Israelites had marched on dry land through the midst of the sea, with the
30 water like a wall to their right and to their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel on that day from the power of the Egyptians. When Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore
31 | and beheld the great power that the Lord had shown against the Egyptians, they feared the Lord and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

14, 19: *The column of cloud:* see 13, 21-22 n.

14, 23: Scholars cannot pinpoint the crossing of the sea. The Hebrews speak of the crossing at the reed sea. This indicates the marshy area of the lakes. The southern route is considered by far as the more probable one though it is far from certain. (See map, p. 126).

14, 24: *Cloud:* see 13, 21-22 n.


The Route of the Exodus
Great Sea
(Mediterranean)
Jericho
Salt Sea
(Dead Sea)
ISRAEL
MOAB
CADES
150 miles
250 miles
EDOM
GESEN
Suez Canal
RAMESES
LAKE BALAH
LAKE TIMSAH
SUCCOTH
BITTER LAKES
Suez Canal
RED SEA REEDS
E G Y P T
N
Nile River
Marah
Elim
SINAI
DESERT
MADIAN
Gulf of Suez
Gulf of Aqaba
MT. SINAI
or HOREB
(Jebel Mousa)
7500 ft.
SAUDI ARABIA
MADIAN
Red Sea
ALTERNATIVE CROSSINGS OF
"THE SEA OF REEDS"
This map shows the present-day boundaries

THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS

When the Israelites departed from Rameses, they did not follow the shorter northern route along the Mediterranean coast (Ex 13, 17) because they would have had to fight Egyptian soldiers. The Israelites journeyed to Succoth, 32 miles south of Rameses (called Soan in the Bible and Tanis in classical literature).

Scholars dispute about the location of the "Sea of Reeds" or "marshes" which is the meaning of the Hebrew "Yam Suph," and not Red Sea as the Septuagint, the Greek Bible, translates. It is most likely that the people crossed the Gulf of Suez, the northwestern branch of the Red Sea. The text implies that the Reed Sea was near Succoth and the expression could apply to any of the lake or marsh regions along the present Suez Canal, which stretches some 65 miles from the Mediterranean Sea to the Gulf of Suez.

The crossing was either below the Bitter Lakes or above them; the latter route is traced on the map facing this page. The least probable was the crossing above Lake Balah.

15

1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lor
I will sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant; ho
and chariot he has cast into the sea.
2 My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has be
my savior. He is my God, I praise him; the God of my fath
I extol him.
3.4 The Lord is a warrior, Lord is his name! Pharao's chari
and army he hurled into the sea; the elite of his officers we
5 submerged in the Red Sea. | The flood waters covered the
they sank into the depths like a stone.
6 Your right hand, O Lord, magnificent in power, your rig
7 hand, O Lord, has shattered the enemy. | In your great majes
you overthrew your adversaries; you loosed your wrath to co
8 sume them like stubble. At a breath of your anger the wate
piled up, the flowing waters stood like a mound, the floo
waters congealed in the midst of the sea.
9 The enemy boasted, "I will pursue and overtake them;
will divide the spoils and have my fill of them; I will dra
10 my sword; my hand shall despoil them!" When your win
blew, the sea covered them; like lead they sank in the might
waters.
11 Who is like to you among the gods, O Lord? Who is like t
you, magnificent in holiness? O terrible in renown, worker o
12 wonders, | when you stretched out your right hand, the eart
swallowed them!
13 In your mercy you led the people you redeemed; in you
14 strength you guided them to your holy dwelling. The nation
heard and quaked; anguish gripped the dwellers in Philistia
15 Then were the princes of Edom dismayed; trembling seized th
chieftains of Moab; all the dwellers in Chanaan melted away
16 | terror and dread fell upon them. By the might of your arm
they were frozen like stone, while your people, O Lord, passe
over, while the people you had made your own passed over
17 And you brought them in and planted them on the mountai
of your inheritance—the place where you made your seat, O
Lord, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands established
18 The Lord shall reign forever and ever.

15, 1-21: This Canticle of Moses (v. 1) or Mariam (v. 20) is the national anthem of ancient Israel or the Hebrew *Te Deum*. V. 21 is generally felt to have been written contemporaneously with the even it celebrates. There are clues (vv. 14 and 15) that the rest of the song (vv. 1-20) was written at a later date. Just as Haydn's oratorio, *Creation*, is the most expressive commentary on Gn 1-2, so is Handel's *Israel in Egypt* the most expressive commentary on Ex 15.

19 They sang thus because Pharao's horses and chariots and
charioteers had gone into the sea, and the Lord made the waters
of the sea flow back upon them, though the Israelites had
20 marched on dry land through the midst of the sea. So the
prophetess Mariam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her
hand, while all the women went out after her with tambourines,
21 dancing; and she answered them with the refrain: Sing to the
Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant; horse and chariot he has
cast into the sea.

22 ***At Mara and Elim*** Then Moses led Israel forward from
the Red Sea, and they marched out to the desert of Sur. After
traveling for three days through the desert without finding
23 water, | they arrived at Mara, where they could not drink the
water, because it was too bitter. Hence this place was called
24 Mara. As the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What
25 are we to drink?" | he appealed to the Lord, who pointed out
to him a certain piece of wood. When he threw this into the
water, the water became fresh.

It was here that the Lord, in making rules and regulations
26 for them, put them to the test. "If you really listen to the voice
of the Lord, your God," he told them, "and do what is right in
his eyes: if you heed his commandments and keep all his pre-
cepts, I will not afflict you with any of the diseases with which
I afflicted the Egyptians; for I, the Lord, am your healer."
27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of
water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the
water.

16

1 ***The Desert of Sin*** Having set out from Elim, the whole
Israelite community came into the desert of Sin, which is be-
tween Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month
2 after their departure from the land of Egypt. Here in the desert
the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and
3 Aaron. The Israelites said to them, "Would that we had died
at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our flesh-
pots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this
desert to make the whole community die of famine!"

4 ***The Quail and Manna*** Then the Lord said to Moses, "I

15, 25: Perhaps in the desert there was a species of wood with properties for sweetening bitter water. See Sir 38, 5.

16, 4-36: A doublet is found in Nm 11, 5-9. The natural desert food

will now rain down bread from heaven for you. Each day
people are to go out and gather their daily portion; thus
I test them, to see whether they follow my instructions or
5 On the sixth day, however, when they prepare what they br
in, let it be twice as much as they gather on the other day
6 So Moses and Aaron told all the Israelites, "At evening
will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of
7 land of Egypt; and in the morning you will see the glory of
Lord, as he heeds your grumbling against him. But what
8 we that you should grumble against us? When the Lord gi
you flesh to eat in the evening," continued Moses, "and in t
morning your fill of bread, as he heeds the grumbling y
utter against him, what then are we? Your grumbling is
against us, but against the Lord."
9 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Tell the whole Israelite co
munity: Present yourselves before the Lord, for he has hea
10 your grumbling." When Aaron announced this to the wh
Israelite community, they turned toward the desert, and lo, t
11 glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud! The Lord spoke
12 Moses and said, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelit
Tell them: In the evening twilight you shall eat flesh, and
the morning you shall have your fill of bread, so that you m
know that I, the Lord, am your God."
13 In the evening quail came up and covered the camp. In t
14 morning a dew lay all about the camp, | and when the de
evaporated, there on the surface of the desert were fine flak
15 like hoarfrost on the ground. On seeing it, the Israelites aske
one another, "What is this?" for they did not know what it wa
But Moses told them, "This is the bread which the Lord ha
given you to eat.

16 ***Regulations Regarding the Manna*** "Now, this is wha
the Lord has commanded. So gather it that everyone ha
enough to eat, a gomor for each person, as many of you a
17 there are, each man providing for those of his own tent." Th
Israelites did so. Some gathered a large and some a smal
18 amount. But when they measured it out by the gomor, he wh
had gathered a large amount did not have too much, and h
who had gathered a small amount did not have too little. They

called manna is directly attributed as a wondrous gift from God. The manna may have been the "gum" from insects found on tamarisk trees in Sinai from May to July. However, the properties of manna (v. 31) do not accord well with any known food.

16, 18: Some scholars think that the gomor is six and one-half pints.

so gathered that everyone had enough to eat. Moses also told
them, "Let no one keep any of it over until tomorrow morn-
ing." But they would not listen to him. When some kept a
part of it over until the following morning, it became wormy
and rotten. Therefore Moses was displeased with them.
Morning after morning they gathered it, till each had enough
to eat; but when the sun grew hot, the manna melted away.
On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, two gomors
for each person. When all the leaders of the community came
and reported this to Moses, he told them, "That is what the
Lord prescribed. Tomorrow is a day of complete rest, the Sab-
bath, sacred to the Lord. You may either bake or boil the
manna, as you please; but whatever is left put away and keep
for the morrow." When they put it away for the morrow, as
Moses commanded, it did not become rotten or wormy. Moses
then said, "Eat it today, for today is the Sabbath of the Lord.
On this day you will not find any of it on the ground. On the
other six days you can gather it, but on the seventh day, the
Sabbath, none of it will be there." Still, on the seventh day some
of the people went out to gather it, although they did not find
any. Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will you refuse
to keep my commandments and laws? Take note! The Lord has
given you the Sabbath. That is why on the sixth day he gives
you food for two days. On the seventh day everyone is to stay
home and no one is to go out." After that the people rested on
the seventh day.
The Israelites called this food manna. It was like coriander
seed, but white, and it tasted like wafers made with honey.
Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded. Keep a
gomorful of manna for your descendants, that they may see
what food I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you
out of the land of Egypt." Moses then told Aaron, "Take an
urn and put a gomor of manna in it. Then place it before the
Lord in safekeeping for your descendants." So Aaron placed
it in front of the Commandments for safekeeping, as the Lord
had commanded Moses.
The Israelites ate this manna for forty years, until they came
to settled land; they ate manna until they reached the borders
of Chanaan. [A gomor is one tenth of an epha.]

16, 35: The manna was not the only food the people ate (see "live-
stock" in 17, 3). The Sabbath regulations show that most of this chap-
ter belongs to the Priestly tradition of the sixth century B.C. In Jn
6, 31-59, manna is spoken of as a type of the Holy Eucharist. The
liturgy continues this typology.

17

1 ***Water from the Rock*** From the desert of Sin the whole
Israelite community journeyed by stages, as the Lord directed,
and encamped at Raphidim.
2 Here there was no water for the people to drink. The people
quarreled, therefore, with Moses and said, "Give us water to
drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do
3 you put the Lord to a test?" | Here, then, in their thirst for
water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "Why did
you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here
4 of thirst with our children and our livestock?" So Moses cried
out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? A little
5 more and they will stone me!" The Lord answered Moses:
"Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the
elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with
6 which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of
you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will
flow from it for the people to drink." This Moses did, in the
7 presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massa
and Meriba, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested
the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord in our midst or not?"

8 ***Battle with Amalec*** At Raphidim, Amalec came and waged
9 war against Israel. Moses, therefore, said to Josue, "Pick out
certain men, and tomorrow go out and engage Amalec in
battle. I will be standing on top of the hill with the staff of God
10 in my hand." So Josue did as Moses told him: he engaged
Amalec in battle after Moses had climbed to the top of the hill
11 with Aaron and Hur. As long as Moses kept his hands raised up,
Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest,
12 Amalec had the better of the fight. Moses' hands, however,
grew tired; so they put a rock in place for him to sit on. Mean-
while Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side
and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till
13 sunset. And Josue mowed down Amalec and his people with
the edge of the sword.
14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this down in a docu-
ment as something to be remembered, and recite it in the ears
of Josue: I will completely blot out the memory of Amalec from
15 under the heavens." Moses also built an altar there, which he

17, 1-7: See Nm 20, 1-13 n, for either a similar incident or a doublet.

17, 8-16: The people of Amalec are the descendants of Esau (Gn 36, 16). This episode teaches the necessity of perseverance in prayer.

16 called Yahweh-nissi; for he said, "The Lord takes in hand his
banner; the Lord will war against Amalec through the cen-
turies."

18

1 ***Meeting with Jethro*** Now Moses' father-in-law Jethro,
the priest of Madian, heard of all that God had done for Moses
and for his people Israel: how the Lord had brought Israel out
2 of Egypt. So his father-in-law Jethro took along Sepphora,
3 Moses' wife, whom Moses had sent back to him, | and her two
sons. One of these was called Gersam; for he said, "I am a
4 stranger in a foreign land." The other was called Eliezer; for
he said, "My father's God is my helper; he has rescued me from
5 Pharao's sword." Together with Moses' wife and sons, then,
his father-in-law Jethro came to him in the desert where he was
6 encamped near the mountain of God, and he sent word to
Moses, "I, Jethro, your father-in-law, am coming to you, along
with your wife and her two sons."
7 Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down before
him, and kissed him. Having greeted each other, they went into
8 the tent. Moses then told his father-in-law of all that the Lord
had done to Pharao and the Egyptians for the sake of Israel,
and of all the hardships they had had to endure on their jour-
9 ney, and how the Lord had come to their rescue. Jethro rejoiced
over all the goodness that the Lord had shown Israel in rescuing
10 them from the hands of the Egyptians. "Blessed be the Lord,"
he said, "who has rescued his people from the hands of Pharao
11 and the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is a deity great
beyond any other; for he took occasion of their being dealt with
insolently to deliver the people from the power of the Egyp-
12 tians." Then Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, brought a holo-
caust and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the
elders of Israel to participate with Moses' father-in-law in the
meal before God.

13 ***Appointment of Minor Judges*** The next day Moses sat
in judgment for the people, who waited about him from morn-
14 ing until evening. When his father-in-law saw all that he was
doing for the people, he inquired, "What sort of thing is this
that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone while
all the people have to stand about you from morning till eve-
15 ning?" Moses answered his father-in-law, "The people come to

18, 3: Almost all the etymologies in the Pentateuch like those through-
out the Bible are folk or popular etymologies not scientific ones.

16 me to consult God. Whenever they have a disagreement, the
come to me to have me settle the matter between them an
make known to them God's decisions and regulations."
17.18 "You are not acting wisely," his father-in-law replied. "Yo
will surely wear yourself out, and not only yourself but als
these people with you. The task is too heavy for you; yo
19 cannot do it alone. | Now, listen to me, and I will give you som
advice, that God may be with you. Act as the people's repre
sentative before God, bringing to him whatever they have to say
20 Enlighten them in regard to the decisions and regulations, show
21 ing them how they are to live and what they are to do. But yo
should also look among all the people for able and God-fearing
men, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and set them a
officers over groups of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and o
22 tens. Let these men render decisions for the people in all ordi
nary cases. More important cases they should refer to you
but all the lesser cases they can settle themselves. Thus, your
23 burden will be lightened, since they will bear it with you. If
you do this, when God gives you orders you will be able to
stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."
24 Moses followed the advice of his father-in-law and did all
25 that he had suggested. He picked out able men from all Israel
and put them in charge of the people as officers over groups of
26 thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. They rendered
decisions for the people in all ordinary cases. The more difficult
cases they referred to Moses, but all the lesser cases they set-
27 tled themselves. Then Moses bade farewell to his father-in-law,
who went off to his own country.

III. THE COVENANT AT MOUNT SINAI

19

1 ***Arrival at Sinai*** In the third month after their departure
from the land of Egypt, on its first day, the Israelites came to
2 the desert of Sinai. After the journey from Raphidim to the
desert of Sinai, they pitched camp.

While Israel was encamped here in front of the mountain,
3 | Moses went up the mountain to God. Then the Lord called

19—24: These six chapters comprise the essential part of the Old Testament, namely, the Covenant at Mount Sinai and the Code of the Alliance. These chapters are not presented just as the events happened, but as they were later theologically reinterpreted in the liturgy. Jos 24 is a good example of an account of the liturgical feast of the Covenant renewal.

19, 3-6: This is the explanation of the Covenant or *berit* in Hebrew.

to him and said, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob;
4 tell the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves how I treated
the Egyptians and how I bore you up on eagle wings and
5 brought you here to myself. Therefore, if you hearken to my
voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession,
dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine.
6 You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. That
7 is what you must tell the Israelites." So Moses went and sum-
moned the elders of the people. When he set before them all
8 that the Lord had ordered him to tell them, the people all an-
swered together, "Everything the Lord has said, we will do."
Then Moses brought back to the Lord the response of the
people.
9 The Lord also told him, "I am coming to you in a dense
cloud, so that when the people hear me speaking with you, they
may always have faith in you also." When Moses, then, had
10 reported to the Lord the response of the people, | the Lord
added, "Go to the people and have them sanctify themselves
11 today and tomorrow. Make them wash their garments | and
be ready for the third day; for on the third day the Lord will
come down on Mount Sinai before the eyes of all the people.
12 Set limits for the people all around the mountain, and tell them:
Take care not to go up the mountain, or even to touch its base.
13 If anyone touches the mountain he must be put to death. No
hand shall touch him; he must be stoned to death or killed with
arrows. Such a one, man or beast, must not be allowed to live.
Only when the ram's horn resounds may they go up to the
14 mountain." Then Moses came down from the mountain to the
people and had them sanctify themselves and wash their gar-
15 ments. He warned them, "Be ready for the third day. Have no
intercourse with any woman."

16 ***The Great Theophany*** On the morning of the third day
there were peals of thunder and lightning, and a heavy cloud
over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all
17 the people in the camp trembled. But Moses led the people out
of the camp to meet God, and they stationed themselves at the

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The people were to obey God as their King, and be as holy as a priest.

19, 9-19: May well be a parallel account of vv. 20-25. See 13, 21-22 n, for v. 9.

19, 16-19: Because these ancient biblical writers wrote to answer the question "what does this mean" rather than "did it really happen," it is difficult to separate the historical event from its literary embroidery. Miracles in our modern sense may very well have happened along the route of Exodus. They happen today at Lourdes. In this scene, most

18 foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smo
for the Lord came down upon it in fire. The smoke rose fr
it as though from a furnace, and the whole mountain tr
19 bled violently. The trumpet blast grew louder and louder, w
Moses was speaking and God answering him with thun
20 When the Lord came down to the top of Mount Sinai,
summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses w
21 up to him. Then the Lord told Moses, "Go down and warn
people not to break through toward the Lord in order to
22 him; otherwise many of them will be struck down. The prie
too, who approach the Lord must sanctify themselves; else
23 will vent his anger upon them." Moses said to the Lord, "T
people cannot go up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warr
24 us to set limits around the mountain to make it sacred." T
Lord repeated, "Go down now! Then come up again along w
Aaron. But the priests and the people must not break throu
to come up to the Lord; else he will vent his anger upon them
25 So Moses went down to the people and told them this.

20

1 ***The Ten Commandments*** Then God delivered all the
commandments:
2 "I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the lan
3 of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall not have other go
4 besides me. You shall not carve idols for yourselves in th
shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or

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modern scholars understand the fire and cosmic disturbances as a re
erent dramatic way of expressing the true presence and power of Go
Scholars do not understand exactly how God made His presence felt
how He intervened historically at the scene of the Ten Commandment
But of all the extraordinary Exodus events the scholars hold that i
this scene God must have certainly intervened with His Covenant. Th
rest of Old Testament history would not make sense otherwise.

19, 18: *Mount Sinai:* it is the other name for Mount Horeb; th
traditional and still most widely accepted site is Jebel Musa (Arabi
name, meaning "mountain of Moses"). See map: The Route of th
Exodus, p. 126.

19, 20: The Lord already descended according to v. 18.

20, 1-17: The Ten Commandments were originally very brief com
mandments as in v. 13. They were probably originally written in th
negative. The Hebrew is even more brief than the English. The Com
mandments here are according to the Priestly tradition. The Command
ments in Dt 5, 6-21 are according to the Deuteronomic tradition
Both parallel accounts are enlarged. The Exodus account is older i
content, the Deuteronomy account older in its literary fixation. Sinc
the Scriptures speak of ten words, whence we derive the word Deca
logue, all agree that there are ten commandments but scholars disagre
on the enumeration.

5 the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before
them or worship them. For I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous
God, inflicting punishment for their fathers' wickedness on the
children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth
6 generation; but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth gen-
eration, on the children of those who love me and keep my
commandments.
7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in
vain. For the Lord will not leave unpunished him who takes
his name in vain.
8-9 "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days you may
10 labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath
of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then either by
you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave,
11 or your beast, or by the alien who lives with you. In six days the
Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is
in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the
Lord has blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
12 "Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a
long life in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.
13 "You shall not kill.
14 "You shall not commit adultery.
15 "You shall not steal.
16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not

St. Augustine's enumeration has been adopted by the Church and by the Lutherans. He makes the worship of false gods and of images one commandment (the first commandment), while the coveting of another's wife and of another's goods are considered as two distinct commandments (the ninth and tenth, respectively).

On the other hand, the enumeration established by Philo, Josephus, and followed by the Jews, many Greek Fathers, and many Protestants today reverses the numbering. The worship of false gods and of images are two commandments (the first and the second), while the coveting of another's wife and of another's goods are considered as one commandment (the tenth). The divergence of opinion is a literary, not a doctrinal, question. None of the Ten Commandments goes beyond natural religion and the natural law; yet it is noteworthy that no other ancient religion ever expressed them so exactly.

20, 5: *Jealous God:* no pagan god of antiquity ever demanded such an exclusive love as did Yahweh, the god of the Hebrews.

20, 6: *Thousandth generation:* God's mercy goes further than his wrath.

20, 8: *The Sabbath:* has some traits that are original in Israel. It most likely goes back to the time of Moses. See 20, 1-17 n.

20, 17: The wife is subordinated to the house here, but Dt 5, 21 shows a higher consideration when it places the wife first.

covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave,
his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him."

18 ***The Fear of God*** When the people witnessed the thun
and lightning, the trumpet blast and the mountain smok
they all feared and trembled. So they took up a position n
19 farther away | and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and
will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we shall d
20 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid, for God
come to you only to test you and put his fear upon you,
21 you should sin." Still the people remained at a distance, w
Moses approached the cloud where God was.
22 The Lord told Moses, "Thus shall you speak to the Israelit
You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you fr
23 heaven. Do not make anything to rank with me; either g
of silver nor gods of gold shall you make for yourselves.
24 "An altar of earth you shall make for me, and upon it y
shall sacrifice your holocausts and peace offerings, your she
and your oxen. In whatever place I choose for the remembran
25 of my name I will come to you and bless you. If you make
altar of stone for me, do not build it of cut stone, for by putti
26 a tool to it you desecrate it. You shall not go up by steps
my altar, on which you must not be indecently uncovered.

21

1 ***Laws Regarding Slaves*** "These are the rules you shall l

20, 19: *Or we shall die:* God is so holy that just to hear Him wou
suffice to cause death. A different view is presented in Dt 5, 24.

20, 21: *Cloud:* see 13, 21-22.

20, 22—23, 19: This section is called the Code of the Alliance
Covenant. It gets its name from 24, 7f. The Ten Commandments a
the nerve center of this Code. The allusions to houses show that th
Code as given here was made when the people were more sedentar
than semi-nomadic. The Code is attributed to the eighth century B.C
Elohist tradition. Yet, when stripped of its modernizations, there ar
enough clues to make scholars believe that the Code goes back to Mose
himself. The Code is a religious Code and it is placed after the Te
Commandments to apply them to civil and criminal life.

Excavated codes of the Sumerians, Assyrians, Hittites, and that
Hammurabi reveal that the biblical Code, though younger, did not bo
row directly but drew from a common Near Eastern source. Th
written formulation of the Code can be shown to be an adaptation o
one type of Hittite treaty, in force about 1450-1200 B.C. Technicall
and juridically the Code is inferior to the other oriental codes. Ethi
cally and religiously, it is superior. Literarily, the Code of the Alli
ance is composed of a series of prescriptions in the conditional style
"if you . . .," e.g., 21, 3-11. Another series of prescriptions is foun
in the imperative style, "you shall . . ." as in the Decalogue, e.g., 20
22-24.

2 before them. When you purchase a Hebrew slave, he is to
serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he shall be given
3 his freedom without cost. If he comes into service alone, he
shall leave alone; if he comes with a wife, his wife shall leave
4 with him. But if his master gives him a wife and she bears
him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall re-
main the master's property and the man shall leave alone.
5 If, however, the slave declares, 'I am devoted to my master
6 and my wife and children; I will not go free,' | his master
shall bring him to God and there, at the door or doorpost, he
shall pierce his ear with an awl, thus keeping him as his slave
forever.

7 When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not
8 go free as male slaves do. But if her master who had destined
her for himself dislikes her, he shall let her be redeemed. He
has no right to sell her to a foreigner, since he has broken
9 faith with her. If he destines her for his son, he shall treat
10 her like a daughter. If he takes another wife, he shall not
11 withhold her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. If he
does not grant her these three things, she shall be given her
freedom absolutely, without cost to her.

12 ***Personal Injury*** "Whoever strikes a man a mortal blow
13 must be put to death. He, however, who did not hunt a man
down, but caused his death by an act of God, may flee to a
14 place which I will set apart for this purpose. But when a man
kills another after maliciously scheming to do so, you must
15 take him even from my altar and put him to death. Whoever
strikes his father or mother shall be put to death.

16 "A kidnaper, whether he sells his victim or still has him
when caught, shall be put to death.

17 "Whoever curses his father or mother shall be put to death.

18 "When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone
or with his fist, not mortally, but enough to put him in bed,
19 the one who struck the blow shall be acquitted, provided
the other can get up and walk around with the help of his
staff. Still, he must compensate him for his enforced idleness
and provide for his complete cure.

20 "When a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod
so hard that the slave dies under his hand, he shall be pun-
21 ished. If, however, the slave survives for a day or two, he is
not to be punished, since the slave is his own property.

22 "When men have a fight and hurt a pregnant woman, so
that she suffers a miscarriage, but no further injury, the guilty
one shall be fined as much as the woman's husband demands

of him, and he shall pay in the presence of the judg
23.24 But if injury ensues, you shall give life for life, | eye
25 eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, | burn
burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
26 "When a man strikes his male or female slave in the
and destroys the use of the eye, he shall let the slave go free
27 compensation for the eye. If he knocks out a tooth of his m
or female slave, he shall let the slave go free in compensati
for the tooth.
28 "When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the
must be stoned; its flesh may not be eaten. The owner of t
29 ox, however, shall go unpunished. But if an ox was previou
in the habit of goring people and its owner, though warne
would not keep it in; should it then kill a man or a woma
not only must the ox be stoned, but its owner also must
30 put to death. If, however, a fine is imposed on him, he mu
pay in ransom for his life whatever amount is imposed on hi
31.32 This law applies if it is a boy or a girl that the ox gores. B
if it is a male or a female slave that it gores, he must pay th
owner of the slave thirty shekels of silver, and the ox must b
stoned.

33 ***Property Damage*** "When a man uncovers or digs a cister
and does not cover it over again, should an ox or an ass fa
34 into it, the owner of the cistern must make good by restorin
the value of the animal to its owner; the dead animal, however
he may keep.
35 "When one man's ox hurts another's ox so badly that i
dies, they shall sell the live ox and divide this money as wel
36 as the dead animal equally between them. But if it was known
that the ox was previously in the habit of goring and its
owner would not keep it in, he must make full restitution
an ox for an ox; but the dead animal he may keep.
37 "When a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters o
sells it, he shall restore five oxen for the one ox, and four sheep
for the one sheep.

22

1 [If a thief is caught in the act of housebreaking and beaten to
2 death, there is no bloodguilt involved. But if after sunrise he

21, 23-25: This is known as the law of retaliation. Its purpose was to mitigate revenge. The Israelites abided by this law together with several other peoples of the ancient Near East, long before the Code of Alliance was adopted. See Gn 4, 23; Lv 24, 20. However, the formulation "eye for eye . . ." was peculiar to the Israelites.

is thus beaten, there is bloodguilt.] He must make full restitution. If he has nothing, he shall be sold to pay for his theft.
3 If what he stole is found alive in his possession, be it an ox, an ass or a sheep, he shall restore two animals for each one stolen.
4 "When a man is burning over a field or a vineyard, if he lets the fire spread so that it burns in another's field, he must make restitution with the best produce of his own field or
5 vineyard. If the fire spreads further, and catches on to thorn bushes, so that shocked grain or standing grain or the field itself is burned up, the one who started the fire must make full restitution.

6 *Trusts and Loans* "When a man gives money or any article to another for safekeeping and it is stolen from the latter's
7 house, the thief, if caught, must make twofold restitution. If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house shall be brought to God, to swear that he himself did not lay hands on his
8 neighbor's property. In every question of dishonest appropriation, whether it be about an ox, or an ass, or a garment, or anything else that has disappeared, where another claims that the thing is his, both parties shall present their case before God; the one whom God convicts must make twofold restitution to the other.
9 "When a man gives an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any other animal to another for safekeeping, if it dies, or is maimed
10 or snatched away, without anyone witnessing the fact, the custodian shall swear by the Lord that he did not lay hands on his neighbor's property; the owner must accept the oath, and
11 no restitution is to be made. But if the custodian is really
12 guilty of theft, he must make restitution to the owner. If it has been killed by a wild beast, let him bring it as evidence, and he need not make restitution for the mangled animal.
13 "When a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, if it is maimed or dies while the owner is not present, the man must
14 make restitution. But if the owner is present, he need not make restitution. If it was hired, this was covered by the price of its hire.

15 *Social Laws* "When a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall pay her marriage price and

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22, 15: Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons, often referred to Jacob's polygamous marriages and to this text to justify polygamy. But this interpretation forgets the New Testament teaching, e.g., Christ's abolition of divorce in Mt 19, 3-12.

16 marry her. If her father refuses to give her to him, he n
still pay him the customary marriage price for virgins.
17 "You shall not let a sorceress live.
18 "Anyone who lies with an animal shall be put to death.
19 "Whoever sacrifices to any god, except to the Lord al
shall be doomed.
20 "You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you w
21 once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall
22 wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them
23 they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry. My wrath
flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your
wives will be widows, and your children orphans.
24 "If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors am
my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward h
25 by demanding interest from him. If you take your neighb
26 cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before sunset;
this cloak of his is the only covering he has for his body. Wh
else has he to sleep in? If he cries out to me, I will hear hi
for I am compassionate.
27 "You shall not revile God, nor curse a prince of your peop
28 "You shall not delay the offering of your harvest and yo
29 press. You shall give me the first-born of your sons. You mu
do the same with your oxen and your sheep; for seven da
the firstling may stay with its mother, but on the eighth d
you must give it to me.
30 "You shall be men sacred to me. Flesh torn to pieces in th
field you shall not eat; throw it to the dogs.

23

1 "You shall not repeat a false report. Do not join the wicke
2 in putting your hand, as an unjust witness, upon anyone. Ne
ther shall you allege the example of the many as an excuse fo
doing wrong, nor shall you, when testifying in a lawsuit, sid
3 with the many in perverting justice. You shall not favor a poo
man in his lawsuit.
4 "When you come upon your enemy's ox or ass going astray
5 see to it that it is returned to him. When you notice the ass o
one who hates you lying prostrate under its burden, by n
means desert him; help him, rather, to raise it up.
6 "You shall not deny one of your needy fellow men hi
7 rights in his lawsuit. You shall keep away from anything dis
honest. The innocent and the just you shall not put to death
8 nor shall you acquit the guilty. Never take a bribe, for a brib
blinds even the most clear-sighted and twists the words ever
9 of the just. You shall not oppress an alien; you well know how

it feels to be an alien, since you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.

10 ***Religious Laws*** "For six years you may sow your land and
11 gather in its produce. But the seventh year you shall let the land lie untilled and unharvested, that the poor among you may eat of it and the beasts of the field may eat what the poor leave. So also shall you do in regard to your vineyard and your olive grove.

12 "For six days you may do your work, but on the seventh day you must rest, that your ox and your ass may also have rest, and that the son of your maidservant and the alien may
13 be refreshed. Give heed to all that I have told you.

"Never mention the name of any other god; it shall not be heard from your lips.

14 "Three times a year you shall celebrate a pilgrim feast to
15 me. | You shall keep the feast of Unleavened Bread. As I have commanded you, you must eat unleavened bread for seven days at the prescribed time in the month of Abib, for it was then that you came out of Egypt. No one shall ap-
16 pear before me empty-handed. You shall also keep the feast of the grain harvest with the first of the crop that you have sown in the field; and finally, the feast at the fruit harvest at the end of the year, when you gather in the produce from
17 the fields. Thrice a year shall all your men appear before the Lord God.

18 "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of my feast be kept overnight till the
19 next day. The choicest first fruits of your soil you shall bring to the house of the Lord, your God.

"You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

20 ***Reward of Fidelity*** "See, I am sending an angel before you, to guard you on the way and bring you to the place I have
21 prepared. Be attentive to him and heed his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not forgive your sin. My authority
22 resides in him. If you heed his voice and carry out all I tell you, I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes.
23 "My angel will go before you and bring you to the Amorrites, Hethites, Pherezites, Chanaanites, Hevites and Jebusites; and
24 I will wipe them out. Therefore, you shall not bow down in worship before their gods, nor shall you make anything like

23, 20-23: The angel means God Himself as in similar previous passages. See Gn 16. 1-15 n.

them; rather, you must demolish them and smash their sac
25 pillars. The Lord, your God, you shall worship; then I
bless your food and drink, and I will remove all sickness fi
26 your midst; no woman in your land will be barren or miscai
and I will give you a full span of life.
27 "I will have the fear of me precede you, so that I will thi
into panic every nation you reach. I will make all your enen
28 turn from you in flight, and ahead of you I will send horr
to drive the Hevites, Chanaanites and Hethites out of y
29 way. But not in one year will I drive them all out before y
else the land will become so desolate that the wild beasts v
30 multiply against you. Instead, I will drive them out little
little before you, until you have grown numerous enough
31 take possession of the land. I will set your boundaries from
Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert
the River; all who dwell in this land I will hand over to y
32 to be driven out of your way. You shall not make a covena
33 with them or their gods. They must not abide in your lar
lest they make you sin against me by ensnaring you into w
shiping their gods."

24

1 ***Ratification of the Covenant*** Moses himself was tol
"Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, with Nadab, Abiu, ar
seventy of the elders of Israel. You shall all worship at son
2 distance, but Moses alone is to come close to the Lord; th
others shall not come too near, and the people shall not con
up at all with Moses."
3 When Moses came to the people and related all the wor
and ordinances of the Lord, they all answered with one voic
4 "We will do everything that the Lord has told us." Moses the
wrote down all the words of the Lord and, rising early the ne
day, he erected at the foot of the mountain an altar an
5 twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, having sen
certain young men of the Israelites to offer holocausts an
6 sacrifice young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord, Moses tool
half of the blood and put it in large bowls; the other half h
7 splashed on the altar. Taking the Book of the Covenant, h
read it aloud to the people, who answered, "All that the Lor
8 has said, we will heed and do." Then he took the blood an
sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of th
covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordanc
with all these words of his."

23, 28: *Hornets:* afflictions.

9 Moses then went up with Aaron, Nadab, Abiu, and seventy
10 elders of Israel, and they beheld the God of Israel. Under his
feet there appeared to be sapphire tilework, as clear as the sky
11 itself. Yet he did not smite these chosen Israelites. After gazing
on God, they could still eat and drink.

12 ***Moses on the Mountain*** The Lord said to Moses, "Come
up to me on the mountain and, while you are there, I will give
you the stone tablets on which I have written the command-
13 ments intended for their instruction." So Moses set out with
14 Josue, his aide, and went up to the mountain of God. The eld-
ers, however, had been told by him, "Wait here for us un-
til we return to you. Aaron and Hur are staying with you. If
anyone has a complaint, let him refer the matter to them."
15 After Moses had gone up, a cloud covered the mountain.
16 The glory of the Lord settled upon Mount Sinai. The cloud
covered it for six days, and on the seventh day he called to
17 Moses from the midst of the cloud. To the Israelites the glory
of the Lord was seen as a consuming fire on the mountaintop.
18 But Moses passed into the midst of the cloud as he went up
on the mountain; and there he stayed for forty days and forty
nights.

IV. THE DWELLING AND ITS FURNISHINGS

25

1 ***Collection of Materials*** This is what the Lord then said to
2 Moses: "Tell the Israelites to take up a collection for me. From
every man you shall accept the contribution that his heart
3 prompts him to give me. These are the contributions you shall
4 accept from them: gold, silver and bronze; | violet, purple and
5 scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; | rams' skins dyed red,
6 and thahas skins; acacia wood; | oil for the light; spices for the
7 anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; onyx stones and
other gems for mounting on the ephod and the breastpiece.
8 "They shall make a sanctuary for me, that I may dwell in
9 their midst. This Dwelling and all its furnishings you shall
make exactly according to the pattern that I will now show you.

24, 12: Laws in the ancient Near East were written on stone blocks, e.g., the Code of Hammurabi. The author may not necessarily mean that God Himself wrote on these two tablets; he may be following the example of the Egyptians who used to say that the finger of such and such a god wrote such and such an inscription. See 31, 18; 32, 16; 34, 1.

24, 15-18: See 13, 21-22.

10 ***Plan of the Ark*** "You shall make an ark of acacia woc
two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, ar
11 one and a half cubits high. Plate it inside and outside wi
12 pure gold, and put a molding of gold around the top of it. Ca
four gold rings and fasten them on the four supports of tl
13 ark, two rings on one side and two on the opposite side. Th
14 make poles of acacia wood and plate them with gold. The
poles you are to put through the rings on the sides of the ar
15 for carrying it; they must remain in the rings of the ark ar
16 never be withdrawn. In the ark you are to put the Comman
ments which I will give you.
17 "You shall then make a propitiatory of pure gold, two ci
18 bits and a half long, and one and a half cubits wide. Make tw
cherubim of beaten gold for the two ends of the propitiator
19 fastening them so that one cherub springs direct from each en
20 The cherubim shall have their wings spread out above, cove
ing the propitiatory with them; they shall be turned towar
each other, but with their faces looking toward the propitiatory
21 This propitiatory you shall then place on top of the ark. I
the ark itself you are to put the Commandments which I wil
22 give you. There I will meet you and there, from above the pro
pitiatory between the two cherubim on the Ark of the Com
mandments, I will tell you all the commands that I wish you t
give the Israelites.

23 ***The Table*** "You shall also make a table of acacia wood
24 two cubits long, a cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high. Plate
25 it with pure gold and make a molding of gold around it. Sur-
round it with a frame, a handbreadth high, with a molding of
26 gold around the frame. You shall also make four rings of gold
27 for it and fasten them at the four corners, | one at each leg,

25—31: These seven chapters belong to the Priestly tradition. They were finally written after the end of the exile in 538 B.C. Some things mentioned here really go back to the time of Moses in the thirteenth century B.C., namely, the Ark of the Covenant, the tent, and other similar things with which Moses provided for the cult. But the main stress of the final redactor is that all these prescriptions of the construction of the sanctuary and of the cult, plus the whole development of the cult from Moses to the sixth century B.C., are authentically Mosaic. Therefore, these prescriptions are executed according to God's explicit will. To underscore this, the redactor makes God dictate the prescriptions to Moses. From many aspects, the tent in the Sinai desert is a miniature copy of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem built in the tenth century B.C., and as it was remembered in the sixth century B.C. In a sense these seven chapters speak of both the tent in Sinai and Solomon's temple.

on two opposite sides of the frame as holders for the poles
28 to carry the table. These poles for carrying the table you shall
29 make of acacia wood and plate with gold. Of pure gold you shall make its plates and cups, as well as its pitchers and
30 bowls for pouring libations. On the table you shall always keep showbread set before me.

31 ***The Lampstand*** "You shall make a lampstand of pure beaten gold—its shaft and branches—with its cups and knobs
32 and petals springing directly from it. Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand, three branches on one
33 side, and three on the other. On one branch there are to be three cups, shaped like almond blossoms, each with its knob and petals; on the opposite branch there are to be three cups, shaped like almond blossoms, each with its knob and petals; and so for
34 the six branches that extend from the lampstand. On the shaft there are to be four cups, shaped like almond blossoms, with
35 their knobs and petals, including a knob below each of the three
36 pairs of branches that extend from the lampstand. Their knobs and branches shall so spring from it that the whole will form
37 but a single piece of pure beaten gold. You shall then make seven lamps for it and so set up the lamps that they shed their
38 light on the space in front of the lampstand. These, as well as the trimming shears and trays, must be of pure gold.
39 Use a talent of pure gold for the lampstand and all its ap-
40 purtenances. See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

26

1 ***The Tent Cloth*** "The Dwelling itself you shall make out of sheets woven of fine linen twined and of violet, purple and
2 scarlet yarn, with cherubim embroidered on them. The length of each shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width four cubits;
3 all the sheets shall be of the same size. Five of the sheets are to be sewed together, edge to edge; and the same for the other
4 five. Make loops of violet yarn along the edge of the end
5 sheet in one set, and the same along the edge of the end sheet in the other set. There are to be fifty loops along the edge of the end sheet in the first set, and fifty loops along the edge of the corresponding sheet in the second set, and so placed that the
6 loops are directly opposite each other. Then make fifty clasps of gold, with which to join the two sets of sheets, so that the Dwelling forms one whole.

7 "Also make sheets woven of goat hair, to be used as a
8 tent covering over the Dwelling. Eleven such sheets are to be

made; the length of each shall be thirty cubits, and the wi
9 four cubits: all eleven sheets shall be of the same size. S
five of the sheets, edge to edge, into one set, and the other
sheets into another set. Use the sixth sheet double at the fr
10 of the tent. Make fifty loops along the edge of the end sheet
one set, and fifty loops along the edge of the end sheet in
11 second set. Also make fifty bronze clasps and put them into
12 loops, to join the tent into one whole. There will be an ex
half sheet of tent covering, which shall be allowed to hang do
13 over the rear of the Dwelling. Likewise, the sheets of the t
will have an extra cubit's length to be left hanging down
14 either side of the Dwelling to protect it. Over the tent its
you shall make a covering of rams' skins dyed red, and abo
that, a covering of thahas skins.

15 ***The Wooden Walls*** "You shall make boards of aca
16 wood as walls for the Dwelling. The length of each board
17 to be ten cubits, and its width one and a half cubits. Each boa
shall have two arms that shall serve to fasten the boards
line. In this way all the boards of the Dwelling are to be mac
18 Set up the boards of the Dwelling as follows: twenty boar
19 on the south side, with forty silver pedestals under the twen
boards, so that there are two pedestals under each boar
20 at its two arms; twenty boards on the other side of the Dwe
21 ing, the north side, | with their forty silver pedestals, two u
22 der each board; six boards for the rear of the Dwelling, to th
23 west; and two boards for the corners at the rear of the Dwel
24 ing. These two shall be double at the bottom, and likewi
double at the top, to the first ring. That is how both boards i
25 the corners are to be made. Thus, there shall be in the rear eigh
boards, with their sixteen silver pedestals, two pedestals unde
26 each board. Also make bars of acacia wood: five for the board
27 on one side of the Dwelling, five for those on the other side
28 and five for those at the rear, toward the west. The center bar
at the middle of the boards, shall reach across from end to end
29 Plate the boards with gold, and make gold rings on them a
holders for the bars, which are also to be plated with gold
30 You shall erect the Dwelling according to the pattern shown
you on the mountain.

31 ***The Veils*** "You shall have a veil woven of violet, purple
and scarlet yarn, and of fine linen twined, with cherubim em
32 broidered on it. It is to be hung on four gold-plated columns
of acacia wood, which shall have hooks of gold and shall res
33 on four silver pedestals. Hang the veil from clasps. The Ar

of the Commandments you shall bring inside, behind this veil
34 which divides the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Set
the propitiatory on the Ark of the Commandments in the Holy
of Holies.
35 "Outside the veil you shall place the table and the lamp-
stand, the latter on the south side of the Dwelling, opposite
36 the table, which is to be put on the north side. For the entrance
of the tent make a variegated curtain of violet, purple and
37 scarlet yarn and of fine linen twined. Make five columns of
acacia wood for this curtain; have them plated with gold,
with their hooks of gold; and cast five bronze pedestals for
them.

27

1 *The Altar of Holocausts* "You shall make an altar of
acacia wood, on a square, five cubits long and five cubits wide;
2 it shall be three cubits high. At the four corners there are to
be horns, so made that they spring directly from the altar.
3 You shall then plate it with bronze. | Make pots for removing
the ashes, as well as shovels, basins, forks and fire pans, all
4 of which shall be of bronze. Make a grating of bronze net-
work for it; this to have four bronze rings, one at each of its
5 four corners. Put it down around the altar, on the ground. This
6 network is to be half as high as the altar. You shall also make
poles of acacia wood for the altar, and plate them with bronze.
7 These poles are to be put through the rings, so that they are
8 on either side of the altar when it is carried. Make the altar
itself in the form of a hollow box, just at it was shown you
on the mountain.

9 *Court of the Dwelling* "You shall also make a court for
the Dwelling. On the south side the court shall have hang-
10 ings a hundred cubits long, woven of fine linen twined, | with
twenty columns and twenty pedestals of bronze; the hooks and
11 bands on the columns shall be of silver. On the north side
there shall be similar hangings, a hundred cubits long, with
twenty columns and twenty pedestals of bronze; the hooks
12 and bands on the columns shall be of silver. On the west side,
across the width of the court, there shall be hangings, fifty
13 cubits long, with ten columns and ten pedestals. The width
14 of the court on the east side shall be fifty cubits. On one side
there shall be hangings to the extent of fifteen cubits, with
15 three columns and three pedestals; on the other side there shall
be hangings to the extent of fifteen cubits, with three columns
and three pedestals.

16 "At the entrance of the court there shall be a variega
curtain, twenty cubits long, woven of violet, purple and sca
yarn and of fine linen twined. It shall have four columns
four pedestals.
17 "All the columns around the court shall have bands
18 hooks of silver, and pedestals of bronze. The enclosure of
court is to be one hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide,
five cubits high. Fine linen twined must be used, and the p
19 estals must be of bronze. All the fittings of the Dwelling, wh
ever be their use, as well as all its tent pegs and all the t
pegs of the court, must be of bronze.

20 ***Oil for the Lamps*** "You shall order the Israelites to br
you clear oil of crushed olives, to be used for the light, so tl
21 you may keep lamps burning regularly. From evening to mo
ing Aaron and his sons shall maintain them before the Lo
in the Meeting Tent, outside the veil which hangs in front
the Commandments. This shall be a perpetual ordinance
the Israelites throughout their generations.

28

1 ***The Priestly Vestments*** "From among the Israelites ha
your brother Aaron, together with his sons Nadab, Abiu, Ele
zar and Ithamar, brought to you, that they may be my pries
2 For the glorious adornment of your brother Aaron you sh
3 have sacred vestments made. Therefore, to the various expe
workmen whom I have endowed with skill, you shall gi
instructions to make such vestments for Aaron as will s
4 him apart for his sacred service as my priest. These are tl
vestments they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe,
brocaded tunic, a miter and a sash. In making these sacre
vestments which your brother Aaron and his sons are to wear
5 serving as my priests, | they shall use gold, violet, purple an
scarlet yarn and fine linen.

6 ***The Ephod and Breastpiece*** "The ephod they shall mak
of gold thread and of violet, purple and scarlet yarn, embroi
7 dered on cloth of fine linen twined. It shall have a pair of shoul
8 der straps joined to its two upper ends. The embroidered bel
on the ephod shall extend out from it and, like it, be made o
gold thread, of violet, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine linen
twined.
9 "Get two onyx stones and engrave on them the names o
10 the sons of Israel: | six of their names on one stone, and th
11 other six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. As a gem

cutter engraves a seal, so shall you have the two stones engraved with the names of the sons of Israel and then mounted
12 in gold filigree work. Set these two stones on the shoulder straps of the ephod as memorial stones of the sons of Israel. Thus Aaron shall bear their names on his shoulders as a re-
13.14 minder before the Lord. Make filigree rosettes of gold, as well as two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords, and fasten the cordlike chains to the filigree rosettes.

15 "The breastpiece of decision you shall also have made, embroidered like the ephod with gold thread and violet, purple
16 and scarlet yarn on cloth of fine linen twined. It is to be square
17 when folded double, a span high and a span wide. On it you shall mount four rows of precious stones: in the first row, a
18 carnelian, a topaz and an emerald; | in the second row, a gar-
19 net, a sapphire and a beryl; in the third row, a jacinth, an agate
20 and an amethyst; in the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper. These stones are to be mounted in gold filigree work,
21 twelve of them to match the names of the sons of Israel, each stone engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.

22 "When the chains of pure gold, twisted like cords, have
23 been made for the breastpiece, you shall then make two rings of gold for it and fasten them to the two upper ends of the
24 breastpiece. The gold cords are then to be fastened to the two
25 rings at the upper ends of the breastpiece, the other two ends of the cords being fastened in front to the two filigree rosettes
26 which are attached to the shoulder straps of the ephod. Make two other rings of gold and put them on the two lower ends
27 of the breastpiece, on its edge that faces the ephod. Then make two more rings of gold and fasten them to the bottom of the shoulder straps next to where they join the ephod in front, just
28 above its embroidered belt. Violet ribbons shall bind the rings of the breastpiece to the rings of the ephod, so that the breastpiece will stay right above the embroidered belt of the ephod and not swing loose from it.

29 "Whenever Aaron enters the sanctuary, he will thus bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastpiece of decision over
30 his heart as a constant reminder before the Lord. In this breastpiece of decision you shall put the Urim and Thummim, that they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the Lord. Thus he shall always bear the decisions for the Israelites over his heart in the Lord's presence.

31 *Other Vestments* "The robe of the ephod you shall make
32 entirely of violet material. It shall have an opening for the

head in the center, and around this opening there shall be
selvage, woven as at the opening of a shirt, to keep it fro
33 being torn. All around the hem at the bottom you shall ma
pomegranates, woven of violet, purple and scarlet yarn a
34 fine linen twined, with gold bells between them; first a go
bell, then a pomegranate, and thus alternating all around t
35 hem of the robe. Aaron shall wear it when ministering, th
its tinkling may be heard as he enters and leaves the Lord
presence in the sanctuary; else he will die.
36 "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engra
37 on it, as on a seal engraving, "Sacred to the Lord." Th
plate is to be tied over the miter with a violet ribbon in suc
38 a way that it rests on the front of the miter, over Aaron's for
head. Since Aaron bears whatever guilt the Israelites ma
incur in consecrating any of their sacred gifts, this plate mu
always be over his forehead, so that they may find favor wit
the Lord.
39 "The tunic of fine linen shall be brocaded. The miter shall b
made of fine linen. The sash shall be of variegated work.
40 "Likewise, for the glorious adornment of Aaron's sons yo
41 shall have tunics and sashes and turbans made. With these yo
shall clothe your brother Aaron and his sons. Anoint and or
42 dain them, consecrating them as my priests. You must als
make linen drawers for them, to cover their naked flesh fro
43 their loins to their thighs. Aaron and his sons shall wear then
whenever they go into the Meeting Tent or approach the alta
to minister in the sanctuary, lest they incur guilt and die. Thi
shall be a perpetual ordinance for him and for his descendants

29

1 ***Consecration of the Priests*** "This is the rite you shall per-
form in consecrating them as my priests. Procure a young bull
2 and two unblemished rams. With fine wheat flour make un-
leavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread
3 with oil, | and put them in a basket. Take the basket of them
4 along with the bullock and the two rams. Aaron and his sons
you shall also bring to the entrance of the Meeting Tent, and
5 there wash them with water. Take the vestments and clothe
Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself,
and the breastpiece, fastening the embroidered belt of the
6 ephod around him. Put the miter on his head, the sacred dia-
7 dem on the miter. Then take the anointing oil and anoint
8 him with it, pouring it on his head. Bring forward his sons
9 also and clothe them with the tunics, | gird them with the
sashes, and tie the turbans on them. Thus shall the priesthood

be theirs by perpetual law, and thus shall you ordain Aaron and his sons.

Ordination Sacrifices "Now bring forward the bullock in front of the Meeting Tent. There Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Then slaughter the bullock before the Lord, at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Take some of its blood and with your finger put it on the horns of the altar. All the rest of the blood you shall pour out at the base of the altar. All the fat that covers its inner organs, as well as the lobe of its liver and its two kidneys, together with the fat that is on them, you shall take and burn on the altar. But the flesh and hide and offal of the bullock you must burn up outside the camp, since this is a sin offering.

"Then take one of the rams, and after Aaron and his sons have laid their hands on its head, | slaughter it. The blood you shall take and splash on all the sides of the altar. Cut the ram into pieces; its inner organs and shanks you shall first wash, and then put them with the pieces and with the head. The entire ram shall then be burned on the altar, since it is a holocaust, a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.

"After this take the other ram, and when Aaron and his sons have laid their hands on its head, slaughter it. Some of its blood you shall take and put on the tip of Aaron's right ear and on the tips of his sons' right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and the great toes of their right feet. Splash the rest of the blood on all the sides of the altar. Then take some of the blood that is on the altar, together with some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle this on Aaron and his vestments, as well as on his sons and their vestments, that his sons and their vestments may be sacred.

"Now, from this ram you shall take its fat: its fatty tail, the fat that covers its inner organs, the lobe of its liver, its two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and its right thigh, since this is the ordination ram; then, out of the basket of unleavened food that you have set before he Lord, you shall take one of the loaves of bread, one of the cakes made with oil, and one of the wafers. All these things you shall put into the hands of Aaron and his sons, so that they may wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. After you have received them back from their hands, you shall burn them on top of the holocaust on the altar as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord. Finally, take the breast of Aaron's ordination ram and wave it as a wave offering before the Lord; this is to be your own portion.

"Thus shall you set aside the breast of whatever wave of-

fering is waved, as well as the thigh of whatever raised offe
is raised up, whether this be the ordination ram or anytl
28 else belonging to Aaron or to his sons. Such things are du
Aaron and his sons from the Israelites by a perpetual o
nance as a contribution. From their peace offerings, too,
Israelites shall make a contribution, their contribution to
Lord.
29 "The sacred vestments of Aaron shall be passed dowr
his descendants, that in them they may be anointed and
30 dained. The descendant who succeeds him as priest and v
is to enter the Meeting Tent to minister in the sanctu
shall be clothed with them for seven days.
31 "You shall take the flesh of the ordination ram and l
32 it in a holy place. At the entrance of the Meeting Tent Aa
and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram and the bread t
33 is in the basket. They themselves are to eat of these thi
by which atonement was made at their ordination and cor
cration; but no layman may eat of them, since they are sacr
34 If some of the flesh of the ordination sacrifice or some
the bread remains over on the next day, this remnant must
35 burned up; it is not to be eaten, since it is sacred. Carry out
these orders in regard to Aaron and his sons just as I ha
given them to you.
36 "Seven days you shall spend in ordaining them, | sacrifici
a bullock each day as a sin offering, to make atonement. Th
also shall you purge the altar in making atonement for
37 you shall anoint it in order to consecrate it. Seven da
you shall spend in making atonement for the altar and in co
secrating it. Then the altar will be most sacred, and whatev
touches it will become sacred.
38 "Now, this is what you shall offer on the altar: two yearli
39 lambs as the sacrifice established for each day; one lamb
40 the morning and the other lamb at the evening twilight. W
the first lamb there shall be a tenth of an epha of fine flo
mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil of crushed olives and,
41 its libation, a fourth of a hin of wine. The other lamb y
shall offer at the evening twilight, with the same cereal offeri
and libation as in the morning. You shall offer this as a swe
42 smelling oblation to the Lord. Throughout your generations th
established holocaust shall be offered before the Lord at t
entrance of the Meeting Tent, where I will meet you and spe
to you.
43 "There, at the altar, I will meet the Israelites; hence,
44 will be made sacred by my glory. Thus I will consecrate t
Meeting Tent and the altar, just as I also consecrate Aar

45 and his sons to be my priests. I will dwell in the midst of the
46 Israelites and will be their God. They shall know that I, the
Lord, am their God who brought them out of the land of
Egypt, so that I, the Lord, their God, might dwell among them.

30

1 ***Altar of Incense*** "For burning incense you shall make an
2 altar of acacia wood, with a square surface, a cubit long, a cu-
bit wide, and a cubit high, with horns that spring directly
3 from it. Its grate on top, its walls on all four sides, and its
horns you shall plate with pure gold. Put a gold molding
4 around it. Underneath the molding you shall put gold rings,
two on one side and two on the opposite side, as holders for
5 the poles used in carrying it. Make the poles, too, of acacia
6 wood and plate them with gold. This altar you are to place
in front of the veil that hangs before the Ark of the Com-
mandments where I will meet you.
7 "On it Aaron shall burn fragrant incense. Morning after
8 morning, when he prepares the lamps, | and again in the eve-
ning twilight, when he lights the lamps, he shall burn incense.
Throughout your generations this shall be the established
9 incense offering before the Lord. On this altar you shall not
offer up any profane incense, or any holocaust or cereal offer-
10 ing; nor shall you pour out a libation upon it. Once a year
Aaron shall perform the atonement rite on its horns. Through-
out your generations this atonement is to be made once a year
with the blood of the atoning sin offering. This altar is most
sacred to the Lord."

11-12 ***Census Tax*** The Lord also said to Moses, "When you take
a census of the Israelites who are to be registered, each one, as
he is enrolled, shall give the Lord a forfeit for his life, so that
13 no plague may come upon them for being registered. Everyone
who enters the registered group must pay a half-shekel, ac-
cording to the standard of the sanctuary shekel, twenty geras to
the shekel. This payment of a half-shekel is a contribution to
14 the Lord. Everyone of twenty years or more who enters the
15 registered group must give this contribution to the Lord. The
rich need not give more, nor shall the poor give less, than a half-
shekel in this contribution to the Lord to pay the forfeit for
16 their lives. When you receive this forfeit money from the
Israelites, you shall donate it to the service of the Meeting
Tent, that there it may be the Israelites' reminder before the
Lord, of the forfeit paid for their lives."

17.18 ***The Laver*** The Lord said to Moses, "For ablutions
shall make a bronze laver with a bronze base. Place it betw
19 the Meeting Tent and the altar, and put water in it. Aa
and his sons shall use it in washing their hands and f
20 When they are about to enter the Meeting Tent, they m
wash with water, lest they die. Likewise when they appro
the altar in their ministry, to offer an oblation to the Lor
21 they must wash their hands and feet, lest they die. This sl
be a perpetual ordinance for him and his descendants throu
out their generations."

22.23 ***The Anointing Oil*** The Lord said to Moses, "Take
finest spices: five hundred shekels of free-flowing myrrh; h
that amount, that is, two hundred and fifty shekels, of f
grant cinnamon; two hundred and fifty shekels of fragr
24 cane; | five hundred shekels of cassia—all according to
standard of the sanctuary shekel; together with a hin of ol
25 oil; and blend them into sacred anointing oil, perfumed oi
26 ment expertly prepared. With this sacred anointing oil y
shall anoint the Meeting Tent and the Ark of the Commar
27 ments, the table and all its appurtenances, the lampstand a
28 its appurtenances, the altar of incense | and the altar of ho
causts with all its appurtenances, and the laver with its ba
29 When you have consecrated them, they shall be most sacre
30 whatever touches them shall be sacred. Aaron and his sons y
31 shall also anoint and consecrate as my priests. To the Israeli
you shall say: As sacred anointing oil this shall belong
32 me throughout your generations. It may not be used in a
ordinary anointing of the body, nor may you make any oth
oil of a like mixture. It is sacred, and shall be treated as sacr
33 by you. Whoever prepares a perfume like this, or whoev
puts any of this on a layman, shall be cut off from his kin
men."

34 ***The Incense*** The Lord told Moses, "Take these aromat
substances: storax and onycha and galbanum, these and pu
35 frankincense in equal parts; and blend them into incense. Th
fragrant powder, expertly prepared, is to be salted and so ke
36 pure and sacred. Grind some of it into fine dust and put th
before the Commandments in the Meeting Tent where I w
meet you. This incense shall be treated as most sacred by yo
37 You may not make incense of a like mixture for yourselve
38 you must treat it as sacred to the Lord. Whoever makes i
incense like this for his own enjoyment of its fragrance, sha
be cut off from his kinsmen."

31

1.2 ***Choice of Artisans*** The Lord said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Beseleel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Juda,
3 and I have filled him with a divine spirit of skill and under-
4 standing and knowledge in every craft: in the production of
5 embroidery, in making things of gold, silver or bronze, | in cutting and mounting precious stones, in carving wood, and
6 in every other craft. As his assistant I have appointed Oholiab, son of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan. I have also endowed all the experts with the necessary skill to make all the things
7 I have ordered you to make: the Meeting Tent, the Ark of the Commandments with the propitiatory on top of it, all the
8 furnishings of the Tent, | the table with its appurtenances, the pure gold lampstand with all its appurtenances, the altar of
9 incense, | the altar of holocausts with all its appurtenances,
10 the laver with its base, | the service cloths, the sacred vestments for Aaron the priest, the vestments for his sons in their
11 ministry, | the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense for the sanctuary. All these things they shall make just as I have commanded you."

12.13 ***Sabbath Laws*** The Lord said to Moses, "You must also tell the Israelites: Take care to keep my Sabbaths, for that is to be the token between you and me throughout the generations, to
14 show that it is I, the Lord, who make you holy. Therefore, you must keep the Sabbath as something sacred. Whoever desecrates it shall be put to death. If anyone does work on that day,
15 he must be rooted out of his people. Six days there are for doing work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of complete rest, sacred to the Lord. Anyone who does work on the Sabbath day
16 shall be put to death. So shall the Israelites observe the Sabbath, keeping it throughout their generations as a perpetual cove-
17 nant. Between me and the Israelites it is to be an everlasting token; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he rested at his ease."

18 When the Lord had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Commandments, the stone tablets inscribed by God's own finger.

32

1 ***The Golden Calf*** When the people became aware of Moses' delay in coming down from the mountain, they gath-

31, 18: See 24, 12 n.

32, 1-24: The pagans represented their gods on the back of an animal

ered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god w
will be our leader; as for the man Moses who brought us out
the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to hin
2 Aaron replied, "Have your wives and sons and daughters ta
off the golden earrings they are wearing, and bring them
3 me." So all the people took off their earrings and brought th
4 to Aaron, who accepted their offering, and fashioning this g
with a graving tool, made a molten calf. Then they cried o
"This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the la
5 of Egypt." On seeing this, Aaron built an altar before the c
6 and proclaimed, "Tomorrow is a feast of the Lord." Early t
next day the people offered holocausts and brought pe
offerings. Then they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up
revel.
7 With that, the Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once
your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt,
8 they have become depraved. They have soon turned aside fr
the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molt
calf and worshiping it, sacrificing to it and crying out, 'This
your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egyp
9 I see how stiff-necked this people is," continued the Lord
10 Moses. "Let me alone, then, that my wrath may blaze
against them to consume them. Then I will make of you
great nation."
11 But Moses implored the Lord, his God, saying, "Why,
Lord, should your wrath blaze up against your own peop
whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with such gr
12 power and with so strong a hand? Why should the Egypti
say, 'With evil intent he brought them out, that he might k
them in the mountains and exterminate them from the face
the earth'? Let your blazing wrath die down; relent in puni
13 ing your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac a
Israel, and how you swore to them by your own self, sayi
'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in t
sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your
14 scendants as their perpetual heritage.' " So the Lord relent
in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his peop
15 Moses then turned and came down the mountain with t
two tablets of the Commandments in his hands, tablets tl
16 were written on both sides, front and back; tablets that w

used as a pedestal. Scholars believe that the calf was only the ped
tal. There was no image of God nor any other image placed on top
the pedestal-calf. Archeologists have never found an image of Yahw

32, 16: See 24, 12 n.

made by God, having inscriptions on them that were engraved
17 by God himself. Now, when Josue heard the noise of the people
shouting, he said to Moses, "That sounds like a battle in the
18 camp." But Moses answered, "It does not sound like cries of
victory, nor does it sound like cries of defeat; the sounds that
19 I hear are cries of revelry." As he drew near the camp, he saw
the calf and the dancing. With that, Moses' wrath flared up,
so that he threw the tablets down and broke them on the base
20 of the mountain. Taking the calf they had made, he fused it in
the fire and then ground it down to powder, which he scattered
on the water and made the Israelites drink.
21 Moses asked Aaron, "What did this people ever do to you
22 that you should lead them into so grave a sin?" Aaron replied,
"Let not my lord be angry. You know well enough how prone
23 the people are to evil. They said to me, 'Make us a god to be
our leader; as for the man Moses who brought us out of the
land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.'
24 So I told them, 'Let anyone who has gold jewelry take it off.'
They gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf
came out."
25 When Moses realized that, to the scornful joy of their foes,
26 Aaron had let the people run wild, | he stood at the gate of
the camp and cried, "Whoever is for the Lord, let him come
27 to me!" All the Levites then rallied to him, | and he told them,
"Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Put your sword on
your hip, every one of you! Now go up and down the camp,
from gate to gate, and slay your own kinsmen, your friends
28 and neighbors!" The Levites carried out the command of
Moses, and that day there fell about three thousand of the
29 people. Then Moses said, "Today you have been dedicated to
the Lord, for you were against your own sons and kinsmen,
to bring a blessing upon yourselves this day."

30 ***The Atonement*** On the next day Moses said to the people,
"You have committed a grave sin. I will go up to the Lord,
then; perhaps I may be able to make atonement for your sin."
31 So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Ah, this people
32 has indeed committed a grave sin in making a god of gold
for themselves! If you would only forgive their sin! If you
will not, then strike me out of the book that you have written."

32, 20: This seems to refer to an ordeal that would prove fatal to
ne guilty. Dt 9, 21 renders this account differently.
32, 28: *Three thousand:* most likely an exaggerated number.
32, 29: Because of their zeal the Levites afterward became the
riests of Yahweh.

33 The Lord answered, "Him only who has sinned against me
34 I strike out of my book. Now, go and lead the people whi
I have told you. My angel will go before you. When it is t
for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."
35 Thus the Lord smote the people for having had Aaron m
the calf for them.

33

1 The Lord told Moses, "You and the people whom you h
brought up from the land of Egypt, are to go up from her
the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob I wo
2 give to their descendants. Driving out the Chanaanites, An
rites, Hethites, Pherezites, Hevites and Jebusites, I will send
3 angel before you | to the land flowing with milk and hon
But I myself will not go up in your company, because y
are a stiff-necked people; otherwise I might exterminate y
4 on the way." When the people heard this bad news, they w
into mourning, and no one wore his ornaments.
5 The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites: You are a st
necked people. Were I to go up in your company even fo
moment, I would exterminate you. Take off your ornamer
6 therefore; I will then see what I am to do with you." So, fr
Mount Horeb onward, the Israelites laid aside their ornamer

7 ***Moses' Intimacy with God*** The Tent, which was called t
Meeting Tent, Moses used to pitch at some distance aw
outside the camp. Anyone who wished to consult the Lo
8 would go to this Meeting Tent outside the camp. Whenev
Moses went out to the Tent, the people would all rise a
stand at the entrance of their own tents, watching Moses un
9 he entered the Tent. As Moses entered the Tent, the column
cloud would come down and stand at its entrance while t
10 Lord spoke with Moses. On seeing the column of cloud sta
at the entrance of the Tent, all the people would rise a
11 worship at the entrance of their own tents. The Lord used
speak to Moses face to face, as one man speaks to anothe
Moses would then return to the camp, but his young assistan
Josue, son of Nun, would not move out of the Tent.
12 Moses said to the Lord, "You, indeed, are telling me to le
this people on; but you have not let me know whom you w
send with me. Yet you have said, 'You are my intimate frien
13 and also, 'You have found favor with me.' Now, if I ha
found favor with you, do let me know your ways so that,
knowing you, I may continue to find favor with you. The
14 too, this nation is, after all, your own people." "I myself," t

15 Lord answered, "will go along, to give you rest." Moses replied, "If you are not going yourself, do not make us go up
16 from here. For how can it be known that we, your people and I, have found favor with you, except by your going with us? Then we, your people and I, will be singled out from every
17 other people on the earth." The Lord said to Moses, "This request, too, which you have just made, I will carry out, because you have found favor with me and you are my intimate friend."

18.19 Then Moses said, "Do let me see your glory!" He answered, "I will make all my beauty pass before you, and in your presence I will pronounce my name, 'Lord'; I who show
20 favors to whom I will, I who grant mercy to whom I will. But my face you cannot see, for no man sees me and still lives.
21 Here," continued the Lord, "is a place near me where you
22 shall station yourself on the rock. When my glory passes I will set you in the hollow of the rock and will cover you with my
23 hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand, so that you may see my back; but my face is not to be seen."

34

1 ***Renewal of the Tablets*** The Lord said to Moses, "Cut two stone tablets like the former, that I may write on them the Commandments which were on the former tablets that you
2 broke. Get ready for tomorrow morning, when you are to go up Mount Sinai and there present yourself to me on the top
3 of the mountain. No one shall come up with you, and no one is even to be seen on any part of the mountain; even the flocks and the herds are not to go grazing toward this moun-
4 tain." Moses then cut two stone tablets like the former, and early the next morning he went up Mount Sinai as the Lord had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets.

5 Having come down in a cloud, the Lord stood with him
6 there and proclaimed his name, "Lord." Thus the Lord passed before him and cried out, "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and

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33, 23: Seems to be a correction of "face to face" in v. 11, in Nm 12, 8; and in Dt 34, 10.

34, 1: See 24, 12 n.

34, 5-8: God fulfills the promise He made in 33, 19-23. In pronouncing His name, He also reveals His attributes, especially His mercy and justice. *Kindness:* is the translation of the Hebrew *hesed.* Since it is so rich in meaning, it is untranslatable. Often it is rendered "Covenant love." *Hesed* means the attribute of those who are bound by the Covenant ("berit") with God. See 19, 3-6 n; 20, 6 n. The verses 5 to 8 are often quoted in the Old Testament.

gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelit
7 continuing his kindness for a thousand generations, and fo
giving wickedness and crime and sin; yet not declaring th
guilty guiltless, but punishing children and grandchildren
the third and fourth generation for their fathers' wickedness
8,9 Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship. Then h
said, "If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along
our company. This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardo
our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own."

10 ***Religious Laws*** "Here, then," said the Lord, "is the co
enant I will make. Before the eyes of all your people I wi
work such marvels as have never been wrought in any natio
anywhere on earth, so that this people among whom you liv
may see how awe-inspiring are the deeds which I, the Lor
11 will do at your side. But you, on your part, must keep th
commandments I am giving you today.

"I will drive out before you the Amorrites, Chanaanite
12 Hethites, Pherezites, Hevites and Jebusites. Take care, there
fore, not to make a covenant with these inhabitants of th
land that you are to enter; else they will become a snare amon
13 you. Tear down their altars; smash their sacred pillars, an
14 cut down their sacred poles. You shall not worship any othe
15 God, for the Lord is 'the Jealous One'; a jealous God is he. D
not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land; else
when they render their wanton worship to their gods an
sacrifice to them, one of them may invite you and you ma
16 partake of his sacrifice. Neither shall you take their daughter
as wives for your sons; otherwise, when their daughters ren
der their wanton worship to their gods, they will make you
sons do the same.

17 "You shall not make for yourselves molten gods.

18 "You shall keep the feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven
days at the prescribed time in the month of Abib you are to
eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you; for in the month
of Abib you came out of Egypt.

19 "To me belongs every first-born male that opens the womb
among all your livestock, whether in the herd or in the flock.
20 The firstling of an ass you shall redeem with one of the flock;
if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. The first-
born among your sons you shall redeem.

"No one shall appear before me empty-handed.

21 "For six days you may work, but on the seventh day you
shall rest; on that day you must rest even during the seasons
of plowing and harvesting.

22 "You shall keep the feast of Weeks with the first of the
wheat harvest; likewise, the feast at the fruit harvest at the
23 close of the year. Three times a year all your men shall ap-
24 pear before the Lord, the Lord God of Israel. Since I will
drive out the nations before you to give you a large territory,
there will be no one to covet your land when you go up three
times a year to appear before the Lord, your God.
25 "You shall not offer me the blood of sacrifice with leavened
bread, nor shall the sacrifice of the Passover feast be kept
overnight for the next day.
26 "The choicest first fruits of your soil you shall bring to
the house of the Lord, your God.
"You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

27 ***Radiance of Moses' Face*** Then the Lord said to Moses,
"Write down these words, for in accordance with them I have
28 made a covenant with you and with Israel." So Moses stayed
there with the Lord for forty days and forty nights, without eat-
ing any food or drinking any water, and he wrote on the
tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.
29 As Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tab-
lets of the Commandments in his hands, he did not know that
the skin of his face had become radiant while he conversed
30 with the Lord. When Aaron, then, and the other Israelites
saw Moses and noticed how radiant the skin of his face had
31 become, they were afraid to come near him. Only after Moses
called to them did Aaron and all the rulers of the community
32 come back to him. Moses then spoke to them. Later on, all
the Israelites came up to him, and he enjoined on them all
33 that the Lord had told him on Mount Sinai. When he finished
34 speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever
Moses entered the presence of the Lord to converse with him,
he removed the veil until he came out again. On coming out,
he would tell the Israelites all that had been commanded.
35 Then the Israelites would see that the skin of Moses' face was
radiant; so he would again put the veil over his face until he
went in to converse with the Lord.

35
1 ***Sabbath Regulations*** Moses assembled the whole Israelite
community and said to them, "This is what the Lord has com-

34, 29-35: Moses' face reflected God's glory.

34, 29: *Radiant:* Michelangelo's Moses has two horns on his head because the sculptor followed the Vg., which instead of "radiant," gives a literal translation: "His face was horned."

manded to be done. On six days work may be done, but th
seventh day shall be sacred to you as the Sabbath of complet
rest to the Lord. Anyone who does work on that day shall b
put to death. You shall not even light a fire in any of you
dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Collection of Materials Moses told the whole Israelit
community, "This is what the Lord has commanded: Take u
among you a collection for the Lord. Everyone, as his hear
prompts him, shall bring, as a contribution to the Lord, gold
silver and bronze; violet, purple and scarlet yarn; fine linen
and goat hair; rams' skins dyed red, and thahas skins; acacia
wood; | oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and fo
the fragrant incense; onyx stones and other gems for mount
ing on the ephod and on the breastpiece.

Call for Artisans "Let every expert among you come and
make all that the Lord has commanded: the Dwelling, with
its tent, its covering, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its columns
and its pedestals; the ark, with its poles, the propitiatory, and
the curtain veil; the table, with its poles and all its appurte-
nances, and the showbread; the lampstand, with its appur-
tenances, the lamps, and the oil for the light; | the altar of
incense, with its poles; the anointing oil, and the fragrant in-
cense; the entrance curtain for the entrance of the Dwelling;
the altar of holocausts, with its bronze grating, its poles, and
all its appurtenances; the laver, with its base; | the hangings
of the court, with their columns and pedestals; the curtain
for the entrance of the court; the tent pegs for the Dwelling and
for the court, with their ropes; the service cloths for use in
the sanctuary; the sacred vestments for Aaron, the priest, and
the vestments worn by his sons in their ministry."

The Contribution When the whole Israelite community left
Moses' presence, | everyone, as his heart suggested and his
spirit prompted, brought a contribution to the Lord for the
construction of the Meeting Tent, for all its services, and for
the sacred vestments. Both the men and the women, all as
their heart prompted them, brought brooches, earrings, rings,
necklaces and various other gold articles. Everyone who could
presented an offering of gold to the Lord. Everyone who hap-
pened to have violet, purple or scarlet yarn, fine linen or goat

35—40: The last part of Exodus relates the execution of the orders given in 25—31. There are many repetitions.

hair, rams' skins dyed red or thahas skins, brought them.
24 Whoever could make a contribution of silver or bronze offered
it to the Lord; and everyone who happened to have acacia
25 wood for any part of the work, brought it. All the women
who were expert spinners brought hand-spun violet, purple
26 and scarlet yarn and fine linen thread. All the women who
27 possessed the skill, spun goat hair. The princes brought onyx
stones and other gems for mounting on the ephod and on the
28 breastpiece; as well as spices, and oil for the light, anointing
29 oil, and fragrant incense. Every Israelite man and woman
brought to the Lord such voluntary offerings as they thought
best, for the various kinds of work which the Lord had com-
manded Moses to have done.

30 ***The Artisans*** Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the Lord
has chosen Beseleel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of
1 Juda, | and has filled him with a divine spirit of skill and
2 understanding and knowledge in every craft: in the production
3 of embroidery, in making things of gold, silver or bronze, | in
cutting and mounting precious stones, in carving wood, and in
4 every other craft. He has also given both him and Oholiab, son
of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others.
5 He has endowed them with skill to execute all types of work:
engraving, embroidering, the making of variegated cloth of
violet, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen thread, weaving,
and all other arts and crafts.

6

1 "Beseleel, therefore, will set to work with Oholiab and with
all the experts whom the Lord has endowed with skill and
understanding in knowing how to execute all the work for
the service of the sanctuary, just as the Lord has commanded."
2 Moses then called Beseleel and Oholiab and all the other
experts whom the Lord had endowed with skill, men whose
3 hearts moved them to come and take part in the work. They
received from Moses all the contributions which the Israelites
had brought for establishing the service of the sanctuary. Still,
morning after morning the people continued to bring their
voluntary offerings to Moses. Thereupon the experts who were
executing the various kinds of work for the sanctuary, all left
the work they were doing, | and told Moses, "The people are
bringing much more than is needed to carry out the work which
the Lord has commanded us to do." Moses, therefore, ordered
a proclamation to be made throughout the camp: "Let neither
man nor woman make any more contributions for the sanc-

7 tuary." So the people stopped bringing their offerings; the
was already enough at hand, in fact, more than enough,
complete the work to be done.

8 ***The Tent Cloth and Coverings*** The various experts wl
were executing the work, made the Dwelling with its t
sheets woven of fine linen twined, having cherubim embr
9 dered on them with violet, purple and scarlet yarn. The leng
of each sheet was twenty-eight cubits, and the width fo
10 cubits; all the sheets were of the same size. Five of the shee
were sewed together, edge to edge; and the same for the oth
11 five. Loops of violet yarn were made along the edge of tl
end sheet in the first set, and the same along the edge of th
12 end sheet in the second set. Fifty loops were thus put on or
inner sheet, and fifty loops on the inner sheet in the other se
13 with the loops directly opposite each other. Then fifty clasp
of gold were made, with which the sheets were joined so tha
the Dwelling formed one whole.
14 Sheets of goat hair were also woven as a tent over th
15 Dwelling. Eleven such sheets were made. | The length o
each sheet was thirty cubits and the width four cubits; a
16 eleven sheets were of the same size. Five of these sheets wer
sewed edge to edge into one set; and the other six sheets int
17 another set. Fifty loops were made along the edge of the en
sheet in one set, and fifty loops along the edge of the corres
18 ponding sheet in the other set. Fifty bronze clasps were mad
with which the tent was joined so that it formed one whole
19 A covering for the tent was made of rams' skins dyed red, an
above that, a covering of thahas skins.

20 ***The Boards*** Boards of acacia wood were made as walls fo
21 the Dwelling. The length of each board was ten cubits, anc
22 the width one and a half cubits. Each board had two arms,
fastening them in line. In this way all the boards of the Dwell-
23 ing were made. They were set up as follows: twenty boards on
24 the south side, | with forty silver pedestals under the twenty
boards, so that there were two pedestals under each board, at
25 its two arms; twenty boards on the other side of the Dwelling,
26 the north side, | with their forty silver pedestals, two under
27 each board; six boards at the rear of the Dwelling, to the west;
28 and two boards at the corners in the rear of the Dwelling.
29 These were double at the bottom, and likewise double at the
top, to the first ring. That is how both boards in the corners
30 were made. Thus, there were in the rear eight boards, with
their sixteen silver pedestals, two pedestals under each board.

31 Bars of acacia wood were also made, five for the boards on one
32 side of the Dwelling, | five for those on the other side, and
33 five for those at the rear, to the west. The center bar, at the
middle of the boards, was made to reach across from end to
34 end. The boards were plated with gold, and gold rings were
made on them as holders for the bars, which were also plated
with gold.

35 ***The Veil*** The veil was woven of violet, purple and scar-
let yarn, and of fine linen twined, with cherubim embroidered
36 on it. Four gold-plated columns of acacia wood, with gold
hooks, were made for it, and four silver pedestals were cast
for them.
37 The curtain for the entrance of the tent was made of vio-
let, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine linen twined, woven in
38 a variegated manner. Its five columns, with their hooks as well
as their capitals and bands, were plated with gold; their five
pedestals were of bronze.

37
1 ***The Ark*** Beseleel made the ark of acacia wood, two and a
half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a
2 half cubits high. The inside and outside were plated with
3 gold, and a molding of gold was put around it. Four gold
rings were cast and put on its four supports, two rings for
4 one side and two for the opposite side. Poles of acacia wood
5 were made and plated with gold; these were put through the
rings on the sides of the ark, for carrying it.
6 The propitiatory was made of pure gold, two and a half
7 cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. Two cherubim
of beaten gold were made for the two ends of the propitiatory,
8 | one cherub fastened at one end, the other at the other end,
9 springing directly from the propitiatory at its two ends. The
cherubim had their wings spread out above, covering the pro-
pitiatory with them. They were turned toward each other, but
with their faces looking toward the propitiatory.

10 ***The Table*** The table was made of acacia wood, two cubits
11 long, one cubit wide, and one and a half cubits high. It was
plated with pure gold, and a molding of gold was put around
12 it. A frame a handbreadth high was also put around it, with
13 a molding of gold around the frame. Four rings of gold were
14 cast for it and fastened, one at each of the four corners. The
rings were alongside the frame as holders for the poles to
15 carry the table. These poles were made of acacia wood and

16 plated with gold. The vessels that were set on the table, i
plates and cups, as well as its pitchers and bowls for pourir
libations, were of pure gold.

17 ***The Lampstand*** The lampstand was made of pure beate
gold—its shaft and branches as well as its cups and knobs an
18 petals springing directly from it. Six branches extended fro
19 its sides, three branches on one side and three on the other. O
one branch there were three cups, shaped like almond blo
soms, each with its knob and petals; on the opposite branc
there were three cups, shaped like almond blossoms, each wit
its knob and petals; and so for the six branches that e
20 tended from the lampstand. On the shaft there were fou
cups, shaped like almond blossoms, with their knobs and pe
21 als, | including a knob below each of the three pairs of branche
22 that extended from the lampstand. The knobs and branche
sprang so directly from it that the whole formed but a singl
23 piece of pure beaten gold. Its seven lamps, as well as its trim
24 ming shears and trays, were made of pure gold. A talent o
pure gold was used for the lampstand and its various appur
tenances.

25 ***The Altar of Incense*** The altar of incense was made o
acacia wood, on a square, a cubit long, a cubit wide, and tw
26 cubits high, having horns that sprang directly from it. It
grate on top, its walls on all four sides, and its horns wer
plated with pure gold; and a molding of gold was put aroun
27 it. Underneath the molding gold rings were placed, two on one
side and two on the opposite side, as holders for the poles to
28 carry it. The poles, too, were made of acacia wood and plated
with gold.
29 The sacred anointing oil and the fragrant incense were pre-
pared in their pure form by a perfumer.

38

1 ***The Altar of Holocausts*** The altar of holocausts was made
of acacia wood, on a square, five cubits long and five cubits
2 wide; its height was three cubits. At the four corners horns
were made that sprang directly from the altar. The whole
3 was plated with bronze. All the utensils of the altar, the pots,
shovels, basins, forks and fire pans, were likewise made of
4 bronze. A grating of bronze network was made for the altar
and placed round it, on the ground, half as high as the
5 altar itself. Four rings were cast for the four corners of the
6 bronze grating, as holders for the poles, | which were made of

7 acacia wood and plated with bronze. The poles were put
through the rings on the sides of the altar for carrying it. The
altar was made in the form of a hollow box.
8 The bronze laver, with its bronze base was made from the
mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the
Meeting Tent.

9 ***The Court*** The court was made as follows. On the south
side of the court there were hangings, woven of fine linen
10 twined, a hundred cubits long, with twenty columns and twen-
ty pedestals of bronze, the hooks and bands of the columns
11 being of silver. On the north side there were similar hangings,
one hundred cubits long, with twenty columns and twenty
pedestals of bronze, the hooks and bands of the columns being
12 of silver. On the west side there were hangings, fifty cubits
long, with ten columns and ten pedestals, the hooks and bands
13 of the columns being of silver. On the east side the court was
14 fifty cubits long. Toward one side there were hangings to the
extent of fifteen cubits, with three columns and three pedestals;
15 toward the other side, beyond the entrance of the court, there
were likewise hangings to the extent of fifteen cubits, with
16 three columns and three pedestals. The hangings on all sides
17 of the court were woven of fine linen twined. The pedestals
of the columns were of bronze, while the hooks and bands
of the columns were of silver; the capitals were silver-plated,
and all the columns of the court were banded with silver.
18 At the entrance of the court there was a variegated curtain,
woven of violet, purple and scarlet yarn and of fine linen
twined, twenty cubits long and five cubits wide, in keeping
19 with the hangings of the court. There were four columns and
four pedestals of bronze for it, while their hooks were of sil-
10 ver. All the tent pegs for the Dwelling and for the court
around it were of bronze.

11 ***Amount of Metal Used*** The following is an account of
the various amounts used on the Dwelling, the Dwelling of
the Testimony, drawn up at the command of Moses by the
Levites under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.
2 However, it was Beseleel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe
of Juda, who made all that the Lord commanded Moses, |
3 and he was assisted by Oholiab, son of Achisamach, of the
tribe of Dan, who was an engraver, and embroiderer, and a
weaver of variegated cloth of violet, purple and scarlet yarn
and of fine linen.
4 All the gold used in the entire construction of the sanctuary.

having previously been given as an offering, amounted t
twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, ac
25 cording to the standard of the sanctuary shekel. The amour
of the silver received from the community was one hundre
talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five she
26 kels, according to the standard of the sanctuary shekel; one bec
apiece, that is, a half-shekel apiece, according to the standard o
the sanctuary shekel, was received from every man of twent
years or more who entered the registered group; the number o
these was six hundred and three thousand five hundred an
27 fifty men. One hundred talents of silver were used for castin
the pedestals of the sanctuary and the pedestals of the veil
one talent for each pedestal, or one hundred talents for th
28 one hundred pedestals. The remaining one thousand seve
hundred and seventy-five shekels were used for making th
hooks on the columns, for plating the capitals, and for bandin
29 them with silver. The bronze, given as an offering, amounte
to seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels
30 With this were made the pedestals at the entrance of the Meet
ing Tent, the bronze altar with its bronze gratings and all the
31 appurtenances of the altar, | the pedestals around the court,
the pedestals at the entrance of the court, and all the tent pegs
for the Dwelling and for the court around it.

39

1 ***The Vestments*** With violet, purple and scarlet yarn were
woven the service cloths for use in the sanctuary, as well as the
sacred vestments for Aaron, as the Lord had commanded
Moses.

2 The ephod was woven of gold thread and of violet, purple
3 and scarlet yarn of fine linen twined. Gold was first hammered
into gold leaf and then cut up into threads, which were woven
with violet, purple and scarlet yarn into an embroidered pat-
4 tern on the fine linen. Shoulder straps were made for it and
5 joined to its two upper ends. The embroidered belt on the
ephod extended out from it, and like it, was made of gold
thread, of violet, purple and scarlet yarn, and of fine linen
6 twined, as the Lord had commanded Moses. The onyx stones
were prepared and mounted in gold filigree work; they were
engraved like seal engravings with the names of the sons of
7 Israel. These stones were set on the shoulder straps of the
ephod as memorial stones of the sons of Israel, just as the
Lord had commanded Moses.

8 The breastpiece was embroidered like the ephod, with gold
thread and violet, purple and scarlet yarn on cloth of fine linen

9 twined. It was square and folded double, a span high and a
10 span wide in its folded form. Four rows of precious stones
were mounted on it: in the first row a carnelian, a topaz and
11 an emerald; in the second row, a garnet, a sapphire and a beryl;
12.13 in the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; in the
fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper. They were
14 mounted in gold filigree work. These stones were twelve, to
match the names of the sons of Israel, and each stone was en-
graved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.
Chains of pure gold, twisted like cords, were made for the
6 breastpiece, together with two gold filigree rosettes and two
gold rings. The two rings were fastened to the two upper
7 ends of the breastpiece. The two gold chains were then fas-
8 tened to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece. The
other two ends of the two chains were fastened in front to the
two filigree rosettes, which were attached to the shoulder straps
9 of the ephod. Two other gold rings were made and put on
the two lower ends of the breastpiece, on the edge facing the
0 ephod. Two more gold rings were made and fastened to the
bottom of the two shoulder straps next to where they joined the
1 ephod in front, just above its embroidered belt. Violet ribbons
bound the rings of the breastpiece to the rings of the ephod,
so that the breastpiece stayed right above the embroidered belt
of the ephod and did not swing loose from it. All this was just
as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Other Vestments The robe of the ephod was woven
entirely of violet yarn, with an opening in its center like the
opening of a shirt, with selvage around the opening to keep it
from being torn. At the hem of the robe pomegranates were
made of violet, purple and scarlet yarn and of fine linen twined;
bells of pure gold were also made and put between the pome-
granates all around the hem of the robe: first a bell, then a
pomegranate, and thus alternating all around the hem of the
robe which was to be worn in performing the ministry—all
this, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

For Aaron and his sons there were also woven tunics of
fine linen; | the miter of fine linen; the ornate turbans of fine
linen; drawers of linen [of fine linen twined]; | and sashes of
variegated work made of fine linen twined and of violet, purple
and scarlet yarn, as the Lord had commanded Moses. The
plate of the sacred diadem was made of pure gold and in-
scribed, as on a seal engraving: "Sacred to the Lord." It was
tied over the miter with a violet ribbon, as the Lord had com-

32 ***Presentation of the Work to Moses*** Thus the ent
work of the Dwelling of the Meeting Tent was completed. T
Israelites did the work just as the Lord had commanded Mos
33 They then brought to Moses the Dwelling, the tent with
its appurtenances, the clasps, the boards, the bars, the colum
34 the pedestals, | the covering of rams' skins dyed red, the c
35 ering of thahas skins, the curtain veil; the Ark of the Co
36 mandments with its poles, the propitiatory, the table with all
37 appurtenances and the showbread, the pure gold lampsta
with its lamps set up on it and with all its appurtenances, t
38 oil for the light, | the golden altar, the anointing oil, the fi
39 grant incense; the curtain for the entrance of the Tent, | t
altar of bronze with its bronze grating, its poles and all
40 appurtenances, the laver with its base, | the hangings of t
court with their columns and pedestals, the curtain for the e
trance of the court with its ropes and tent pegs, all the equi
ment for the service of the Dwelling of the Meeting Ter
41 the service cloths for use in the sanctuary, the sacred vestmen
for Aaron the priest, and the vestments to be worn by his so
42 in their ministry. The Israelites had carried out all the wo
43 just as the Lord had commanded Moses. So when Moses sa
that all the work was done just as the Lord had commande
he blessed them.

40

1 ***Erection of the Dwelling*** Then the Lord said to Mose
2 "On the first day of the first month you shall erect the Dwellin
3 of the Meeting Tent. Put the Ark of the Commandments in i
4 and screen off the ark with the veil. Bring in the table and set i
5 Then bring in the lampstand and set up the lamps on it. Pu
the golden altar of incense in front of the Ark of the Com
mandments, and hang the curtain at the entrance of the Dwell
6 ing. Put the altar of holocausts in front of the entrance o
7 the Dwelling of the Meeting Tent. Place the laver betwee
8 the Meeting Tent and the altar, and put water in it. Set up
the court round about, and put the curtain at the entrance o
the court.
9 "Take the anointing oil and anoint the Dwelling and every
thing in it, consecrating it and all its furnishings, so that i
10 will be sacred. Anoint the altar of holocausts and all its ap
purtenances, consecrating it, so that it will be most sacred
11 Likewise, anoint the laver with its base, and thus consecrate it
12 "Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the
13 Meeting Tent, and there wash them with water. Clothe Aaron
with the sacred vestments and anoint him, thus consecrating

him as my priest. Bring forward his sons also, and clothe them
with the tunics. As you have anointed their father, anoint them
also as my priests. Thus, by being anointed, shall they receive a
perpetual priesthood throughout all future generations."

16.17 Moses did exactly as the Lord had commanded him. On the
first day of the first month of the second year the Dwelling
was erected. It was Moses who erected the Dwelling. He
placed its pedestals, set up its boards, put in its bars, and set
up its columns. He spread the tent over the Dwelling and put
the covering on top of the tent, as the Lord had commanded
him. He took the Commandments and put them in the ark; he
placed poles alongside the ark and set the propitiatory upon
it. He brought the ark into the Dwelling and hung the cur-
tain veil, thus screening off the Ark of the Commandments, as
the Lord had commanded him. He put the table in the Meet-
ing Tent, on the north side of the Dwelling, outside the veil,
and arranged the bread on it before the Lord, as the Lord had
commanded him. He placed the lampstand in the Meeting
Tent, opposite the table, on the south side of the Dwelling,
and he set up the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord had com-
manded him. He placed the golden altar in the Meeting Tent,
in front of the veil, | and on it he burned fragrant incense,
as the Lord had commanded him. He hung the curtain at the
entrance of the Dwelling. He put the altar of holocausts in
front of the entrance of the Dwelling of the Meeting Tent, and
offered holocausts and cereal offerings on it, as the Lord had
commanded him. He placed the laver between the Meeting
Tent and the altar, and put water in it for washing. Moses and
Aaron and his sons used to wash their hands and feet there, for
they washed themselves whenever they went into the Meeting
Tent or approached the altar, as the Lord had commanded
Moses. Finally, he set up the court around the Dwelling and
the altar and hung the curtain at the entrance of the court.
Thus Moses finished all the work.

God's Presence in the Dwelling Then the cloud covered
the Meeting Tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the Dwell-
ing. Moses could not enter the Meeting Tent, because the
cloud settled down upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the
Dwelling. Whenever the cloud rose from the Dwelling, the
Israelites would set out on their journey. But if the cloud did
not lift, they would not go forward; only when it lifted did
they go forward. In the daytime the cloud of the Lord was
seen over the Dwelling; whereas at night, fire was seen in the
cloud by the whole house of Israel in all the stages of their
journey.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

INTRODUCTION

Leviticus belongs to the Priestly tradition of the sixth century B
The name of the book comes from the Levitical priests (see
32, 29 n). It is Israel's book of worship.

This book encompasses the ten months and nineteen days in t
valley of Mount Sinai where the people had pitched camp. T
author has God dictate the liturgical laws to Moses. The sacr
purpose of this dramatic literary device is to teach that these mode
laws are exactly what Moses, were he still alive, would legisla
Therefore, they are explicitly decreed by God Himself. It is in th
way that the Israelite readers of the sixth century have understood thi
biblical authors. (See Ex 25-31 n.)

The general theme of Leviticus is "You shall be holy, because I, th
Lord, am holy." It is the basic reason for the liturgical laws, whi
govern the people to keep themselves liturgically pure as a sign
intimate union with God. Just as our ritual presumes internal di
positions of adoration, thanksgiving, etc., so did these Levitic
rubrics.

Many of the liturgical precepts laid down in Leviticus are observe
by orthodox Jews today. For Catholics the levitical sacrifices ar
precepts have been replaced by, and fulfilled in, the one sacrifice
Christ, renewed daily at Mass.

Main divisions of the Book of Leviticus are:

1. Ritual of Sacrifices, 1—7
2. Ceremony of Ordination, 8—10
3. Laws regarding Legal Purity, 11—16
4. Code of Legal Holiness, 17—26
5. Redemption of Offerings, 27

1. RITUAL OF SACRIFICES

1

1 ***Holocausts*** The Lord called Moses, and from the Meetin
2 Tent gave him this message: "Speak to the Israelites and te
them: When any one of you wishes to bring an animal offe
ing to the Lord, such an offering must be from the herd or fror
the flock.

1, 2: *From the herd or from the flock:* the only animals whic
could be used as sacrificial victims were either of the bovine clas
(bulls, cows and calves) or the ovine class (sheep and lambs, goat
and kids). Excluded, therefore, were not only all wild animals, bu
also such "unclean" domestic animals as the camel and the ass.

3 "If his holocaust offering is from the herd, it must be a
male without blemish. To find favor with the Lord, he shall
4 bring it to the entrance of the Meeting Tent | and there lay
his hand on the head of the holocaust, so that it may be ac-
5 ceptable to make atonement for him. He shall then slaughter
the bull before the Lord, but Aaron's sons, the priests, shall
offer up its blood by splashing it on the sides of the altar
6 which is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then he shall
7 skin the holocaust and cut it up into pieces. After Aaron's
sons, the priests, have put some burning embers on the altar
8 and laid some wood on them, | they shall lay the pieces of
meat, together with the head and the suet, on top of the wood
9 and embers on the altar. The inner organs and the shanks,
however, the offerer shall first wash with water. The priest
shall then burn the whole offering on the altar as a holocaust,
a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.
10 "If his holocaust offering is from the flock, that is, a sheep
11 or a goat, he must bring a male without blemish. This he shall
slaughter before the Lord at the north side of the altar. Then
Aaron's sons, the priests, shall splash its blood on the sides
12 of the altar. When the offerer has cut it up into pieces, the
priest shall lay these, together with the head and suet, on top
13 of the wood and the fire on the altar. The inner organs and
the shanks, however, the offerer shall first wash with water.
The priest shall offer them up and then burn the whole offering
on the altar as a holocaust, a sweet-smelling oblation to the
Lord.
14 "If he offers a bird as a holocaust to the Lord, he shall
15 choose a turtledove or a pigeon as his offering. Having brought
it to the altar where it is to be burned, the priest shall snap
its head loose and squeeze out its blood against the side of the
16 altar. Its crop and feathers shall be removed and thrown on
17 the ash heap at the east side of the altar. Then, having split the
bird down the middle without separating the halves, the priest
shall burn it on the altar, over the wood on the fire, as a holo-
caust, a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.

2

1 ***Cereal Offerings*** "When anyone wishes to bring a cereal

1, 3: *Holocaust:* from the Greek word meaning "wholly burned," this is the technical term for the special type of sacrifice in which an entire animal except its hide was consumed in the fire on the altar. The primary purpose of this complete gift was to render glory and praise to God.

1, 5: The essence of the sacrifice of the victim takes place when the

offering to the Lord, his offering must consist of fine flour. He
2 shall pour oil on it and put frankincense over it. When he has
brought it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of them shall take a
handful of this fine flour and oil, together with all the frank-
incense, and this he shall burn on the altar as a token offering,
3 a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord. The rest of the cereal
offering belongs to Aaron and his sons. It is a most sacred
oblation to the Lord.
4 "When the cereal offering you present is baked in an oven,
it must be in the form of unleavened cakes made of fine flour
5 mixed with oil, or of unleavened wafers spread with oil. If you
present a cereal offering that is fried on a griddle, it must be
6 of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened. Such a cereal of-
fering must be broken into pieces, and oil must be poured
7 over it. If you present a cereal offering that is prepared in a
8 pot, it must be of fine flour, deep-fried in oil. A cereal offer-
ing that is made in any of these ways you shall bring to the
Lord, offering it to the priest, who shall take it to the altar.
9 Its token offering the priest shall then lift from the cereal of-
fering and burn on the altar as a sweet-smelling oblation to
10 the Lord. The rest of the cereal offering belongs to Aaron and
his sons. It is a most sacred oblation to the Lord.
11 "Every cereal offering that you present to the Lord shall be
unleavened, for you shall not burn any leaven or honey as an
12 oblation to the Lord. Such you may indeed present to the
Lord in the offering of first fruits, but they are not to be placed
13 on the altar for a pleasing odor. However, every cereal offer-
ing that you present to the Lord shall be seasoned with salt.
Do not let the salt of the covenant of your God be lacking
from your cereal offering. On every offering you shall offer salt.
14 "If you present a cereal offering of first fruits to the Lord,
you shall offer it in the form of fresh grits of new ears of
15 grain, roasted by fire. On this cereal offering you shall put
16 oil and frankincense. For its token offering the priest shall then
burn some of the grits and oil, together with all the frankin-
cense, as an oblation to the Lord.

3

1 ***Peace Offerings*** "If someone in presenting a peace offer-
ing makes his offering from the herd, he may offer before the

blood is offered since it represents life. The altar represents God who receives the victim.

2, 13: *The salt of the covenant of your God:* the partaking in common of salt by those seated together at table was an ancient symbol of friendship and alliance.

Lord either a male or a female animal, but it must be without
7 blemish. He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and
then slaughter it at the entrance of the Meeting Tent; but
Aaron's sons, the priests, shall splash its blood on the sides
8 of the altar. From the peace offering he shall offer as an obla-
tion to the Lord the fatty membrane over the inner organs, and
9 all the fat that adheres to them, | as well as the two kidneys,
with the fat on them near the loins, and the lobe of the liver,
10 which he shall sever above the kidneys. All this Aaron's sons
shall then burn on the altar with the holocaust, on the wood
over the fire, as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.
6 "If the peace offering he presents to the Lord is from the
flock, he may offer either a male or a female animal, but it
7 must be without blemish. If he presents a lamb as his offering,
8 he shall bring it before the Lord, | and after laying his hand
on the head of his offering, he shall slaughter it before the
Meeting Tent; but Aaron's sons shall splash its blood on the
9 sides of the altar. As an oblation to the Lord he shall present the
fat of the peace offering: the whole fatty tail, which he must
sever close to the spine, the fatty membrane over the inner
10 organs, and all the fat that adheres to them, | as well as the
two kidneys, with the fat on them near the loins, and the
lobe of the liver, which he must sever above the kidneys.
11 All this the priest shall burn on the altar as the food of the
Lord's oblation.
12 "If he presents a goat, he shall bring it before the Lord, |
13 and after laying his hand on its head, he shall slaughter it before
the Meeting Tent; but Aaron's sons shall splash its blood on
14 the sides of the altar. From it he shall offer as an oblation to
the Lord the fatty membrane over the inner organs, and all the
15 fat that adheres to them, | as well as the two kidneys, with
the fat on them near the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which
16 he must sever above the kidneys. All this the priest shall burn
on the altar as the food of the sweet-smelling oblation. All
17 the fat belongs to the Lord. This shall be a perpetual ordi-
nance for your descendants wherever they may dwell. You
shall not partake of any fat or any blood."

4

1.2 ***Sin Offerings: For Priests*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell
the Israelites: When a person inadvertently commits a sin

4, 2: *A sin:* not necessarily a moral fault; included are all the cases of ritual uncleanness which people necessarily incurred in certain unavoidable circumstances.

against some command of the Lord by doing one of the for
3 bidden things, if it is the anointed priest who thus sins and
thereby makes the people also become guilty, he shall presen
to the Lord a young, unblemished bull as a sin offering for
4 the sin he committed. Bringing the bullock to the entrance
of the Meeting Tent, before the Lord, he shall lay his hand
5 on its head and slaughter it before the Lord. The anointed
priest shall then take some of the bullock's blood and bring
6 it into the Meeting Tent, where, dipping his finger in the
blood, he shall sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, toward
7 the veil of the sanctuary. The priest shall also put some of the
blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is
before the Lord in the Meeting Tent. The rest of the bullock's
blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of holocausts
8 which is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. From the sin-
offering bullock he shall remove all the fat: the fatty membrane
9 over the inner organs, and all the fat that adheres to them, | as
well as the two kidneys, with the fat on them near the loins,
and the lobe of the liver, which he must sever above the kid-
10 neys. This is the same as is removed from the ox of the peace
offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar of holocausts.
11 The hide of the bullock and all its flesh, with its head, legs,
12 inner organs and offal, | in short, the whole bullock, shall be
brought outside the camp to a clean place where the ashes are
deposited and there be burned up in a wood fire. At the place
of the ash heap, there it must be burned.

13 ***For the Community*** "If the whole community of Israel
inadvertently and without even being aware of it does some-
thing that the Lord has forbidden and thus makes itself guilty,
14 should it later on become known that the sin was committed,
the community shall present a young bull as a sin offering.
15 They shall bring it before the Meeting Tent, | and here, be-
fore the Lord, the elders of the community shall lay their
hands on the bullock's head. When the bullock has been slaugh-
16 tered before the Lord, the anointed priest shall bring some of
17 its blood into the Meeting Tent, | and dipping his finger in
the blood, he shall sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, to-
18 ward the veil. He shall also put some of the blood on the horns
of the altar of fragrant incense which is before the Lord in
the Meeting Tent. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at
the base of the altar of holocausts which is at the entrance of
19 the Meeting Tent. All of its fat he shall take from it and burn
20 on the altar, doing with this bullock just as he did with the
other sin-offering bullock. Thus the priest shall make atone-

21 ment for them, and they will be forgiven. This bullock must
also be brought outside the camp and burned, just as has been
prescribed for the other one. This is the sin offering for the
community.

22 ***For the Princes*** "Should a prince commit a sin inadvert-
ently by doing one of the things which are forbidden by some
commandment of the Lord, his God, and thus become guilty,
23 if later on he learns of the sin he committed, he shall bring as
24 his offering an unblemished male goat. Having laid his hands
on its head, he shall slaughter the goat as a sin offering be-
fore the Lord, in the place where the holocausts are slaugh-
25 tered. The priest shall then take some of the blood of the sin
offering on his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of
holocausts. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base
26 of this altar. All of the fat he shall burn on the altar like the
fat of the peace offering. Thus the priest shall make atone-
ment for the prince's sin, and it will be forgiven.

27 ***For Private Persons*** "If a private person commits a sin
inadvertently by doing one of the things which are forbidden
by the commandments of the Lord, and thus becomes guilty,
28 should he later on learn of the sin he committed, he shall
29 bring an unblemished she-goat as the offering for his sin. Hav-
ing laid his hand on the head of the sin offering, he shall
30 slaughter it at the place of the holocausts. The priest shall
then take some of its blood on his finger and put it on the horns
of the altar of holocausts. The rest of the blood he shall pour
31 out at the base of the altar. All the fat shall be removed, just
as the fat is removed from the peace offering, and the priest
shall burn it on the altar for an odor pleasing to the Lord.
Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will
be forgiven.

32 "If, however, for his sin offering he presents a lamb, he
33 shall bring an unblemished female. Having laid his hand on its
head, he shall slaughter this sin offering in the place where
34 the holocausts are slaughtered. The priest shall then take some
of the blood of the sin offering on his finger and put it on the
horns of the altar of holocausts. The rest of the blood he
35 shall pour out at the base of the altar. All the fat shall be re-
moved, just as the fat is removed from the peace-offering
lamb, and the priest shall burn it on the altar with the other
oblations of the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement
for the man's sin, and it will be forgiven.

5

1 ***For Special Cases*** "If any person refuses to give the in
formation which, as a witness of something he has seen o
learned, he has been adjured to give, and thus commits a sir
2 and has guilt to bear; or if someone, without being aware o
it, touches any unclean thing, as the carcass of an unclear
wild animal, or that of an unclean domestic animal, or tha
of an unclean swarming creature, and thus becomes unclear
3 and guilty; or if someone, without being aware of it, touches
some human uncleanness, whatever kind of uncleanness this
4 may be, and then recognizes his guilt; or if someone, without
being aware of it, rashly utters an oath to do good or evil,
such as men are accustomed to utter rashly, and then recog-
5 nizes that he is guilty of such an oath; then whoever is guilty
in any of these cases shall confess the sin he has incurred,
6 and as his sin offering for the sin he has committed he shall
bring to the Lord a female animal from the flock, a ewe lamb
or a she-goat. The priest shall then make atonement for his
sin.

7 "If, however, he cannot afford an animal of the flock, he shall
bring to the Lord as the sin offering for his sin two turtle-
doves or two pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a
8 holocaust. He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer the
one for the sin offering first. Snapping its head loose at the
9 neck, yet without breaking it off completely, he shall sprinkle
some of the blood of the sin offering against the side of the al-
tar. The rest of the blood shall be squeezed out against the base
10 of the altar. Such is the offering for sin. The other bird shall
be offered as a holocaust in the usual way. Thus the priest
shall make atonement for the sin the man committed, and it will
be forgiven.

11 "If he is unable to afford even two turtledoves or two pi-
geons, he shall present as a sin offering for his sin one tenth of
an epha of fine flour. He shall not put oil or frankincense on it,
12 because it is a sin offering. When he has brought it to the priest,
the latter shall take a handful of this flour as a token offering,
and this he shall burn as a sin offering on the altar with the
13 other oblations of the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atone-
ment for the sin that the man committed in any of the above
cases, and it will be forgiven. The rest of the flour, like the
cereal offerings, shall belong to the priest."

14.15 ***Guilt Offerings*** The Lord said to Moses, "If someone
commits a sin by inadvertently cheating in the Lord's sacred
dues, he shall bring to the Lord as his guilt offering an unblem-

ished ram from the flock, valued at two silver shekels according
16 to the standard of the sanctuary shekel. He shall also restore
what he has sinfully withheld from the sanctuary, adding to
it a fifth of its value. This is to be given to the priest, who
shall then make atonement for him with the guilt-offering ram,
and he will be forgiven.
17 "If someone, without being aware of it, commits such a sin
by doing one of the things which are forbidden by some com-
mandment of the Lord, that he incurs guilt for which he must
18 answer, he shall bring as a guilt offering to the priest an un-
blemished ram of the flock of the established value. The priest
shall then make atonement for the fault which was unwittingly
19 committed, and it will be forgiven. Such is the offering for
guilt; the penalty of the guilt must be paid to the Lord."
20.21 The Lord said to Moses, "If someone commits a sin of dis-
honesty against the Lord by denying his neighbor a deposit
or a pledge or a stolen article, or by otherwise retaining his
22 neighbor's goods unjustly, | or if, having found a lost article,
he denies the fact and swears falsely about it with any of
23 sinful oaths that men make in such cases, | he shall therefore,
since he has incurred guilt by his sin, restore the thing that
was stolen or unjustly retained by him or the deposit left with
24 him or the lost article he found | or whatever else he swore
falsely about; on the day of his guilt offering he shall make
full restitution of the thing itself, and in addition, give the
25 owner one fifth of its value. As his guilt offering he shall bring
to the Lord an unblemished ram of the flock of the established
value. When he has presented this as his guilt offering to the
26 priest, the latter shall make atonement for him before the Lord,
and he will be forgiven whatever guilt he may have incurred."

6

1.2 ***The Daily Holocaust*** The Lord said to Moses, "Give Aaron
and his sons the following command: This is the ritual for holo-
causts. The holocaust is to remain on the hearth of the altar all
night until the next morning, and the fire is to be kept burn-
3 ing on the altar. The priest, clothed in his linen robe and wear-
ing linen drawers on his body, shall take away the ashes to
4 which the fire has reduced the holocaust on the altar, and lay
them at the side of the altar. Then, having taken off these gar-
ments and put on other garments, he shall carry the ashes to a
5 clean place outside the camp. The fire on the altar is to be

5, 17: *Without being aware of it:* the case naturally presupposes that later on the offender learns of his mistake.

kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the prie
shall put firewood on it. On this he shall lay out the holocau
6 and burn the fat of the peace offerings. The fire is to be kep
burning continuously on the altar; it must not go out.

7 ***Daily Cereal Offering*** "This is the ritual of the cereal o
fering. One of Aaron's sons shall first present it before the Lorc
8 in front of the altar. Then he shall take from it a handful c
its fine flour and oil, together with all the frankincense that i
on it, and this he shall burn on the altar as its token offering
9 a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord. The rest of it Aaro
and his sons may eat; but it must be eaten in the form of un
leavened cakes and in a sacred place: in the court of the Meet
10 ing Tent they shall eat it. | It shall not be baked with leaven
I have given it to them as their portion from the oblations o
the Lord; it is most sacred, like the sin offering and the guil
11 offering. All the male descendants of Aaron may partake of it a
their rightful share in the oblations of the Lord perpetually
throughout your generations. Whatever touches the oblation
becomes sacred."

12.13 The Lord said to Moses, "This is the offering that Aaror
and his sons shall present to the Lord [on the day he is
anointed]: one tenth of an epha of fine flour for the established
14 cereal offering, half in the morning and half in the evening. It
shall be well kneaded and fried in oil on a griddle when you
bring it in. Having broken the offering into pieces, you shall pre-
15 sent it as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord. Aaron's de-
scendant who succeeds him as the anointed priest shall do like-
wise. This is a perpetual ordinance: for the Lord the whole
16 offering shall be burned. Every cereal offering of a priest shall
be a whole burnt offering; it may not be eaten."

17.18 ***Sin Offerings*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and
his sons: This is the ritual for sin offerings. At the place where
holocausts are slaughtered, there also, before the Lord, shall the
19 sin offering be slaughtered. It is most sacred. The priest who
presents the sin offering may partake of it; but it must be
20 eaten in a sacred place, in the court of the Meeting Tent. What-
ever touches its flesh shall become sacred. If any of its blood is
spilled on a garment, the stained part must be washed in a
21 sacred place. A clay vessel in which it has been cooked shall
thereafter be broken; if it is cooked in a bronze vessel, this
22 shall be scoured afterward and rinsed with water. All the
males of the priestly line may partake of the sin offering, since
23 it is most sacred. But no one may partake of any sin offering

of which some blood has been brought into the Meeting Tent to make atonement in the sanctuary; such an offering must be burned up in the fire.

1 ***Guilt Offerings*** "This is the ritual for guilt offerings, which
2 are most sacred. At the place where holocausts are slaughtered, there also shall the guilt offering be slaughtered. Its
3 blood shall be splashed on the sides of the altar. All of its fat shall be taken from it and offered up: the fatty tail, the fatty
4 membrane over the inner organs, as well as the two kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the lobe of the liver,
5 which must be severed above the kidneys. All this the priest shall burn on the altar as an oblation to the Lord. This is the
6 guilt offering. All the males of the priestly line may partake of it; but it must be eaten in a sacred place, since it is most sacred.
7 "Because the sin offering and the guilt offering are alike,
both having the same ritual, the guilt offering likewise be-
8 longs to the priest who makes atonement with it. Similarly, the priest who offers a holocaust for someone may keep for him-
9 self the hide of the holocaust that he has offered. Also, every cereal offering that is baked in an oven or deep-fried in a pot or fried on a griddle shall belong to the priest who offers it,
10 whereas all cereal offerings that are offered up dry or mixed with oil shall belong to all of Aaron's sons without distinction.

1 ***Peace Offerings*** "This is the ritual for the peace offerings
2 that are presented to the Lord. When anyone makes a peace offering in thanksgiving, together with his thanksgiving sacrifice he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes made of fine flour mixed
3 with oil and well kneaded. His offering shall also include loaves of leavened bread along with the victim of his peace
4 offering for thanksgiving. From each of his offerings he shall present one portion as a contribution to the Lord; this shall belong to the priest who splashes the blood of the peace offering.
5 "The flesh of the thanksgiving sacrifice shall be eaten on the day it is offered; none of it may be kept till the next day.
6 However, if the sacrifice is a votive or a free-will offering, it should indeed be eaten on the day the sacrifice is offered, but
7 what is left over may be eaten on the next day. Should any flesh from the sacrifice be left over on the third day, it must be
8 burned up in the fire. If, therefore, any of the flesh of the peace offering is eaten on the third day, it shall not win favor for him

nor shall it be reckoned to his credit; rather, it shall be considered as refuse, and anyone who eats of it shall have his
19 guilt to bear. Should the flesh touch anything unclean, it may not be eaten, but shall be burned up in the fire.
20 "All who are clean may partake of this flesh. | If, however, someone while in a state of uncleanness eats any of the flesh of a peace offering belonging to the Lord, that person
21 shall be cut off from his people. Likewise, if someone touches anything unclean, whether the uncleanness be of human or of animal origin or from some loathsome crawling creature, and then eats of a peace offering belonging to the Lord, that person, too, shall be cut off from his people."

22 ***Prohibition against Blood and Fat*** The Lord said to
23 Moses, "Tell the Israelites: You shall not eat the fat of any ox or
24 sheep or goat. Although the fat of an animal that has died a natural death or has been killed by wild beasts may be put to any
25 other use, you may not eat it. If anyone eats the fat of an animal from which an oblation is made to the Lord, such a one shall
26 be cut off from his people. Wherever you dwell, you shall not
27 partake of any blood, be it of bird or of animal. Every person who partakes of any blood shall be cut off from his people."

28.29 ***The Portions for Priests*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites: He who presents a peace offering to the Lord
30 shall bring a part of it as his special offering to him, carrying in with his own hands the oblations to the Lord. The fat is to be brought in, together with the breast, which is to be waved
31 as a wave offering before the Lord. The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons.
32 Moreover, from your peace offering you shall give to the
33 priest the right leg as a raised offering. The descendant of Aaron who offers up the blood and fat of the peace offering
34 shall have the right leg as his portion, for from the peace offerings of the Israelites I have taken the breast that is waved and the leg that is raised up, and I have given them to Aaron, the priest, and to his sons by a perpetual ordinance as a contribution from the Israelites."
35 This is the priestly share from the oblations of the Lord, allotted to Aaron and his sons on the day he called them to
36 be the priests of the Lord; on the day he anointed them the Lord ordered the Israelites to give them this share by a perpetual ordinance throughout their generations.
37 This is the ritual for holocausts, cereal offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings, [ordination offerings] and peace offerings,

which the Lord enjoined on Moses at Mount Sinai at the time when he commanded the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai to bring their offerings to the Lord.

II. CEREMONY OF ORDINATION

8

1 ***Ordination of Aaron and His Sons*** The Lord said to
2 Moses, "Take Aaron and his sons, together with the vestments,
the anointing oil, the bullock for a sin offering, the two rams,
3 and the basket of unleavened food. Then assemble the whole
4 community at the entrance of the Meeting Tent." And Moses
did as the Lord had commanded. When the community had
5 assembled at the entrance of the Meeting Tent, Moses told them
6 what the Lord had ordered to be done. Bringing forward Aaron
7 and his sons, he first washed them with water. Then he put the
tunic on Aaron, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the
robe, placed the ephod on him, and girded him with the em-
8 broidered belt of the ephod, fastening it around him. He then
set the breastpiece on him, with the Urim and Thummim in
9 it, | and put the miter on his head, attaching the gold plate,
the sacred diadem, over the front of the miter, at his forehead,
as the Lord had commanded him to do.
10 Taking the anointing oil, Moses anointed and consecrated
11 the Dwelling, with all that was in it. Then he sprinkled some
of this oil seven times on the altar, and anointed the altar, with
all its appurtenances, and the laver, with its base, thus con-
12 secrating them. He also poured some of the anointing oil on
13 Aaron's head, thus consecrating him. Moses likewise brought
forward Aaron's sons, clothed them with tunics, girded them
with sashes, and put turbans on them, as the Lord had com-
manded him to do.

14 ***Ordination Sacrifices*** When he had brought forward the bullock for a sin offering, Aaron and his sons laid their hands

8, 1—9, 21: Though presented in the form of a narrative, this description of Aaron's ordination was intended to serve as a guide for all future ordinations.

8, 8: *The Urim and Thummim:* these objects were used by the priest or high priest (and originally the priest-king) to give a decision in God's name. There is no adequate explanation of the meaning of these two terms, nor of the makeup of the objects themselves. Maybe they were small stones or small sticks. They were no longer in use after David's time. They are mentioned in Ex 28, 30; Nm 27, 21; Dt 33, 8.

15 on its head. Then Moses slaughtered it, and taking some of i
blood, with his finger he put it on the horns around the alta
thus purifying the altar. He also made atonement for the alt
by pouring out the blood at its base when he consecrated
16 Taking all the fat that was over the inner organs, as well
the lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat, Mos
17 burned them on the altar. The bullock, however, with its hi
and flesh and offal he burned in the fire outside the camp, as t
Lord had commanded him to do.
18 He next brought forward the holocaust ram, and Aaro
19 and his sons laid their hands on its head. When he had slaug
20 tered it, Moses splashed its blood on all sides of the altar. Aft
cutting up the ram into pieces, he burned the head, the cut u
21 pieces and the suet; then, having washed the inner organs an
the shanks with water, he also burned these remaining part
of the ram on the altar as a holocaust, a sweet-smelling oblatio
to the Lord, as the Lord had commanded him to do.
22 Then he brought forward the second ram, the ordinatio
23 ram, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Whe
he had slaughtered it, Moses took some of its blood and put i
on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand
24 and on the big toe of his right foot. Moses had the sons o
Aaron also come forward, and he put some of the blood on th
tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, an
on the big toes of their right feet. The rest of the blood h
25 splashed on the sides of the altar. He then took the fat: th
fatty tail and all the fat over the inner organs, the lobe of th
liver and the two kidneys with their fat, and likewise the righ
26 leg; from the basket of unleavened food that was set before th
Lord he took one unleavened cake, one loaf of bread made wit
oil, and one wafer; these he placed on top of the portions o
27 fat and the right leg. He then put all these things into the hand
of Aaron and his sons, whom he had wave them as a wave
28 offering before the Lord. When he had received them back,
Moses burned them with the holocaust on the altar as the
ordination offering, a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.
29 He then took the breast and waved it as a wave offering before
the Lord; this was Moses' own portion of the ordination ram.
All this was in keeping with the Lord's command to Moses.
30 Taking some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that
was on the altar, Moses sprinkled with it Aaron and his vest-
ments, as well as his sons and their vestments, thus consecrat-
ing both Aaron and his vestments and his sons and their
vestments.
31 Finally, Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh at

the entrance of the Meeting Tent, and there eat it with the bread
that is in the basket of the ordination offering, in keeping with
the command I have received: 'Aaron and his sons shall eat of
2 it.' What is left over of the flesh and the bread you shall burn
3 up in the fire. Moreover, you are not to depart from the en-
trance of the Meeing Tent for seven days, until the days of your
ordination are completed; for your ordination is to last for
4 seven days. The Lord has commanded that what has been done
5 today be done to make atonement for you. Hence you must
remain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent day and night for
seven days, carrying out the prescriptions of the Lord; other-
wise you shall die; for this is the command I have received."
6 So Aaron and his sons did all that the Lord had commanded
through Moses.

1 ***Octave of the Ordination*** On the eighth day Moses sum-
moned Aaron and his sons, together with the elders of Israel,
2 | and said to Aaron, "Take a calf for a sin offering and a ram
for a holocaust, both without blemish, and offer them before
3 the Lord. Tell the elders of Israel, too: Take a he-goat for a
sin offering, a calf and a lamb, both unblemished yearlings, for
4 a holocaust, | and an ox and a ram for a peace offering, to
sacrifice them before the Lord, along with a cereal offering
mixed with oil; for today the Lord will reveal himself to you."
5 So they brought what Moses had ordered. When the whole
community had come forward and stood before the Lord, |
6 Moses said, "This is what the Lord orders you to do, that the
7 glory of the Lord may be revealed to you. Come up to the
altar," Moses then told Aaron, "and offer your sin offering
and your holocaust in atonement for yourself and for your
family; then present the offering of the people in atonement
for them, as the Lord has commanded."
8 Going up to the altar, Aaron first slaughtered the calf that
9 was his own sin offering. When his sons presented the blood
to him, he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns
of the altar. The rest of the blood he poured out at the base of
10 the altar. He then burned on the altar the fat, the kidneys and
the lobe of the liver that were taken from the sin offering, as
11 the Lord had commanded Moses; but the flesh and the hide

8, 34: The sense is not quite clear. Either the verse gives merely the
reason why God ordered this ceremony, or it contains God's command
that the same ceremony be used in all future ordinations, or it decrees
repetition of the entire ceremony on each of the seven days.

12 he burned up in the fire outside the camp. Then Aaron slau
tered his holocaust. When his sons brought him the blood,
13 splashed it on all sides of the altar. They then brought h
the pieces and the head of the holocaust, and he burned th
14 on the altar. Having washed the inner organs and the shan
he burned these also with the holocaust on the altar.
15 Thereupon he had the people's offering brought up. Taki
the goat that was for the people's sin offering, he slaughter
16 it and offered it up for sin as before. Then he brought forwa
the holocaust, other than the morning holocaust, and offer
17 it in the usual manner. He then presented the cereal offerin
18 taking a handful of it, he burned it on the altar. Finally
slaughtered the ox and the ram, the peace offering of t
people. When his sons brought him the blood, Aaron splash
19 it on all sides of the altar. The portions of fat from the ox a
from the ram, the fatty tail, the fatty membrane over the inn
organs, the two kidneys, with the fat that is on them, and th
20 lobe of the liver, he placed on top of the breasts and burn
21 them on the altar, having first waved the breasts and the rig
legs as a wave offering before the Lord, in keeping with th
Lord's command to Moses.

22 ***Revelation of the Lord's Glory*** Aaron then raised h
hands over the people and blessed them. When he came dow
from offering the sin offering and holocaust and peace offerin
23 Moses and Aaron went into the Meeting Tent. On coming ou
they again blessed the people. Then the glory of the Lord wa
24 revealed to all the people. Fire came forth from the Lord
presence and consumed the holocaust and the remnants of th
fat on the altar. Seeing this, all the people cried out and fe
prostrate.

10

1 ***Nadab and Abiu*** During this time Aaron's sons Nada
and Abiu took their censers and, strewing incense on the fir
they had put in them, they offered up before the Lord profan
2 fire, such as he had not authorized. Fire therefore came fort
from the Lord's presence and consumed them, so that they die
3 in his presence. Moses then said to Aaron, "This is as the Lor
said: Through those who approach me I will manifest m
sacredness; in the sight of all the people I will reveal my glory.

10, 1-2: The precise nature of their crime is not clear in the Hebrew text.

10, 2: *Fire:* perhaps after the manner of lightning.

4 But Aaron said nothing. | Then Moses summoned Misael and
Elisaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Oziel, with the order,
"Come, remove your kinsmen from the sanctuary and carry
5 them to a place outside the camp." So they went in and took
them, in their tunics, outside the camp, as Moses had com-
manded.

6 ***Conduct of the Priests*** Moses said to Aaron and his sons
Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not bare your heads or tear your
garments, lest you bring not only death on yourselves but God's
wrath also on the whole community. Your kinsmen, the rest
of the house of Israel, shall mourn for those whom the Lord's
7 fire has smitten; but do not you go beyond the entry of the
Meeting Tent, else you shall die; for the anointing oil of the
Lord is upon you." So they did as Moses told them.
8 9 The Lord said to Aaron, "When you are to go to the Meet-
ing Tent, you and your sons are forbidden under pain of death,
by a perpetual ordinance throughout your generations, to drink
10 any wine or strong drink. You must be able to distinguish
between what is sacred and what is profane, between what is
11 clean and what is unclean; you must teach the Israelites all the
laws that the Lord has given them through Moses."

12 ***The Eating of the Priestly Portions*** Moses said to Aaron
and his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the cereal
offering left over from the oblations of the Lord, and eat it
beside the altar in the form of unleavened cakes. Since it is
13 most sacred, you must eat it in a sacred place. This is your due
from the oblations of the Lord, and that of your sons; such is
14 the command I have received. With your sons and daughters
you shall also eat the breast of the wave offering and the leg
of the raised offering, in a clean place; for these have been
assigned to you and your children as your due from the peace
15 offerings of the Israelites. The leg of the raised offering and the
breast of the wave offering shall first be brought in with the
oblations, the fatty portions, that are to be waved as a wave
offering before the Lord. Then they shall belong to you and
your children by a perpetual ordinance, as the Lord has
commanded."

10, 6: *Bare your heads:* go without the customary head covering, as sign of mourning. Some interpreters, however, understand it as the utting off of one's hair, which ordinarily all the Israelites, men as well s women, let grow long. Still others understand the verb to mean to let one's hair hang loose and wild."

16 When Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering, he
discovered that it had all been burned. So he was angry with
the surviving sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, and said
17 | "Why did you not eat the sin offering in the sacred place
since it is most sacred? It has been given to you that you might
bear the guilt of the community and make atonement for them
18 before the Lord. If its blood was not brought into the inmost
part of the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten the
offering in the sanctuary, in keeping with the command I had
19 received." Aaron answered Moses, "Even though they pre-
sented their sin offering and holocaust before the Lord today,
yet this misfortune has befallen me. Had I then eaten of the
sin offering today, would it have been pleasing to the Lord?"
20 On hearing this, Moses was satisfied.

III. LEGAL PURITY

11

1 ***Clean and Unclean Food*** The Lord said to Moses and
2 Aaron, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: Of all land ani-
3 mals these are the ones you may eat: any animal that has hoofs
you may eat, provided it is cloven-footed and chews the cud.
4 But you shall not eat any of the following that only chew the
cud or only have hoofs: the camel, which indeed chews the
cud, but does not have hoofs and is therefore unclean for you;
5 the rock badger, which indeed chews the cud, but does not have
6 hoofs and is therefore unclean for you; the hare, which indeed
chews the cud, but does not have hoofs and is therefore unclean
7 for you; and the pig, which does indeed have hoofs and is
cloven-footed, but does not chew the cud and is therefore

11—15: The people of God assumed that He is concerned with every aspect of human life. Therefore, religion should include procedures about hygiene, medicine, eating habits. Many of the purities were customs and taboos observed by other ancient Near Eastern peoples before and during the time of the Hebrews.

11, 1ff: These distinctions between edible and inedible meats were probably based on traditional ideas of hygiene, but they are here given a moral, religious basis: the inedible varieties are classified as "unclean" to remind the Israelites that they are to be a pure and holy people, dedicated to the Lord.

11, 5f: According to modern zoology, the *rock badger* (hyrax Syriacus is classified as an ungulate, and *the hare* as a rodent; neither is a ruminant. They appear to chew their food as the true ruminants do, and it is upon this appearance that the classification in the text is based.

11, 3-19, 30: The identification of the various Hebrew names for these birds and reptiles is in many cases uncertain.

8 unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their dead
bodies you shall not touch; they are unclean for you.
9 "Of the various creatures that live in the water, you may
eat the following: whatever in the seas or in river waters has
10 both fins and scales you may eat. But of the various creatures
that crawl or swim in the water, whether in the sea or in the
rivers, all those that lack either fins or scales are loathsome for
11 you, and you shall treat them as loathsome. Their flesh you
12 shall not eat, and their dead bodies you shall loathe. Every
water creature that lacks fins or scales is loathsome for you.
13 "Of the birds, these you shall loathe and, as loathsome, they
14 shall not be eaten: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, | the kite,
15 the various species of falcons, | the various species of crows,
16 | the ostrich, the nightjar, the gull, the various species of
17.18 hawks, | the owl, the cormorant, the screech owl, | the barn
19 owl, the desert owl, the buzzard, | the stork, the various species
of herons, the hoopoe, and the bat.
20 "The various winged insects that walk on all fours are
21 loathsome for you. But of the various winged insects that walk
on all fours you may eat those that have jointed legs for leap-
22 ing on the ground; hence of these you may eat the following:
the various kinds of locusts, the various kinds of grasshoppers,
the various kinds of katydids, and the various kinds of crickets.
23 All other winged insects that have four legs are loathsome for
you.
24 "Such is the uncleanness that you contract, that everyone
who touches their dead bodies shall be unclean until evening,
25 and everyone who picks up any part of their dead bodies shall
26 wash his garments and be unclean until evening. All hoofed
animals that are not cloven-footed or do not chew the cud are
unclean for you; everyone who touches them becomes unclean.
27 Of the various quadrupeds, all those that walk on paws are
unclean for you; everyone who touches their dead bodies shall
28 be unclean until evening, and everyone who picks up their dead

11, 19: *The bat:* actually a mammal, but listed here with the birds because of its wings.

11, 22: The Hebrew distinguishes four classes of edible locust-like insects, but the difference between them is quite uncertain.

11, 24-28: This paragraph sharpens the prohibition against unclean animals: not only is their meat unfit for food, but contact with their dead bodies makes a person ritually unclean.

11, 26: *All hoofed animals that are not cloven-footed:* such as the horse and the ass.

11, 27: *All those that walk on paws:* such as dogs and cats.

bodies shall wash his garments and be unclean until evening
Such is their uncleanness for you.
29 "Of the creatures that swarm on the ground, the following
are unclean for you: the rat, the mouse, the various kinds of
30 lizards, | the gecko, the chameleon, the agama, the skink, and
31 the mole. Among the various swarming creatures, these are
unclean for you. Everyone who touches them when they are
32 dead shall be unclean until evening. Everything on which one
of them falls when dead becomes unclean. Any such article
that men use, whether it be an article of wood, cloth, leather
or goat hair, must be put in water and remain unclean until
33 evening, when it again becomes clean. Should any of these
creatures fall into a clay vessel, everything in it becomes un-
34 clean, and the vessel itself you must break. Any solid food that
was in contact with water, and any liquid that men drink, in
35 any such vessel become unclean. Any object on which one of
their dead bodies falls, becomes unclean; if it is an oven or a jar-
stand, this must be broken to pieces; they are unclean and
36 shall be treated as unclean by you. However, a spring or a
cistern for collecting water remains clean; but whoever touches
37 the dead body becomes unclean. Any sort of cultivated grain
remains clean even though one of their dead bodies falls on it;
38 but if the grain has become moistened, it becomes unclean
when one of these falls on it.
39 "When one of the animals that you could otherwise eat,
dies of itself, anyone who touches its dead body shall be un-
40 clean until evening; and anyone who eats of its dead body
shall wash his garments and be unclean until evening; so also,
anyone who removes its dead body shall wash his garments and
be unclean until evening.
41 "All the creatures that swarm on the ground are loathsome
42 and shall not be eaten. Whether it crawls on its belly, goes on
all fours, or has many legs, you shall eat no swarming creature:
43 they are loathsome. Do not make yourselves loathsome or un-
clean with any swarming creature through being contaminated
44 by them. For I, the Lord, am your God; and you shall make
and keep yourselves holy, because I am holy. You shall not
make yourselves unclean, then, by any swarming creature that
45 crawls on the ground. Since I, the Lord, brought you up from
the land of Egypt that I might be your God, you shall be holy,
because I am holy.
46 "This is the law for animals and birds and for all the crea-

11, 36: *Whoever touches the dead body:* to remove the dead insect from the water supply.

tures that move about in the water or swarm on the ground,
47 that you may distinguish between the clean and the unclean,
between creatures that may be eaten and those that may not
be eaten."

12

1 ***Uncleanness of Childbirth*** The Lord said to Moses,
2 "Tell the Israelites: When a woman has conceived and gives birth
to a boy, she shall be unclean for seven days, with the same
3 uncleanness as at her menstrual period. On the eighth day,
4 the flesh of the boy's foreskin shall be circumcised, and then
she shall spend thirty-three days more in becoming purified
of her blood; she shall not touch anything sacred nor enter
5 the sanctuary till the days of her purification are fulfilled. If
she gives birth to a girl, for fourteen days she shall be as un-
clean as at her menstruation, after which she shall spend sixty-
six days in becoming purified of her blood.
6 "When the days of her purification for a son or for a daugh-
ter are fulfilled, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of
the Meeting Tent a yearling lamb for a holocaust and a pigeon
7 or a turtledove for a sin offering. The priest shall offer them
up before the Lord to make atonement for her, and thus she
will be clean again after her flow of blood. Such is the law for
8 the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl child. If, however,
she cannot afford a lamb, she may take two turtledoves or
two pigeons, the one for a holocaust and the other for a sin
offering. The priest shall make atonement for her, and thus
she will again be clean."

13

1-2 ***Leprosy*** The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "If someone
has on his skin a scab or pustule or blotch which appears to be
the sore of leprosy, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest,
3 or to one of the priests among his descendants, | who shall
examine the sore on his skin. If the hair on the sore has turned
white and the sore itself shows that it has penetrated below the

12, 2f: The uncleanness of the woman was more serious during the first period, the seven days after the birth of a boy or the fourteen days after the birth of a girl; only during this period would the rules given in 15, 19-24 apply.

13, 2ff: Various kinds of skin blemishes are treated here which were not contagious but simply disqualified their subjects from association with others, especially in public worship, until they were declared ritually clean. The Hebrew term used does not refer to Hansen's disease, currently called leprosy.

skin, it is indeed the sore of leprosy; the priest, on seeing thi
4 shall declare the man unclean. If, however, the blotch on th
skin is white, but does not seem to have penetrated below th
skin, nor has the hair turned white, the priest shall quarantin
5 the stricken man for seven days. On the seventh day the pries
shall again examine him. If he judges that the sore has re
mained unchanged and has not spread on the skin, the pries
6 shall quarantine him for another seven days, and once mor
examine him on the seventh day. If the sore is now dying ou
and has not spread on the skin, the priest shall declare the ma
clean; it was merely eczema. The man shall wash his garment
7 and so become clean. But if, after he has shown himself to th
priest to be declared clean, the eczema spreads at all on hi
8 skin, he shall once more show himself to the priest. Shoulc
the priest, on examining it, find that the eczema has indeec
spread on the skin, he shall declare the man unclean; it i
leprosy.

9 "When someone is stricken with leprosy, he shall be brought
10 to the priest. Should the priest, on examining him, find that
there is a white scab on the skin which has turned the hair
11 white and that there is raw flesh in it, it is skin leprosy that
has long developed. The priest shall declare the man unclean
without first quarantining him, since he is certainly unclean.
12 If leprosy breaks out on the skin and, as far as the priest can
see, covers all the skin of the stricken man from head to foot,
13 should the priest then, on examining him, find that the leprosy
does cover his whole body, he shall declare the stricken man
14 clean; since it has all turned white, the man is clean. But as
15 soon as raw flesh appears on him, he is unclean; on observing
the raw flesh, the priest shall declare him unclean, because raw
16 flesh is unclean; it is leprosy. If, however, the raw flesh again
17 turns white, he shall return to the priest; should the latter, on
examining him, find that the sore has indeed turned white, he
shall declare the stricken man clean, and thus he will be clean.

18 "If a man who had a boil on his skin which later healed,
19 should now in the place of the boil have a white scab or a pink
20 blotch, he shall show himself to the priest. If the latter, on
examination, sees that it is deeper than the skin and that the
hair has turned white, he shall declare the man unclean; it is
21 the sore of leprosy that has broken out in the boil. But if the
priest, on examining him, finds that there is no white hair in it

13, 12ff: *If leprosy breaks out on the skin:* the symptoms described here point to a form of skin disease which is merely on the surface and therefore easily cured.

and that it is not deeper than the skin and is already dying out,
22 the priest shall quarantine him for seven days. If it has then
spread on the skin, the priest shall declare him unclean; the
23 man is stricken. But if the blotch remains in its place without
spreading, it is merely the scar of the boil; the priest shall there-
fore declare him clean.
24 "If a man had a burn on his skin, and the proud flesh of the
25 burn now becomes a pink or a white blotch, the priest shall
examine it. If the hair has turned white on the blotch and this
seems to have penetrated below the skin, it is leprosy that has
broken out in the burn; the priest shall therefore declare him
26 unclean and stricken with leprosy. But if the priest, on examin-
ing it, finds that there is no white hair on the blotch and that
this is not deeper than the skin and is already dying out, the
27 priest shall quarantine him for seven days. Should the priest,
when examining it on the seventh day, find that it has spread
at all on the skin, he shall declare the man unclean and stricken
28 with leprosy. But if the blotch remains in its place without
spreading on the skin and is already dying out, it is merely the
scab of the burn; the priest shall therefore declare the man
clean, since it is only the scar of the burn.
29 "When a man or a woman has a sore on the head or cheek,
30 | should the priest, on examining it, find that the sore has pene-
trated below the skin and that there is fine yellow hair on it, the
priest shall declare the person unclean, for this is scall, a
31 leprous disease of the head or cheek. But if the priest, on ex-
amining the scall sore, finds that it has not penetrated below
the skin, though the hair on it may not be black, the priest shall
32 quarantine the person with scall sore for seven days, and
on the seventh day again examine the sore. If the scall has not
spread and has no yellow hair on it and does not seem to have
33 penetrated below the skin, | the man shall shave himself, but
not on the diseased spot. Then the priest shall quarantine him
34 for another seven days. If the priest, when examining the scall
on the seventh day, finds that it has not spread on the skin and
that it has not penetrated below the skin, he shall declare the
man clean; the latter shall wash his garments, and thus he
35 will be clean. But if the scall spreads at all on his skin after he
36 has been declared clean, the priest shall again examine it. If
the scall has indeed spread on the skin, he need not look for
37 yellow hair; the man is surely unclean. If, however, he judges
that the scall has remained in its place and that black hair has

13, 30: *Scall:* according to some, "ringworm."

grown on it, the disease has been healed; the man is clean, and the priest shall declare him clean.

38 "When the skin of a man or a woman is spotted with white
39 blotches, | the priest shall make an examination. If the blotches on the skin are white and already dying out, it is only tetter that has broken out on the skin, and the person therefore is clean.

40 "When a man loses the hair of his head, he is not unclean
41 merely because of his bald crown. So too, if he loses the hair on the front of his head, he is not unclean merely because of his
42 bald forehead. But when there is a pink sore on his bald crown or bald forehead, it is leprosy that is breaking out there.
43 The priest shall examine him; and if the scab on the sore of the bald spot has the same pink appearance as that of skin
44 leprosy of the fleshy part of the body, | the man is leprous and unclean, and the priest shall declare him unclean by reason of the sore on his head.

45 "The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he
46 shall cry out, 'Unclean, unclean!' As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp.

47 ***Leprosy of Clothes*** "When a leprous infection is on a gar-
48 ment of wool or of linen, or on woven or knitted material of
49 linen or wool, or on a hide or anything made of leather, if the infection on the garment or hide, or on the woven or knitted material, or on any leather article is greenish or reddish, the thing is indeed infected with leprosy and must be shown to the
50 priest. Having examined the infection, the priest shall quarantine the infected article for seven days.

51 "On the seventh day the priest shall again examine the infection. If it has spread on the garment, or on the woven or knitted material, or on the leather, whatever be its use, the in-
52 fection is malignant leprosy, and the article is unclean. He shall therefore burn up the garment, or the woven or knitted material of wool or linen, or the leather article, whatever it may be, which is infected; since it has malignant leprosy, it
53 must be destroyed by fire. But if the priest, on examining the infection, finds that it has not spread on the garment, or on the
54 woven or knitted material, or on the leather article, he shall

13, 39: *Tetter:* vitiligo, a harmless form of skin disease.
13, 47: *A leprous infection:* some mold or fungus growth resembling human leprosy.

give orders to have the infected article washed and then quarantined for another seven days.

55 "Then the priest shall again examine the infected article after it has been washed. If the infection has not changed its appearance, even though it may not have spread, the article is
56 unclean and shall be destroyed by fire. But if the priest, on examining the infection, finds that it is dying out after the washing, he shall tear the infected part out of the garment, or
57 the leather, or the woven or knitted material. If, however, the infection again appears on the garment, or on the woven or knitted material, or on the leather article, it is still virulent and
58 the thing infected shall be destroyed by fire. But if, after the washing, the infection has left the garment, or the woven or knitted material, or the leather article, the thing shall be washed
59 a second time, and thus it will be clean. This is the law for leprous infection on a garment of wool or linen, or on woven or knitted material, or on any leather article, to determine whether it is clean or unclean."

14

1,2 ***Purification after Leprosy*** The Lord said to Moses, "This is the law for the victim of leprosy at the time of his purification. He shall be brought to the priest, who is to go outside the
3 camp to examine him. If the priest finds that the sore of leprosy
4 has healed in the leper, he shall order the man who is to be purified, to get two live, clean birds, as well as some cedar
5 wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop. The priest shall then order him to slay one of the birds over an earthen vessel with spring
6 water in it. Taking the living bird with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, the priest shall dip them all in the
7 blood of the bird that was slain over the spring water, and then sprinkle seven times the man to be purified from his leprosy. When he has thus purified him, he shall let the living bird fly
8 away over the countryside. The man being purified shall then wash his garments and shave off all his hair and bathe in water; only when he is thus made clean may he come inside the camp; but he shall still remain outside his tent for seven days.
9 On the seventh day he shall again shave off all the hair of his head, his beard, his eyebrows, and any other hair he may have, and also wash his garments and bathe his body in water; and so he will be clean.

14, 5: *Spring water:* literally, "living water," taken from some source of running water, not from a cistern.

10 ***Purification Sacrifices*** "On the eighth day he shall take
two unblemished male lambs, one unblemished yearling ewe
lamb, three tenths of an epha of fine flour mixed with oil for
11 a cereal offering, and one log of oil. The priest who performs
the purification ceremony shall place the man who is being
purified, as well as all these offerings, before the Lord at the
12 entrance of the Meeting Tent. Taking one of the male lambs,
the priest shall present it as a guilt offering, along with the
log of oil, waving them as a wave offering before the Lord.
13 (This lamb he shall slaughter in the sacred place where the
sin offering and the holocaust are slaughtered; because, like
the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest and is
14 most sacred.) Then the priest shall take some of the blood of
the guilt offering and put it on the tip of the man's right ear,
the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot.
15 The priest shall also take the log of oil and pour some of it
16 into the palm of his own left hand; then, dipping his right
forefinger in it, he shall sprinkle it seven times before the Lord.
17 Of the oil left in his hand the priest shall put some on the tip
of the man's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the
big toe of his right foot, over the blood of the guilt offering.
18 The rest of the oil in his hand the priest shall put on the head
of the man being purified. Thus shall the priest make atone-
19 ment for him before the Lord. Only after he has offered the
sin offering in atonement for the man's uncleanness shall the
20 priest slaughter the holocaust | and offer it, together with the
cereal offering, on the altar before the Lord. When the priest
has thus made atonement for him, the man will be clean.

21 ***Poor Leper's Sacrifice*** "If a man is poor and cannot afford
so much, he shall take one male lamb for a guilt offering, to be
used as a wave offering in atonement for himself, one tenth of
an epha of fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering, a log
22 of oil, | and two turtledoves or pigeons, which he can more
easily afford, the one as a sin offering and the other as a holo-
23 caust. On the eighth day of his purification he shall bring them
to the priest, at the entrance of the Meeting Tent before the
24 Lord. Taking the guilt-offering lamb, along with the log of oil,
the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the Lord.
25 When he has slaughtered the guilt-offering lamb, he shall take
some of its blood, and put it on the tip of the right ear of the
man being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the

14, 22: *Two turtledoves:* substitutes for the two additional lambs, similar to the offering of a poor woman after childbirth.

big toe of his right foot. The priest shall then pour some of
the oil into the palm of his own left hand | and with his right
forefinger sprinkle it seven times before the Lord. Some of the
oil in his hand the priest shall also put on the tip of the man's
right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his
right foot, over the blood of the guilt offering. The rest of the
oil in his hand the priest shall put on the man's head. Thus
shall he make atonement for him before the Lord. Then, of the
turtledoves or pigeons, such as the man can afford, | the priest
shall offer up one as a sin offering and the other as a holocaust,
along with the cereal offering. Thus shall the priest make atone-
ment before the Lord for the man who is to be purified. This is
the law for one afflicted with leprosy who has insufficient
means for his purification."

Leprosy of Houses The Lord said to Moses and Aaron,
"When you come into the land of Chanaan, which I am giving
you to possess, if I put a leprous infection on any house of the
land you occupy, the owner of the house shall come and report
to the priest, 'It looks to me as if my house were infected.'
The priest shall then order the house to be cleared out before
he goes in to examine the infection, lest everything in the house
become unclean. Only after this is he to go in to examine the
house. | If the priest, on examining it, finds that the infection
on the walls of the house consists of greenish or reddish de-
pressions which seem to go deeper than the surface of the wall,
he shall close the door of the house behind him and quarantine
the house for seven days. On the seventh day the priest shall
return to examine the house again. If he finds that the infection
has spread on the walls, he shall order the infected stones to be
pulled out and cast in an unclean place outside the city. The
whole inside of the house shall then be scraped, and the mortar
that has been scraped off shall be dumped in an unclean place
outside the city. Then new stones shall be brought and put in
the place of the old stones, and new mortar shall be made and
plastered on the house.

If the infection breaks out once more after the stones have
been pulled out and the house has been scraped and replastered,
| the priest shall come again; and if he finds that the infection
has spread in the house, it is corrosive leprosy, and the house
is unclean. It shall be pulled down, and all its stones, beams
and mortar shall be hauled away to an unclean place outside
the city. Whoever enters a house while it is quarantined shall be
unclean until evening. Whoever sleeps or eats in such a house
shall also wash his garments. If the priest finds, when he comes

to examine the house, that the infection has in fact not sprea
after the plastering, he shall declare the house clean, since th
49 infection has been healed. To purify the house, he shall tak
two birds, as well as cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop
50 One of the birds he shall slay over an earthen vessel with sprin
51 water in it. Then, taking the cedar wood, the hyssop and th
scarlet yarn, together with the living bird, he shall dip them a
in the blood of the slain bird and the spring water, and sprinkl
52 the house seven times. Thus shall he purify the house with th
bird's blood and the spring water, along with the living bir
53 the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet yarn. He shall the
let the living bird fly away over the countryside outside th
city. When he has thus made atonement for it, the house wil
be clean.
54 "This is the law for every kind of human leprosy and scall
55.56 for leprosy of garments and houses, as well as for scabs
57 pustules and blotches, | so that it may be manifest when ther
is a state of uncleanness and when a state of cleanness. Thi
is the law for leprosy."

15

1 ***Personal Uncleanness*** The Lord said to Moses and Aaron
2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: Every man who i
afflicted with a chronic flow from his private parts is thereby
3 unclean. Such is his uncleanness from this flow that it make
no difference whether the flow drains off or is blocked up
4 his uncleanness remains. Any bed on which the man afflicted
with the flow lies, is unclean, and any piece of furniture on
5 which he sits, is unclean. Anyone who touches his bed shall
wash his garments, bathe in water, and be unclean until
6 evening. Whoever sits on a piece of furniture on which the
afflicted man was sitting, shall wash his garments, bathe in
7 water, and be unclean until evening. Whoever touches the body
of the afflicted man shall wash his garments, bathe in water,
8 and be unclean until evening. If the afflicted man spits on a
clean man, the latter shall wash his garments, bathe in water,
9 and be unclean until evening. Any saddle on which the afflicted
10 man rides, is unclean. Whoever touches anything that was
under him shall be unclean until evening; whoever lifts up
any such thing shall wash his garments, bathe in water, and
11 be unclean until evening. Anyone whom the afflicted man
touches with unrinsed hands shall wash his garments, bathe
12 in water, and be unclean until evening. Earthenware touched
by the afflicted man shall be broken; and every wooden article
shall be rinsed with water.

13 "When a man who has been afflicted with a flow becomes
free of his affliction, he shall wait seven days for his purifica-
tion. Then he shall wash his garments and bathe his body in
14 fresh water, and so he will be clean. On the eighth day he shall
take two turtledoves or two pigeons, and going before the Lord,
to the entrance of the Meeting Tent, he shall give them to the
15 priest, | who shall offer them up, the one as a sin offering
and the other as a holocaust. Thus shall the priest make atone-
ment before the Lord for the man's flow.
16 "When a man has an emission of seed, he shall bathe his
17 whole body in water and be unclean until evening. Any piece
of cloth or leather with seed on it shall be washed with water
and be unclean until evening.
18 "If a man lies carnally with a woman, they shall both
bathe in water and be unclean until evening.
19 "When a woman has her menstrual flow, she shall be in
a state of impurity for seven days. Anyone who touches her
20 shall be unclean until evening. Anything on which she lies or
21 sits during her impurity shall be unclean. Anyone who touches
her bed shall wash his garments, bathe in water, and be un-
22 clean until evening. Whoever touches any article of furniture
on which she was sitting, shall wash his garments, bathe in
23 water, and be unclean until evening. But if she is on the bed
or on the seat when he touches it, he shall be unclean until
24 evening. If a man dares to lie with her, he contracts her im-
purity and shall be unclean for seven days; every bed on which
he then lies also becomes unclean.
25 "When a woman is afflicted with a flow of blood for several
days outside her menstrual period, or when her flow continues
beyond the ordinary period, as long as she suffers this unclean
flow she shall be unclean, just as during her menstrual period.
26 Any bed on which she lies during such a flow becomes unclean,
as it would during her menstruation, and any article of furni-
ture on which she sits becomes unclean just as during her
27 menstruation. Anyone who touches them becomes unclean; he
shall wash his garments, bathe in water, and be unclean until
evening.
28 "If she becomes freed from her affliction, she shall wait
29 seven days, and only then is she to be purified. On the eighth
day she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons and bring
30 them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. The
priest shall offer up one of them as a sin offering and the other

15, 23: What is added to the legislation by this verse is uncertain in both the Hebrew and the Greek.

as a holocaust. Thus shall the priest make atonement befo
the Lord for her unclean flow.
31 "You shall warn the Israelites of their uncleanness, lest I
defiling my Dwelling, which is in their midst, their unclea
ness be the cause of their death.
32 "This is the law for the man who is afflicted with a chron
flow, or who has an emission of seed, and thereby becom
33 unclean; as well as for the woman who has her menstru
period, or who is afflicted with a chronic flow; the law fo
male and female; and also for the man who lies with an u
clean woman."

16

1 ***The Day of Atonement*** After the death of Aaron's tw
sons, who died when they approached the Lord's presence, th
2 Lord spoke to Moses | and said to him, "Tell your brother Aaro
that he is not to come whenever he pleases into the sanctuary
inside the veil, in front of the propitiatory on the ark; other
wise, when I reveal myself in a cloud above the propitiatory
3 he will die. Only in this way may Aaron enter the sanctuary
He shall bring a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram
for a holocaust. He shall wear the sacred linen tunic, with th
linen drawers next to his flesh, gird himself with the linen
4 sash and put on the linen miter. But since these vestments ar
sacred, he shall not put them on until he has first bathed hi
5 body in water. From the Israelite community he shall receiv
two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a holocaust
6 "Aaron shall bring in the bullock, his sin offering to atone
7 for himself and for his household. Taking the two male goats
and setting them before the Lord at the entrance of the Meet-
8 ing Tent, he shall cast lots to determine which one is for the
9 Lord and which for Azazel. The goat that is determined by
lot for the Lord Aaron shall bring in and offer up as a sin
10 offering. But the goat determined by lot for Azazel he shall
set alive before the Lord, so that with it he may make atone-
ment by sending it off to Azazel in the desert.
11 "Thus shall Aaron offer up the bullock, his sin offering, to
atone for himself and for his family. When he has slaugh-

16, 2: *The sanctuary, inside the veil:* the innermost part of the sanctuary, known as "the Holy of Holies." Here the high priest was allowed to enter only once a year, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

16, 8: *Azazel:* perhaps a name for Satan, used only in this chapter. The ancient versions translated this word as "the escaping goat," whence the English word "scapegoat."

12 tered it, he shall take a censer full of glowing embers from
the altar before the Lord, as well as a double handful of finely
ground fragrant incense, and bringing them inside the veil,
13 there before the Lord he shall put incense on the fire, so that a
cloud of incense may cover the propitiatory over the Com-
14 mandments; else he will die. Taking some of the bullock's
blood, he shall sprinkle it with his finger on the fore part of
the propitiatory and likewise sprinkle some of the blood with
his finger seven times in front of the propitiatory.

15 "Then he shall slaughter the people's sin-offering goat, and
bringing its blood inside the veil, he shall do with it as he did
with the bullock's blood, sprinkling it on the propitiatory and
16 before it. Thus he shall make atonement for the sanctuary
because of all the sinful defilements and faults of the Israelites.
He shall do the same for the Meeting Tent, which is set up
17 among them in the midst of their uncleanness. No one else
may be in the Meeting Tent from the time he enters the sanc-
tuary to make atonement until he departs. When he has made
atonement for himself and his household, as well as for the
18 whole Israelite community, he shall come out to the altar
before the Lord and make atonement for it also. Taking some of
the bullock's and the goat's blood, he shall put it on the horns
19 around the altar, and with his finger sprinkle some of the
blood on it seven times. Thus he shall render it clean and holy,
purged of the defilements of the Israelites.

20 *The Scapegoat* "When he has completed the atonement rite
for the sanctuary, the Meeting Tent and the altar, Aaron shall
21 bring forward the live goat. Laying both hands on its head, he
shall confess over it all the sinful faults and transgressions of
the Israelites, and so put them on the goat's head. He shall
22 then have it led into the desert by an attendant. Since the goat
is to carry off their iniquities to an isolated region, it must be
sent away into the desert.

23 "After Aaron has again gone into the Meeting Tent, he
shall strip off and leave in the sanctuary the linen vestments
24 he had put on when he entered there. After bathing his body
with water in a sacred place, he shall put on his vestments, and

16, 13: *Else he will die:* this indicates the popular idea that no living being can see God without dying. See Ex 33, 20.

16, 21-22: This is a symbolic ceremony of removing sin from the community.

16, 23: This verse is best read after v. 25. According to later Jewish practice the high priest again went into the Holy of Holies to remove

then come out and offer his own and the people's holocau
25 in atonement for himself and for the people, and also bu
the fat of the sin offering on the altar.
26 "The man who has led away the goat for Azazel shall wa
his garments and bathe his body in water; only then may
27 enter the camp. The sin-offering bullock and goat whose blo
was brought into the sanctuary to make atonement, shall
taken outside the camp, where their hides and flesh and off
28 shall be burned up in the fire. The one who burns them sh
wash his garments and bathe his body in water; only then m
he enter the camp.

29 ***The Fast*** "This shall be an everlasting ordinance for yo
on the tenth day of the seventh month every one of you, whet
er a native or a resident alien, shall mortify himself and sha
30 do no work. Since on this day atonement is made for you
make you clean, so that you may be cleansed of all your sin
31 before the Lord, by everlasting ordinance it shall be a mo
solemn sabbath for you, on which you must mortify yourselve
32 "This atonement is to be made by the priest who has bee
anointed and ordained to the priesthood in succession to h
father. He shall wear the linen garments, the sacred vestment
33 and make atonement for the sacred sanctuary, the Meetin
Tent and the altar, as well as for the priests and all the peo
34 ple of the community. This, then, shall be an everlasting o
dinance for you: once a year atonement shall be made for a
the sins of the Israelites."

Thus was it done, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

IV. LEGAL HOLINESS

17

1.2 ***Sacredness of Blood*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak t
Aaron and his sons, as well as to all the Israelites, and te
3 them: This is what the Lord has commanded. Any Israelit
who slaughters an ox or a sheep or a goat, whether in th
4 camp or outside of it, without first bringing it to the entranc
of the Meeting Tent to present it as an offering to the Lord i

16, 29: *Mortify:* that is, fast from food. The only fast day in the la
of Moses was this Day of Atonement, the holiest feast day of the yea
Some scholars believe that besides fasting the people were obliged t
abstain from the use of perfume, sandals, from bathing, and from th
use of marriage. See 23, 26-32.

17—26: The primitive idea of holiness meant unapproachablene
(Ex 33, 20). Unapproachableness in turn became associated with a

front of his Dwelling, shall be judged guilty of bloodshed; and
for this, such a man shall be cut off from among his people.
5 Therefore, such sacrifices as they used to offer up in the open
field the Israelites shall henceforth offer to the Lord, bringing
them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent and
6 sacrificing them there as peace offerings to the Lord. The priest
shall splash the blood on the altar of the Lord at the entrance
of the Meeting Tent and there burn the fat for an odor pleas-
7 ing to the Lord. No longer shall they offer their sacrifices to
the satyrs to whom they used to render their wanton worship.
This shall be an everlasting ordinance for them and their
descendants.

8 "Tell them, therefore: Anyone, whether of the house of
Israel or of the aliens residing among them, who offers a holo-
9 caust or sacrifice | without bringing it to the entrance of the
Meeting Tent to offer it to the Lord, shall be cut off from his
10 kinsmen. And if anyone, whether of the house of Israel or of
the aliens residing among them, partakes of any blood, I will
set myself against that one who partakes of blood and will
11 cut him off from among his people. Since the life of a living
body is in its blood, I have made you put it on the altar, so that
atonement may thereby be made for your own lives, because
12 it is the blood, as the seat of life, that makes atonement. That
is why I have told the Israelites: No one among you, not even
a resident alien, may partake of blood.

13 "Anyone hunting, whether of the Israelites or of the aliens
residing among them, who catches an animal or a bird that
may be eaten, shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.
14 Since the life of every living body is its blood, I have told the
Israelites: You shall not partake of the blood of any meat.

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hat was consecrated to God, such as persons and notably priests (Lv 1, 6), places, and objects. Hence objects used in the liturgy were eparated from profane use and were therefore considered holy or pure. The law of holiness in Lv 17-23 is also a law of ritual purity. Gradually hese ideas were spiritualized when separation from profane use be- ame abstinence from sin, and ritual purity became purity of conscience.

17, 3ff: The ancients considered blood the source and sign of life, nd therefore something sacred, even in animals. Hence, even the rdinary butchering of an animal for meat was looked upon as having sacrificial character, so that it should be performed at the sanctuary. his law, however, could not be carried out without great difficulty hen the Israelites were scattered throughout Palestine, and so was odified in Dt 12, 20ff.

17, 11: This is the basis of why "kosher" laws are ritual acts, be- use to take blood (or life) belongs to God and because the victim epresents the offerer.

Since the life of every living body is its blood, anyone who p
takes of it shall be cut off.
15 "Everyone, whether a native or an alien, who eats of
animal that died of itself or was killed by a wild beast, sh
wash his garments, bathe in water, and be unclean un
16 evening, and then he will be clean. If he does not wash
does not bathe his body, he shall have the guilt to bear."

18

1,2 ***The Sanctity of Sex*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to t
3 Israelites and tell them: I, the Lord, am your God. You sh
not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you once live
nor shall you do as they do in the land of Chanaan, where
4 am bringing you; do not conform to their customs. My d
crees you shall carry out, and my statutes you shall take ca
5 to follow. I, the Lord, am your God. Keep, then, my statut
and decrees, for the man who carries them out will find li
through them. I am the Lord.
6 "None of you shall approach a close relative to have sexu
7 intercourse with her. I am the Lord. | You shall not disgra
your father by having intercourse with your mother. Beside
since she is your own mother, you shall not have intercour
8 with her. You shall not have intercourse with your father
9 wife, for that would be a disgrace to your father. You sha
not have intercourse with your sister, your father's daughter
your mother's daughter, whether she was born in your ow
10 household or born elsewhere. You shall not have intercours
with your son's daughter or with your daughter's daughte
11 for that would be a disgrace to your own family. You sha
not have intercourse with the daughter whom your father'
12 wife bore to him, since she, too, is your sister. You shall no
have intercourse with your father's sister, since she is you
13 father's relative. You shall not have intercourse with you
14 mother's sister, since she is your mother's relative. You sha
not disgrace your father's brother by being intimate with hi
15 wife, since she, too, is your aunt. You shall not have intercours
with your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, and therefor
16 you shall not disgrace her. You shall not have intercourse wit
your brother's wife, for that would be a disgrace to you
17 brother. You shall not have intercourse with a woman an
also her daughter, nor shall you marry and have intercours
with her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; this woul

18, 1-30: The spelling out of such sins was necessitated by the im
moral practices of the Egyptians and principally by the Chanaanites.

18 be shameful, because they are related to her. While your wife is
still living you shall not marry her sister as her rival; for thus
you would disgrace your first wife.
19 "You shall not approach a woman to have intercourse with
20 her while she is unclean from menstruation. You shall not
have carnal relations with your neighbor's wife, defiling your-
21 self with her. You shall not offer any of your offspring to
be immolated to Moloch, thus profaning the name of your
22 God. I am the Lord. | You shall not lie with a male as with
23 a woman; such a thing is an abomination. You shall not have
carnal relations with an animal, defiling yourself with it; nor
shall a woman set herself in front of an animal to mate with it;
such things are abhorrent.
24 "Do not defile yourselves by any of these things by which
the nations whom I am driving out of your way have defiled
25 themselves. Because their land has become defiled, I am pun-
ishing it for its wickedness, by making it vomit out its inhabi-
26 tants. You, however, whether natives or resident aliens, must
keep my statues and decrees forbidding all such abominations
27.28 | by which the previous inhabitants defiled the land; other-
wise the land will vomit you out also for having defiled it, just
29 as it vomited out the nations before you. Everyone who does
any of these abominations shall be cut off from among his
30 people. Heed my charge, then, not to defile yourselves by ob-
serving the abominable customs that have been observed before
you. I, the Lord, am your God."

19

1.2 ***Various Rules of Conduct*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak
to the whole Israelite community and tell them: Be holy, for
3 I, the Lord, your God, am holy. Revere your mother and fa-
ther, and keep my Sabbaths. I, the Lord am your God.
4 "Do not turn aside to idols, nor make molten gods for
yourselves. I, the Lord, am your God.
5 "When you sacrifice your peace offering to the Lord, if
6 you wish it to be acceptable, | it must be eaten on the very day
of your sacrifice or on the following day. Whatever is left
7 over until the third day shall be burned up in the fire. If any
of it is eaten on the third day, the sacrifice will be unacceptable
8 as refuse; whoever eats of it then shall pay the penalty for
having profaned what is sacred to the Lord. Such a one shall
be cut off from his people.
9 "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not
be so thorough that you reap the field to its very edge, nor
10 shall you glean the stray ears of grain. Likewise, you shall

not pick your vineyard bare, nor gather up the grapes tha
have fallen. These things you shall leave for the poor and th
alien. I, the Lord, am your God.
11 "You shall not steal. You shall not lie or speak falsel
12 to one another. You shall not swear falsely by my name, thu
profaning the name of your God. I am the Lord.
13 "You shall not defraud or rob your neighbor. You shall no
14 withhold overnight the wages of your day laborer. You shal
not curse the deaf, or put a stumbling block in front of th
blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the Lord.
15 "You shall not act dishonestly in rendering judgment. Show
neither partiality to the weak nor deference to the mighty
16 but judge your fellow men justly. You shall not go abou
spreading slander among your kinsmen; nor shall you stanc
by idly when your neighbor's life is at stake. I am the Lord
17 "You shall not bear hatred for your brother in your heart
Though you may have to reprove your fellow man, do not in-
18 cur sin because of him. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge
against your fellow countrymen. You shall love your neighbor
as yourself. I am the Lord.
19 "Keep my statutes: do not breed any of your domestic ani-
mals with others of a different species; do not sow a field of
yours with two different kinds of seed; and do not put on a
garment woven with two different kinds of thread.
20 "If a man has carnal relations with a female slave who
has already been living with another man but has not yet been
redeemed or given her freedom, they shall be punished but not
21 put to death, because she is not free. The man, moreover,
shall bring to the entrance of the Meeting Tent a ram as his
22 guilt offering to the Lord. With this ram the priest shall make
atonement before the Lord for the sin he has committed, and
it will be forgiven him.
23 "When you come into the land and plant any fruit tree
there, first look upon its fruit as if it were uncircumcised. For
three years, while its fruit remains uncircumcised, it may not
24 be eaten. In the fourth year, however, all of its fruit shall be

19, 18: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself:* cited by our Lord as the second of the two most important commandments of God. (See Mt 22, 38; Mk 12, 31.) Although in the present context the word "neighbor" is restricted to "fellow countrymen," in Lk 10, 29-37 Christ extends its meaning to embrace all men, even enemies. (See Mt 5, 43ff.)

19, 23ff: *Uncircumcised:* by analogy with a newborn boy, the newly planted tree was considered impure until it was "circumcised" by offering to the Lord all the fruit of its third bearing.

25 sacred to the Lord as a thanksgiving feast to him. | Not until
the fifth year may you eat its fruit. Thus it will continue its
yield for you. I, the Lord, am your God.
26 "Do not eat meat with the blood still in it. Do not practice
27 divination or soothsaying. Do not clip your hair at the tem-
28 ples, nor trim the edges of your beard. Do not lacerate your
bodies for the dead, and do not tattoo yourselves. I am the
Lord.
29 "You shall not degrade your daughter by making a pros-
titute of her; else the land will become corrupt and full of
30 lewdness. Keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary. I
am the Lord.
31 "Do not go to mediums or consult fortune tellers, for you
will be defiled by them. I, the Lord, am your God.
32 "Stand up in the presence of the aged, and show respect for
the old; thus shall you fear your God. I am the Lord.
33 "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not
34 molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you
no differently than the natives born among you; have the same
love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in
the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God.
35 "Do not act dishonestly in using measures of length or
36 weight or capacity. You shall have a true scale and true weights,
an honest epha and an honest hin. I, the Lord, am your God,
37 who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Be careful, then, to
observe all my statutes and decrees. I am the Lord."

20

1.2 ***Penalties for Various Sins*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell
the Israelites: Anyone, whether an Israelite or an alien residing
in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Moloch shall be
3 put to death. Let his fellow citizens stone him. I myself will
turn against such a man and cut him off from the body of his
people; for in giving his offspring to Moloch, he has defiled
4 my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. Even if his fellow
citizens connive at such a man's crime of giving his offspring to
5 Moloch, and fail to put him to death, I myself will set my
face against that man and his family and will cut off from
their people both him and all who join him in his wanton
6 worship of Moloch. Should anyone turn to mediums and for-
tunetellers and follow their wanton ways, I will turn against
7 such a one and cut him off from his people. Sanctify your-
8 selves, then, and be holy; for I, the Lord, your God, am holy. Be
careful, therefore, to observe what I, the Lord, who make you
holy, have prescribed.

9 "Anyone who curses his father or mother shall be put t
death; since he has cursed his father or mother, he has fo
10 feited his life. If a man commits adultery with his neighbor
wife, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to deatl
11 If a man disgraces his father by lying with his father's wif
both the man and his stepmother shall be put to death; the
12 have forfeited their lives. If a man lies with his daughter-in-law
both of them shall be put to death; since they have committe
13 an abhorrent deed, they have forfeited their lives. If a ma
lies with a male as with a woman, both of them shall be put t
death for their abominable deed; they have forfeited their live
14 If a man marries a woman and her mother also, the man an
the two women as well shall be burned to death for thei
shameful conduct, so that such shamefulness may not b
15 found among you. If a man has carnal relations with an animal
the man shall be put to death, and the animal shall be slain
16 If a woman goes up to any animal to mate with it, the woma
and the animal shall be slain; let them both be put to death
17 their lives are forfeit. If a man consummates marriage witl
his sister or his half-sister, they shall be publicly cut off from
their people for this shameful deed; the man shall pay the
18 penalty of having had intercourse with his own sister. If a
man lies in sexual intercourse with a woman during her men
strual period, both of them shall be cut off from their people
because they have laid bare the flowing fountain of her blood
19 You shall not have intercourse with your mother's sister or
your father's sister; whoever does so shall pay the penalty of
20 incest. If a man disgraces his uncle by having intercourse with
his uncle's wife, the man and his aunt shall pay the penalty
21 by dying childless. If a man marries his brother's wife and
thus disgraces his brother, they shall be childless because of
this incest.

22 "Be careful to observe all my statutes and all my decrees;
otherwise the land where I am bringing you to dwell will
23 vomit you out. Do not conform, therefore, to the customs of
the nations whom I am driving out of your way, because all
these things that they have done have filled me with disgust
24 for them. But to you I have said: Their land shall be your
possession, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am giving it
to you as your own, I, the Lord, your God, who have set you
25 apart from the other nations. You, too, must set apart, then,
the clean animals from the unclean, and the clean birds from
the unclean, so that you may not be contaminated with the
uncleanness of any beast or bird or of any swarming creature
26 in the land that I have set apart for you. To me, therefore,

you shall be sacred; for I, the Lord, am sacred, I, who have set you apart from the other nations to be my own.

27 "A man or a woman who acts as a medium or fortune-teller shall be put to death by stoning; they have no one but themselves to blame for their death."

21

1 ***Sanctity of the Priesthood*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron's sons, the priests, and tell them: None of you shall make himself unclean for any dead person among his
2 people, except for his nearest relatives, his mother or father,
3 his son or daughter, his brother | or his maiden sister, who is of his own family while she remains unmarried; for these
4 he may make himself unclean. But for a sister who has married out of his family he shall not make himself unclean; this would be a profanation.

5 "The priests shall not make bare the crown of the head,
6 nor shave the edges of the beard, nor lacerate the body. To their God they shall be sacred and not profane his name; since they offer up the oblations of the Lord, the food of their God, they must be holy.

7 "A priest shall not marry a woman who has been a prostitute or has lost her honor, nor a woman who has been divorced
8 by her husband; for the priest is sacred to his God. Honor him as sacred who offers up the food of your God; treat him as sacred, because I, the Lord, who have consecrated him, am sacred.

9 "A priest's daughter who loses her honor by committing fornication and thereby dishonors her father also, shall be burned to death.

10 "The most exalted of the priests, upon whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been ordained to wear the special vestments, shall not bare his head or rend
11 his garments, nor shall he go near any dead person. Not even
12 for his father or mother may he thus become unclean | or leave the sanctuary; otherwise he will profane the sanctuary of his God, for with the anointing oil upon him, he is dedicated to his God, to me, the Lord.

13.14 "The priest shall marry a virgin. Not a widow or a woman who has been divorced or a woman who has lost her honor as

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20, 27: This verse is best read immediately after v. 6.

21, 1: *Unclean for any dead person:* by preparing the corpse for burial.

21, 5: Such mourning customs of the Chanaanites were forbidden to all the Israelites, but especially to the priests.

a prostitute, but a virgin, taken from his own people, sha
15 he marry; otherwise he will have base offspring among h
people. I, the Lord, have made him sacred."

16.17 ***Irregularities*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to Aar
and tell him: None of your descendants, of whatever gener
tion, who has any defect shall come forward to offer up th
18 food of his God. Therefore, he who has any of the following de
fects may not come forward: he who is blind, or lame, o
19 who has any disfigurement or malformation, or a cripple
20 foot or hand, or who is humpbacked or weakly or wall-eyed
21 or who is afflicted with eczema, ringworm or hernia. No de
scendant of Aaron the priest who has any such defect ma
draw near to offer up the oblations of the Lord; on account o
his defect he may not draw near to offer up the food of his God
22 He may, however, partake of the food of his God: of what i
23 most sacred as well as what is sacred. Only, he may not ap
proach the veil nor go up to the altar on account of his defect
he shall not profane these things that are sacred to me, for i
is I, the Lord, who make them sacred."
24 Moses, therefore, told this to Aaron and his sons and to al
the Israelites.

22

1.2 ***Sacrificial Banquets*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron
and his sons to respect the sacred offerings which the Israelites
consecrate to me; else they will profane my holy name. I am
the Lord.
3 "Tell them: If any one of you, or of your descendants in
any future generation, dares, while he is in a state of unclean-
ness, to draw near the sacred offerings which the Israelites
consecrate to the Lord, such a one shall be cut off from my
presence. I am the Lord.
4 "No descendant of Aaron who is stricken with leprosy, or
who suffers from a flow, may eat of these sacred offerings, un-
less he again becomes clean. Moreover, if anyone touches a
person who has become unclean by contact with a corpse, or
5 if anyone has had an emission of seed, | or if anyone touches
any swarming creature or any man whose uncleanness, of what-
6 ever kind it may be, is contagious, the one who touches such
as these shall be unclean until evening and may not eat of the
7 sacred portions until he has first bathed his body in water; then,
when the sun sets, he again becomes clean. Only then may he
8 eat of the sacred offerings, which are his food. He shall not

make himself unclean by eating of any animal that has died of itself or has been killed by wild beasts. I am the Lord.

9 "They shall keep my charge and not do wrong in this matter; else they will die for their profanation. I am the Lord who have consecrated them.

10 "Neither a lay person nor a priest's tenant or hired serv-
11 ant may eat of any sacred offering. But a slave whom a priest acquires by purchase or who is born in his house may
12 eat of his food. A priest's daughter who is married to a lay-
13 man may not eat of the sacred contributions. But if a priest's daughter is widowed or divorced and, having no children, returns to her father's house, she may then eat of her father's food as in her youth. No layman, however, may eat of it.
14 If such a one eats of a sacred offering through inadvertence,
15 he shall make restitution to the priest for the sacred offering, with an increment of one fifth of the amount. The sacred offerings which the Israelites contribute to the Lord the priests shall
16 not allow to be profaned | nor in the eating of the sacred offering shall they bring down guilt that must be punished; it is I, the Lord, who make them sacred."

7.18 ***Unacceptable Victims*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites, and tell them. When anyone of the house of Israel, or any alien residing in Israel, who wishes to offer a sacrifice, brings a holocaust as a
9 votive offering or as a free-will offering to the Lord, | if it is to be acceptable, the ox or sheep or goat that he offers must be
0 an unblemished male. You shall not offer one that has any
1 defect, for such a one would not be acceptable for you. When anyone presents a peace offering to the Lord from the herd or the flock in fulfillment of a vow, or as a free-will offering, if it is to find acceptance, it must be unblemished; it shall not
2 have any defect. One that is blind or crippled or maimed, or one that has a running sore or mange or ringworm, you shall not offer to the Lord; do not put such an animal on the altar
3 as an oblation to the Lord. An ox or a sheep that is in any way ill-proportioned or stunted you may indeed present as a free-will offering, but it will not be acceptable as a votive offering.
4 One that has its testicles bruised or crushed or torn out or cut off you shall not offer to the Lord. You shall neither do this
5 in your own land | nor receive from a foreigner any such animals to offer up as the food of your God; since they are deformed or defective, they will not be acceptable for you."

5.27 The Lord said to Moses, "When an ox or a lamb or a goat is born, it shall remain with its mother for seven days; only

from the eighth day onward will it be acceptable, to be offered
28 as an oblation to the Lord. You shall not slaughter an ox or a
29 sheep on one and the same day with its young. Whenever you offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to the Lord, so offer it that it may
30 be acceptable for you; it must, therefore, be eaten on the same day; none of it shall be left over until the next day. I am the Lord.
31 "Be careful to observe the commandments which I, the Lord,
32 give you, | and do not profane my holy name; in the midst of the Israelites I, the Lord, must be held as sacred. It is I who
33 made you sacred | and led you out of the land of Egypt, that I, the Lord, might be your God."

23

1.2 ***Holy Days*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: The following are the festivals of the Lord, my feast days, which you shall celebrate with a sacred assembly.
3 "For six days work may be done; but the seventh day is the sabbath rest, a day for sacred assembly, on which you shall do no work. The Sabbath shall belong to the Lord wherever you dwell.

4 ***Passover*** "These, then, are the festivals of the Lord which you shall celebrate at their proper time with a sacred assembly.
5 The Passover of the Lord falls on the fourteenth day of the
6 first month, at the evening twilight. The fifteenth day of this month is the Lord's feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days
7 you shall eat unleavened bread. | On the first of these days you
8 shall hold a sacred assembly and do no sort of work. On each of the seven days you shall offer an oblation to the Lord. Then on the seventh day you shall again hold a sacred assembly and do no sort of work."

9.10 The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you come into the land which I am giving you, and reap your harvest, you shall bring a sheaf of the first
11 fruits of your harvest to the priest, who shall wave the sheaf before the Lord that it may be acceptable for you. On the day
12 after the Sabbath the priest shall do this. | On this day, when your sheaf is waved, you shall offer to the Lord for a holo-
13 caust an unblemished yearling lamb. Its cereal offering shall be two tenths of an epha of fine flour mixed with oil, as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord; and its libation shall be
14 a fourth of a hin of wine. Until this day, when you bring your God this offering, you shall not eat any bread or roasted grain

or fresh kernels. This shall be a perpetual statute for you and your descendants wherever you dwell.

15 ***Pentecost*** "Beginning with the day after the Sabbath, the day on which you bring the wave-offering sheaf, you shall
16 count seven full weeks, and then on the day after the seventh week, the fiftieth day, you shall present the new cereal offer-
17 ing to the Lord. For the wave offering of your first fruits to the Lord, you shall bring with you from wherever you live two loaves of bread made of two tenths of an epha of fine flour and
18 baked with leaven. Besides the bread, you shall offer to the Lord a holocaust of seven unblemished yearling lambs, one young bull, and two rams, along with their cereal offering and
19 libations, as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord. One male goat shall be sacrificed as a sin offering, and two yearling
20 lambs as a peace offering. The priest shall wave the bread of the first fruits and the two lambs as a wave offering before the Lord; these shall be sacred to the Lord and belong to the
21 priest. On this same day you shall by proclamation have a sacred assembly, and no sort of work may be done. This shall be a perpetual statute for you and your descendants wherever you dwell.

22 "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not be so thorough that you reap the field to its very edge, nor shall you glean the stray ears of your grain. These things you shall leave for the poor and the alien. I, the Lord, am your God."

23.24 ***New Year's Day*** The Lord said to Moses: "Tell the Israelites: On the first day of the seventh month you shall keep a sabbath rest, with a sacred assembly and with the trumpet
25 blasts as a reminder; you shall then do no sort of work, and you shall offer an oblation to the Lord."

26.27 ***The Day of Atonement*** The Lord said to Moses, "The tenth of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement, when you shall hold a sacred assembly and mortify yourselves and
28 offer an oblation to the Lord. On this day you shall not do any work, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is
29 made for you before the Lord, your God. Anyone who does not mortify himself on this day shall be cut off from his peo-
30 ple; and if anyone does any work on this day, I will remove
31 him from the midst of his people. This is a perpetual statute

23, 16: *The fiftieth:* from the Greek word for this we have the name "Pentecost."

for you and your descendants wherever you dwell: you shall
32 do no work, | but shall keep a sabbath of complete rest and
mortify yourselves. Beginning on the evening of the ninth of
the month, you shall keep this sabbath of yours from evening
to evening.

33.34 ***The Feast of Booths*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the
Israelites: The fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Lord's
35 feast of Booths, which shall continue for seven days. On the
first day there shall be a sacred assembly, and you shall do
36 no sort of work. For seven days you shall offer an oblation to
the Lord, and on the eighth day you shall again hold a sacred
assembly and offer an oblation to the Lord. On that solemn
closing you shall do no sort of work.
37 "These, therefore, are the festivals of the Lord on which
you shall proclaim a sacred assembly, and offer as an obla-
tion to the Lord holocausts and cereal offerings, sacrifices and
38 libations, as prescribed for each day, | in addition to those
of the Lord's Sabbaths, your donations, your various votive
offerings and the freewill offerings that you present to the Lord.
39 "On the fifteenth day, then, of the seventh month, when
you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall cele-
brate a pilgrim feast of the Lord for a whole week. The first
40 and the eighth day shall be days of complete rest. On the first
day you shall gather foliage from majestic trees, branches of
palms and boughs of myrtles and of valley poplars, and then
for a week you shall make merry before the Lord, your God.
41 By perpetual statute for you and your descendants you shall
keep this pilgrim feast of the Lord for one whole week in
42 the seventh month of the year. During this week every native
43 Israelite among you shall dwell in booths, that your descend-
ants may realize that, when I led the Israelites out of the land
of Egypt, I made them dwell in booths. I, the Lord, am your
God."

23, 34: *Feast of Booths:* the joyful observance of the vintage and fruit harvest. During the seven days of the feast the Israelites camped in booths of branches, erected on the roofs of their houses or in the streets, in commemoration of their wanderings in the desert, where they dwelt in booths.

23, 40: *Foliage:* literally, "fruit," but here probably used in the general sense of "produce, growth." These branches were used for constructing the "booths" or huts in which the people lived during the feast. However, from about the time of Christ on, the Jews have understood this of "fruit" in the strict sense; hence, branches of lemons and oranges were carried with the other branches in joyous procession.

44 Thus did Moses announce to the Israelites the festivals of the Lord.

24

1.2 ***The Sanctuary Light*** The Lord said to Moses, "Order the Israelites to bring you clear oil of crushed olives for the light,
3 so that you may keep lamps burning regularly. In the Meeting Tent, outside the veil that hangs in front of the Commandments, Aaron shall set up the lamps to burn before the Lord regularly, from evening till morning. Thus, by a per-
4 petual statute for you and your descendants, | the lamps shall be set up on the pure gold lampstand, to burn regularly before the Lord.

5 ***The Showbread*** "You shall take fine flour and bake it into twelve cakes, using two tenths of an epha of flour for each
6 cake. These you shall place in two piles, six in each pile, on
7 the pure gold table before the Lord. On each pile put some pure frankincense, which shall serve as an oblation to the
8 Lord, a token offering for the bread. Regularly on each Sabbath day this bread shall be set out afresh before the Lord, offered on the part of the Israelites by an everlasting agreement.
9 It shall belong to Aaron and his sons, who must eat it in a sacred place, since, as something most sacred among the various oblations to the Lord, it is his by perpetual right."

10 ***Punishment of Blasphemy*** Among the Israelites there was a man born of an Israelite mother (Salomith, daughter of Dab-
11 ri, of the tribe of Dan) and an Egyptian father. This man quarreled publicly with another Israelite and cursed and blasphemed the Lord's name. So the people brought him to Moses,
12 who kept him in custody till a decision from the Lord should
13 settle the case for them. The Lord then said to Moses,
14 "Take the blasphemer outside the camp, and when all who heard him have laid their hands on his head, let the whole
15 community stone him. Tell the Israelites: Anyone who curses
16 his God shall bear the penalty of his sin; whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death. The whole community shall stone him; alien and native alike must be put to death for blaspheming the Lord's name.
17 "Whoever takes the life of any human being shall be put
18 to death; whoever takes the life of an animal shall make
19 restitution of another animal. A life for a life! Anyone who inflicts an injury on his neighbor shall receive the same in re-

20 turn. Limb for limb, eye for eye, tooth for tooth! The sam
injury that a man gives another shall be inflicted on him in re
21 turn. Whoever slays an animal shall make restitution, bu
22 whoever slays a man shall be put to death. You shall hav
but one rule, for alien and native alike. I, the Lord, am you
God."
23 When Moses told this to the Israelites, they took the blas
phemer outside the camp and stoned him; they carried out th
command that the Lord had given Moses.

25

1 ***The Sabbatical Year*** The Lord said to Moses on Moun
2 Sinai, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you ente
the land that I am giving you, let the land, too, keep a sabbath
3 for the Lord. For six years you may sow your field, and for
4 six years prune your vineyard, gathering in their produce. But
during the seventh year the land shall have a complete rest, a
sabbath for the Lord, when you may neither sow your field
5 nor prune your vineyard. The aftergrowth of your harvest you
shall not reap, nor shall you pick the grapes of your untrimmed
6 vines in this year of sabbath rest for the land. While the land
has its sabbath, all its produce will be food equally for you
yourself and for your male and female slaves, for your hired
7 help and the tenants who live with you, and likewise for
your livestock and for the wild animals on your land.

8 ***The Jubilee Year*** "Seven weeks of years shall you count —
seven times seven years—so that the seven cycles amount to
9 forty-nine years. Then, on the tenth day of the seventh month
let the trumpet resound; on this, the Day of Atonement, the
10 trumpet blast shall re-echo throughout your land. This fiftieth
year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land
for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when every

24, 20: See Ex 21, 23-25 n.

25, 1-22: It is not clear whether the particulars of the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years were meant to be observed. The Christian Jubilee or Holy Year spiritualizes this Old Testament institution.

25, 5ff: As long as the produce of the Sabbatical year remains on the field, it remains available to everyone.

25, 10: *Fiftieth year:* to arrive at this number, both the first and the last year of the series are counted, and therefore this is more exactly the forty-ninth year, the seventh Sabbatical year. *Liberty:* Israelite slaves were set free (v. 50) and landed property was returned to its original owner (v. 13): two important laws for preserving the social and economic equilibrium. *Jubilee:* derived from the Hebrew word "yobel" (ram's horn), which was blown on this occasion.

one of you shall return to his own property, every one to his
11 own family estate. In this fiftieth year, your year of jubilee,
you shall not sow, nor shall you reap the aftergrowth or pick
12 the grapes from the untrimmed vines. Since this is the jubi-
lee, which shall be sacred for you, you may not eat of its pro-
duce, except as taken directly from the field.
13 "In this year of jubilee, then, everyone of you shall return
14 to his own property. Therefore, when you sell any land to
your neighbor or buy any from him, do not deal unfairly.
15 On the basis of the number of years since the last jubilee shall
you purchase the land from him; and so also, on the basis of
16 the number of years for crops, shall he sell it to you. When
the years are many, the price shall be so much the more; when
the years are few, the price shall be so much the less. For it is
17 really the number of crops that he sells you. Do not deal un-
fairly, then; but stand in fear of your God. I, the Lord, am
your God.
18 "Observe my precepts and be careful to keep my regulations,
19 for then you will dwell securely in the land. The land will
yield its fruit and you will have food in abundance, so that
20 you may live there without worry. Therefore, do not say,
'What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we do not then sow
21 or reap our crop?' I will bestow such blessings on you in the
sixth year that there will then be crop enough for three years.
22 When you sow in the eighth year, you will continue to eat from
the old crop; and even into the ninth year, when the crop
comes in, you will still have the old to eat from.

23 ***Redemption of Property*** "The land shall not be sold in
perpetuity; for the land is mine, and you are but aliens who
24 have become my tenants. Therefore, in every part of the coun-
try that you occupy, you must permit the land to be redeemed.
25 When one of your countrymen is reduced to poverty and has
to sell some of his property, his closest relative, who has the
right to redeem it, may go and buy back what his kinsman has
26 sold. If, however, the man has no relative to redeem his land,
but later on acquires sufficient means to buy it back in his own
27 name, he shall make a deduction from the price in proportion
to the number of years since the sale, and then pay back the
balance to the one to whom he sold it, so that he may thus re-
28 gain his own property. But if he does not acquire sufficient
means to buy back his land, what he has sold shall remain in
the possession of the purchaser until the jubilee, when it must
be released and returned to its original owner.
29 "When someone sells a dwelling in a walled town, he has

the right to buy it back during the time of one full year fron
30 its sale. But if such a house in a walled town has not been re
deemed at the end of a full year, it shall belong in perpetuit
to the purchaser and his descendants; nor shall it be releasec
31 in the jubilee. However, houses in villages that are not en
circled by walls shall be considered as belonging to the sur
rounding farm land; they may be redeemed at any time, anc
in the jubilee they must be released.
32 "In Levitical cities the Levites shall always have the righ
33 to redeem the town houses that are their property. Any town
house of the Levites in their cities that had been sold and not
redeemed, shall be released in the jubilee; for the town houses
of the Levites are their hereditary property in the midst of the
34 Israelites. Moreover, the pasture land belonging to their cities
shall not be sold at all; it must always remain their hereditary
property.
35 "When one of your fellow countrymen is reduced to poverty
and is unable to hold out beside you, extend to him the privi-
leges of an alien or a tenant, so that he may continue to live
36 with you. Do not exact interest from your countryman either
in money or in kind, but out of fear of God let him live with
37 you. You are to lend him neither money at interest nor food
38 at a profit. I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of
the land of Egypt to give you the land of Chanaan and to be
your God.
39 "When, then, your countryman becomes so impoverished
beside you that he sells you his services, do not make him
40 work as a slave. Rather, let him be like a hired servant or like
41 your tenant, working with you until the jubilee year, | when
he, together with his children, shall be released from your serv-
ice and return to his kindred and to the property of his an-
42 cestors. Since those whom I brought out of the land of Egypt
are servants of mine, they shall not be sold as slaves to any
43 man. Do not lord it over them harshly, but stand in fear of
your God.
44 "Slaves, male and female, you may indeed possess, provided
45 you buy them from among the neighboring nations. You may
also buy them from among the aliens who reside with you and
from their children who are born and reared in your land. Such
46 slaves you may own as chattels, | and leave to your sons as
their hereditary property, making them perpetual slaves. But
you shall not lord it harshly over any of the Israelites, your
kinsmen.
47 "When one of your countrymen is reduced to such poverty
that he sells himself to a wealthy alien who has a permanent

or a temporary residence among you, or to one of the descend-
48 ants of an immigrant family, even after he has thus sold his
services he still has the right of redemption; he may be re-
49 deemed by one of his own brothers, | or by his uncle or cousin,
or by some other relative or fellow clansman; or, if he ac-
50 quires the means, he may redeem himself. With his purchaser
he shall compute the years from the sale to the jubilee, dis-
tributing the sale price over these years as though he had been
51 hired as a day laborer. The more such years there are, the
52 more of the sale price he shall pay back as ransom; the fewer
years there are left before the jubilee year, the more he has to
his credit; in proportion to his years of service shall he pay
53 his ransom. The alien shall treat him as a servant hired on
an annual basis, and he shall not lord it over him harshly under
54 your very eyes. If he is not thus redeemed, he shall neverthe-
less be released, together with his children, in the jubilee year.
55 For to me the Israelites belong as servants; they are servants
of mine, because I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I,
the Lord, your God.

26

1 ***The Reward of Obedience*** "Do not make false gods for
yourselves. You shall not erect an idol or a sacred pillar for
yourselves, nor shall you set up a stone figure for worship in
2 your land; for I, the Lord, am your God. Keep my Sabbaths,
and reverence my sanctuary. I am the Lord.
3 "If you live in accordance with my precepts and are careful
4 to observe my commandments, I will give you rain in due sea-
son, so that the land will bear its crops, and the trees their
5 fruit; your threshing will last till vintage time, and your vin-
tage till the time for sowing, and you will have food to eat in
6 abundance, so that you may dwell securely in your land. I will
establish peace in the land, that you may lie down to rest with-
out anxiety. I will rid the country of ravenous beasts, and keep
7 the sword of war from sweeping across your land. You will
8 rout your enemies and lay them low with your sword. Five of
you will put a hundred of your foes to flight, and a hundred of
you will chase ten thousand of them, till they are cut down by
9 your sword. I will look with favor upon you, and make you
fruitful and numerous, as I carry out my covenant with you.
10 So much of the old crops will you have stored up for food that
you will have to discard them to make room for the new.

26, 3-45: The rewards and punishments are of a temporal nature but they were interpreted spiritually in New Testament times.

11 I will set my Dwelling among you, and will not disdain you
12 Ever present in your midst, I will be your God, and you wil
13 be my people; for it is I, the Lord, your God, who brough
you out of the land of the Egyptians and freed you from thei
slavery, breaking the yoke they had laid upon you and let
ting you walk erect.

14 ***Punishment of Disobedience*** "But if you do not heed m
15 and do not keep all these commandments, if you reject m
precepts and spurn my decrees, refusing to obey all my com-
16 mandments and breaking my covenant, | then I, in turn, wil
give you your deserts. I will punish you with terrible woes—
with wasting and fever to dim the eyes and sap the life. You
will sow your seed in vain, for your enemies will consume the
17 crop. I will turn against you, till you are beaten down before
your enemies and lorded over by your foes. You will take to
flight though no one pursues you.
18 "If even after this you do not obey me, I will increase the
19 chastisement for your sins sevenfold, to break your haughty
confidence. I will make the sky above you as hard as iron,
20 and your soil as hard as bronze, | so that your strength will be
spent in vain; your land will bear no crops, and its trees no
fruit.
21 "If then you become defiant in your unwillingness to obey
me, I will multiply my blows another sevenfold, as your sins
22 deserve. I will unleash the wild beasts against you, to rob you
of your children and wipe out your livestock, till your popu-
lation dwindles away and your roads become deserted.
23 "If, with all this, you still refuse to be chastened by me
24 and continue to defy me, | I, too, will defy you and will smite
25 you for your sins seven times harder than before. I will make
the sword, the avenger of my covenant, sweep over you.
Though you then huddle together in your walled cities, I will
send in pestilence among you, till you are forced to surrender
26 to the enemy. And as I cut off your supply of bread, ten wom-
en will need but one oven for baking all the bread they dole
out to you in rations—not enough food to still your hunger.
27 "If, despite all this, you still persist in disobeying and de-
28 fying me, | I, also, will meet you with fiery defiance and will
chastise you with sevenfold fiercer punishment for your sins,
29 till you begin to eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters.

26, 29: *Eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters:* extreme famine in cities under siege often forced their inhabitants to such dire means of subsistence. See 4 Kgs 6, 28f.

30 I will demolish your high places, overthrow your incense
stands, and cast your corpses on those of your idols. In my
31 abhorrence of you, | I will lay waste your cities and devastate
your sanctuaries, refusing to accept your sweet-smelling offer-
32 ings. So devastated will I leave the land that your very enemies
33 who come to live there will stand aghast at the sight of it. You
yourselves I will scatter among the nations at the point of my
drawn sword, leaving your countryside desolate and your cities
34 deserted. Then shall the land retrieve its lost sabbaths during
all the time it lies waste, while you are in the land of your ene-
mies; then shall the land have rest and make up for its sab-
35 baths | during all the time that it lies desolate, enjoying the
rest that you would not let it have on the sabbaths when you
lived there.

36 "Those of you who survive in the lands of their enemies I
will make so fainthearted that, if leaves rustle behind them,
they will flee headlong, as if from the sword, though no one
37 pursues them; stumbling over one another as if to escape a
weapon, while no one is after them—so helpless will you be
38 to take a stand against your foes! You will be lost among the
39 Gentiles, swallowed up in your enemies' country. Those of
you who survive in the lands of their enemies will waste away
for their own and their fathers' guilt.

40 "Thus they will have to confess that they and their fathers
were guilty of having rebelled against me and of having de-
41 fied me, | so that I, too, had to defy them and bring them into
their enemies' land. Then, when their uncircumcised hearts are
42 humbled and they make amends for their guilt, I will remem-
ber my covenant with Jacob, my covenant with Isaac, and my
covenant with Abraham; and of the land, too, I will be mind-
43 ful. But the land must first be rid of them, that in its desolation
it may make up its lost sabbaths, and that they, too, may make
good the debt of their guilt for having spurned my precepts
44 and abhorred my statutes. Yet even so, even while they are in
their enemies' land, I will not reject or spurn them, lest, by
wiping them out, I make void my covenant with them; for I,
45 the Lord, am their God. I will remember them because of the
covenant I made with their forefathers, whom I brought out
of the land of Egypt under the very eyes of the Gentiles, that
I, the Lord, might be their God."

46 These are the precepts, decrees and laws which the Lord

26, 46: The Book of Leviticus seems originally to have ended here; the following chapter is an appendix.

had Moses promulgate on Mount Sinai in the pact betwee himself and the Israelites.

V. REDEMPTION OF OFFERINGS

27

1 ***Redemption of Votive Offerings*** The Lord said to Mose:
2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When anyone fulfill a vow of offering one or more persons to the Lord, who are t
3 be ransomed at a fixed sum of money, for persons between th ages of twenty and sixty, the fixed sum, in sanctuary shekels
4 shall be fifty silver shekels for a man, and thirty shekels for
5 woman; for persons between the ages of five and twenty, th fixed sum shall be twenty shekels for a youth, and ten for
6 maiden; for persons between the ages of one month and fiv years, the fixed sum shall be five silver shekels for a boy, anc
7 three for a girl; for persons of sixty or more, the fixed sur
8 shall be fifteen shekels for a man, and ten for a woman. How· ever, if the one who took the vow is too poor to meet the fixed sum, the person must be set before the priest, who shall determine the sum for his ransom in keeping with the means of the one who made the vow.
9 "If the offering vowed to the Lord is an animal that may be sacrificed, every such animal, when vowed to the Lord, becomes
10 sacred. The offerer shall not present a substitute for it by ex· changing either a better for a worse one or a worse for a better one. If he attempts to offer one animal in place of another, both
11 the original and its substitute shall be treated as sacred. If the animal vowed to the Lord is unclean and therefore unfit for
12 sacrifice, it must be set before the priest, who shall determine its value in keeping with its good or bad qualities, and the value
13 set by the priest shall stand. If the offerer wishes to redeem the animal, he shall pay one fifth more than this valuation.
14 "When someone dedicates his house as sacred to the Lord, the priest shall determine its value in keeping with its good or
15 bad points, and the value set by the priest shall stand. If the one who dedicated his house wishes to redeem it, he shall pay one fifth more than the price thus established, and then it will again be his.

27, 12: *Determine its value:* fix the price at which the animal may be sold to someone else. Only the original owner must pay the twenty percent tax, as a penalty for buying back what he had vowed to God. So also for houses and fields that are vowed to the Lord, as treated of in the following verses. The money from the sale or from the redemption of such vowed property naturally goes to the sanctuary.

16 "If the object which someone dedicates to the Lord is a piece
of his hereditary land, its valuation shall be made according to
the amount of seed required to sow it, the acreage sown with a
17 homor of barley seed being valued at fifty silver shekels. If the
dedication of a field is made at the beginning of a jubilee period,
18 the full valuation shall hold; but if it is some time after this, the
priest shall estimate its money value according to the number
of years left until the next jubilee year, with a corresponding
19 rebate on the valuation. If the one who dedicated his field wishes
to redeem it, he shall pay one fifth more than the price thus
20 established, and so reclaim it. If, instead of redeeming such a
field, he sells it to someone else, it may no longer be redeemed;
21 but at the jubilee it shall be released as sacred to the Lord; like
a field that is doomed, it shall become priestly property.
22 "If the field that some man dedicates to the Lord is one he
23 had purchased and not a part of his hereditary property, the
priest shall compute its value in proportion to the number of
years until the next jubilee, and on the same day the price thus
24 established shall be given as sacred to the Lord; at the jubilee,
however, the field shall revert to the hereditary owner of this
land from whom it had been purchased.
25 "Every valuation shall be made according to the standard of
of the sanctuary shekel. There are twenty geras to the shekel.

26 ***Offerings Not to Be Redeemed*** "Note that a first-born
animal, which as such already belongs to the Lord, may not be
dedicated by vow to him. If it is an ox or a sheep, it shall be
27 ceded to the Lord; but if it is an unclean animal, it may be
redeemed by paying one fifth more than its fixed value. If it is
not redeemed, it shall be sold at its fixed value.
28 "Note, also, that any one of his possessions which a man
vows as doomed to the Lord, whether it is a human being or an
animal or a hereditary field, shall be neither sold nor ransomed;
everything that is thus doomed becomes most sacred to the
29 Lord. All human beings that are doomed lose the right to be
redeemed; they must be put to death.

27, 27: *An unclean animal:* such as the first-born of an ass, which was unfit for sacrifice. According to Ex 13, 13; 34, 20, a first-born ass was to be redeemed by offering a sheep in its stead, or was to have its neck broken. The present law is probably a later modification of the earlier one.

27, 29: *All human beings that are doomed:* according to some interpreters, this drastic law was enacted for the purpose of discouraging private persons from rashly vowing their slaves or other dependants as offerings to God.

30 "All tithes of the land, whether in grain from the fields or in
fruit from the trees, belong to the Lord, as sacred to him
31 If someone wishes to buy back any of his tithes, he shall pay
32 one fifth more than their value. The tithes of the herd and the
flock shall be determined by ceding to the Lord as sacred every
33 tenth animal as they are counted by the herdsman's rod. It shall
not matter whether good ones or bad ones are thus chosen, and
no exchange may be made. If any exchange is attempted, both
the original animal and its substitute shall be treated as sacred,
without the right of being bought back."
34 These are the commandments which the Lord gave Moses
on Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Numbers derives its name from the two censuses recorded in chapters 1 and 26, and for the special attention given to numbers throughout the book. The Priestly tradition runs through most of the book (24 chapters). The remaining 12 chapters are composed from the Yahwist and Elohist traditions. (See Introduction to the Pentateuch.)

The book proposes to illustrate the organization of the newborn community according to their tribes and leaders, as well as the organization of the land, and the divisions of authority. It covers a period of thirty-eight years, beginning with the departure from Sinai to the arrival at the entrance to the Promised Land, giving an account of the battles against hostile tribes during the journey. The historical events date from different periods of Israelite history. Many laws, not all, which were enacted after the time of the journey through Sinai, are projected back to that time.

Main divisions of the Book of Numbers are:

1. Preparation for the Departure from Sinai, 1, 1—10, 10
2. From Sinai to the Plains of Moab, 10, 11—22, 1
3. On the Plains of Moab, 22, 2—36, 13

I. PREPARATION FOR THE DEPARTURE FROM SINAI

1

1 ***The Census*** In the year following that of the Israelites' departure from the land of Egypt, on the first day of the second month, the Lord said to Moses in the Meeting Tent in the
2 desert of Sinai: "Take a census of the whole community of the Israelites, by clans and ancestral houses, registering each male
3 individually. You and Aaron shall enroll in companies all the men in Israel of twenty years or more who are fit for military service.

4 ***Moses' Assistants*** "To assist you there shall be a man from
5 each tribe, the head of his ancestral house. These are the names of those who are to assist you: from Ruben: Elisur, son of
5.7 Sedeur; | from Simeon: Salamiel, son of Surisaddai; | from
8 Juda: Nahasson, son of Amminadab; | from Issachar: Na-
9 thanael, son of Suar; | from Zabulon: Eliab, son of Helon; |
10 from Ephraim: Elisama, son of Ammiud, and from Manasse: Gamaliel, son of Phadasur, for the descendants of Joseph; |
11.12 from Benjamin: Abidan, son of Gedeoni; | from Dan:
13 Ahiezer, son of Ammisaddai; | from Aser: Phagiel, son of

14.15 Ochran; | from Gad: Eliasaph, son of Raguel; | from
Nephthali: Ahira, son of Enan."
16 These were councilors of the community, princes of their
17 ancestral tribes, chiefs of the troops of Israel. So Moses and
18 Aaron took these men who had been designated, and assembled
the whole community on the first day of the second month.
Every man of twenty years or more then declared his name and
19 lineage according to clan and ancestral house, as the Lord had
commanded Moses.

Count of the Twelve Tribes This is their census as taken
20 in the desert of Sinai. | Of the descendants of Ruben, the first-
born of Israel, registered by lineage in clans and ancestral
houses: when all the males of twenty years or more who were
21 fit for military service were polled, forty-six thousand five
hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Ruben.
22 Of the descendants of Simeon, registered by lineage in clans
and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years or
23 more who were fit for military service were polled, fifty-nine
thousand three hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Simeon.
24 Of the descendants of Gad, registered by lineage in clans and
ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years or more
25 who were fit for military service were polled, forty-five thou-
sand six hundred and fifty were enrolled in the tribe of Gad.
26 Of the descendants of Juda, registered by lineage in clans
and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years or
27 more who were fit for military service were polled, seventy-four
thousand six hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Juda.
28 Of the descendants of Issachar, registered by lineage in clans
and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years or
29 more who were fit for military service were polled, fifty-four
thousand four hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Issachar.
30 Of the descendants of Zabulon, registered by lineage in clans
and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years or
31 more who were fit for military service were polled, fifty-seven
thousand four hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Zabulon.
32 Of the descendants of Joseph—
Of the descendants of Ephraim, registered by lineage in
clans and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years
33 or more who were fit for military service were polled, forty
thousand five hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Ephraim.
34 Of the descendants of Manasse, registered by lineage in
clans and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years
35 or more who were fit for military service were polled, thirty-

two thousand two hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Manasse.
36 Of the descendants of Benjamin, registered by lineage in clans and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years
37 or more who were fit for military service were polled, thirty-five thousand four hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Benjamin.
38 Of the descendants of Dan, registered by lineage in clans and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years or
39 more who were fit for military service were polled, sixty-two thousand seven hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Dan.
40 Of the descendants of Aser, registered by lineage in clans and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years or
41 more who were fit for military service were polled, forty-one thousand five hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Aser.
42 Of the descendants of Nephthali, registered by lineage in clans and ancestral houses: when all the males of twenty years
43 or more who were fit for military service were polled, fifty-three thousand four hundred were enrolled in the tribe of Nephthali.
44 It was these who were registered, each according to his ancestral house, in the census taken by Moses and Aaron and the
45 twelve princes of Israel. The total number of the Israelites of twenty years or more who were fit for military service, regis-
46 tered by ancestral houses, | was six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty.

47 ***Levites Omitted in the Census*** The Levites, however, were
48 were not registered by ancestral tribe with the others. For the
49 Lord had told Moses, "The tribe of Levi alone you shall not enroll nor include in the census along with the other Israelites.
50 You are to give the Levites charge of the Dwelling of the Commandments with all its equipment and all that belongs to it. It is they who shall carry the Dwelling with all its equipment and who shall be its ministers. They shall therefore camp
51 around the Dwelling. When the Dwelling is to move on, the Levites shall take it down; when the Dwelling is to be pitched, it is the Levites who shall set it up. Any layman who comes
52 near it shall be put to death. While the other Israelites shall
53 camp by companies, each in his own division of the camp, | the Levites shall camp around the Dwelling of the Commandments. Otherwise God's wrath will strike the Israelite community. The Levites, then, shall have charge of the Dwelling of the Com-

1, 46: *Six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty:* a more probable number is five thousand five hundred and fifty.

54 mandments." All this the Israelites fulfilled as the Lord had
commanded Moses.

2

1 ***Arrangement of the Tribes*** The Lord said to Moses and
2 Aaron: "The Israelites shall camp, each in his own division
under the ensigns of their ancestral houses. They shall camp
around the Meeting Tent, but at some distance from it.
3 "Encamped on the east side, toward the sunrise, shall be
the divisional camp of Juda, arranged in companies. [The
4 prince of the Judaites was Nahasson, son of Amminadab, and
his soldiers amounted in the census to seventy-four thousand
5 six hundred.] With Juda shall camp the tribe of Issachar
6 [Their prince was Nathanael, son of Suar, | and his soldiers
amounted in the census to fifty-four thousand four hundred.] |
7 and the tribe of Zabulon. [Their prince was Eliab, son of
8 Helon, | and his soldiers amounted in the census to fifty-seven
9 thousand four hundred. The total number of those registered
by companies in the camp of Juda was one hundred and
eighty-six thousand four hundred.] These shall be first on the
march.
10 "On the south side shall be the divisional camp of Ruben,
arranged in companies. [Their prince was Elisur, son of Sedeur,
11 | and his soldiers amounted in the census to forty-six thousand
12 five hundred.] Beside them shall camp the tribe of Simeon
13 [Their prince was Salamiel, son of Surisaddai, and his soldiers
amounted in the census to fifty-nine thousand three hundred.]
14 and next the tribe of Gad. [Their prince was Eliasaph, son of
15 Raguel, | and his soldiers amounted in the census to forty-five
16 thousand six hundred and fifty. The total number of those
registered by companies in the camp of Ruben was one hundred
and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty.] These shall be
second on the march.
17 "Then the Meeting Tent and the camp of the Levites shall
set out in the middle of the line. As in camp, so also on the
march, every man shall be in his proper place, with his own
division.
18 "On the west side shall be the divisional camp of Ephraim,
arranged in companies. [Their prince was Elisama, son of
19 Ammiud, | and his soldiers amounted in the census to forty
20 thousand five hundred.] Beside them shall camp the tribe of
21 Manasse [Their prince was Gamaliel, son of Phadasur, and
his soldiers amounted in the census to thirty-two thousand
22 two hundred.] and the tribe of Benjamin. [Their prince was
23 Abidan, son of Gedeoni, | and his soldiers amounted in the

census to thirty-five thousand four hundred. The total number of those registered by companies in the camp of Ephraim was one hundred and eight thousand one hundred.] These shall be third on the march.

"On the north side shall be the divisional camp of Dan, arranged in companies. [Their prince was Ahiezer, son of Ammisaddai, and his soldiers amounted in the census to sixty-two thousand seven hundred.] Beside them shall camp the tribe of Aser [Their prince was Phagiel, son of Ochran, and his soldiers amounted in the census to forty-one thousand five hundred.] and next the tribe of Nephthali. [Their prince was Ahira, son of Enan, | and his soldiers amounted in the census to fifty-three thousand four hundred. The total number of those registered by companies in the camp of Dan was one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred.] These shall be the last of the divisions on the march."

This was the census of the Israelites taken by ancestral houses. The total number of those registered by companies in the camps was six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. The Levites, however, were not registered with the other Israelites, for so the Lord had commanded Moses. The Israelites did just as the Lord had commanded Moses; both in camp and on the march they were in their own divisions, every man according to his clan and his ancestral house.

The Sons of Aaron The following were the descendants of Aaron and Moses at the time that the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai. The sons of Aaron were Nadab his first-born, Abiu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests who were ordained to exercise the priesthood. But when Nadab and Abiu offered profane fire before the Lord in the desert of Sinai, they met death in the presence of the Lord, and left no sons. Thereafter only Eleazar and Ithamar performed the priestly functions under the direction of their father Aaron.

Levites in Place of the First-born Now the Lord said to Moses: "Summon the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest, as his assistants. They shall discharge his obligations and those of the whole community before the Meeting Tent by serving at the Dwelling. They shall have custody of all the furnishings of the Meeting Tent and discharge the duties of the Israelites in the service of the Dwelling. You shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they have been set aside from

10 among the Israelites as dedicated to me. But only Aaron and hi
descendants shall you appoint to have charge of the priestl
functions. Any layman who comes near shall be put to death."
11.12 The Lord said to Moses, "It is I who have chosen th
Levites from the Israelites in place of every first-born that open
the womb among the Israelites. The Levites, therefore, ar
13 mine, | because every first-born is mine. When I slew all th
first-born in the land of Egypt, I made all the first-born ir
Israel sacred to me, both of man and of beast. They belong tc
me; I am the Lord."

14 *Census of the Levites* The Lord said to Moses in the desert
15 of Sinai, "Take a census of the Levites by ancestral houses and
16 clans, registering every male of a month or more." Moses, there-
fore, took their census in accordance with the command the
Lord had given him.
17 The sons of Levi were named Gerson, Caath and Merari.
18 The descendants of Gerson, by clans, were named Lebni and
19 Semei. The descendants of Caath, by clans, were Amram, Isaar,
20 Hebron and Oziel. The descendants of Merari, by clans, were
Moholi and Musi. These were the clans of the Levites by
ancestral houses.

21 *Duties of the Levitical Clans* To Gerson belonged the
clan of the Lebnites and the clan of the Semeites; these were the
22 clans of the Gersonites. When all their males of a month or
more were registered, they numbered seven thousand five hun-
23 dred. The clans of the Gersonites camped behind the Dwelling,
24 to the west. The prince of their ancestral house was Eliasaph,
25 son of Lael. At the Meeting Tent they had charge of whatever
pertained to the Dwelling, the tent and its covering, the curtain
26 at the entrance of the Meeting Tent, | the hangings of the
court, the curtain at the entrance of the court enclosing both the
Dwelling and the altar, and the ropes.
27 To Caath belonged the clans of the Amramites, the Isaarites,
the Hebronites, and the Ozielites; these were the clans of the
28 Caathites. When all their males of a month or more were
29 registered, they numbered eight thousand three hundred. They
had charge of the sanctuary. | The clans of the Caathites
30 camped at the south side of the Dwelling. The prince of their
31 ancestral house was Elisaphan, son of Oziel. They had charge of
whatever pertained to the ark, the table, the lampstand, the
altars, the utensils with which the ministry of the sanctuary
32 was exercised, and the veil. The chief prince of the Levites,

however, was Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest; he was supervisor over those who had charge of the sanctuary.

33 To Merari belonged the clans of the Moholites and the
34 Musites; these were the clans of Merari. When all their males
of a month or more were registered, they numbered six thou-
35 sand two hundred. The prince of the ancestral house of the
clans of Merari was Suriel, son of Abihajil. They camped at
36 the north side of the Dwelling. | The Merarites were charged
with the care of whatever pertained to the boards of the
37 Dwelling, its bars, columns, pedestals, and all its fittings, | as
well as the columns of the surrounding court with their pedestals, pegs and ropes.

38 East of the Dwelling, that is, in front of the Meeting Tent, toward the sunrise, were camped Moses and Aaron and the latter's sons. They discharged the obligations of the sanctuary for the Israelites. Any layman who came near was to be put to death.

39 The total number of male Levites a month old or more whom Moses had registered by clans in keeping with the Lord's command, was twenty-two thousand.

40 ***Census and Ransom of First-born*** The Lord then said to Moses, "Take a census of all the first-born males of the Israelites
41 a month old or more, and compute their total number. Then assign the Levites to me, the Lord, in place of all the first-born of the Israelites, as well as their cattle in place of all the first-
42 born among the cattle of the Israelites." So Moses took a census of all the first-born of the Israelites, as the Lord had
43 commanded him. When all the first-born males of a month or more were registered, they numbered twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.

44.45 The Lord said to Moses: "Take the Levites in place of all the first-born of the Israelites, and the Levites' cattle in place of their cattle, that the Levites may belong to me. I am the
46 Lord. | As ransom for the two hundred and seventy-three
47 first-born of the Israelites who outnumber the Levites, you shall take five shekels for each individual, according to the standard
48 of the sanctuary shekel, twenty geras to the shekel. Give this silver to Aaron and his sons as ransom for the extra number."
49 So Moses took the silver as ransom from those who were left
50 when the rest had been redeemed by the Levites. From the first-born of the Israelites he received in silver one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels according to the sanctuary
51 standard. He then gave this ransom silver to Aaron and his sons, as the Lord had commanded him.

4

1 ***Duties Further Defined*** The Lord said to Moses and Aar
2 "Among the Levites take a total of the Caathites, by clans a
3 ancestral houses, all the men of the Caathites | between thi
and fifty years of age; these are to undertake obligatory tasks
the Meeting Tent.
4 "The service of the Caathites in the Meeting Tent concer
5 the most sacred objects. In breaking camp, Aaron and his so
shall go in and take down the screening curtain and cover t
6 Ark of the Commandments with it. Over these they shall p
a cover of thahas skin, and on top of this spread an all-viol
7 cloth. They shall then put the poles in place. On the table
the Presence they shall spread a violet cloth and put on it tl
plates and cups, as well as the bowls and pitchers for libation
8 the established bread offering shall remain on the table. Ov
these they shall spread a scarlet cloth and cover all this wi
9 thahas skin. They shall then put the poles in place. | Th
shall use a violet cloth to cover the lampstand with its lamp
trimming shears, and trays, as well as the various containers
10 oil from which it is supplied. The lampstand with all i
utensils they shall then enclose in a covering of thahas ski
11 and place on a litter. Over the golden altar they shall sprea
a violet cloth, and cover this also with a covering of thaha
12 skin. They shall then put the poles in place. Taking the utensil
of the sanctuary service, they shall wrap them all in violet clot
and cover them with thahas skin. They shall then place ther
13 on a litter. | After cleansing the altar of its ashes, they shal
14 spread a purple cloth over it. On this they shall put all th
utensils with which it is served: the fire pans, forks, shovels
basins, and all the utensils of the altar. They shall then spreac
a covering of thahas skin over this, and put the poles in place
15 "Only after Aaron and his sons have finished covering th
sacred objects and all their utensils on breaking camp, shall th
Caathites enter to carry them. But they shall not touch th
sacred objects; if they do they will die. These, then, are th
objects in the Meeting Tent that the Caathites shall carry.
16 "Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, shall be in charge of th
oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the established cereal
offering, and the anointing oil. He shall be in charge of the
whole Dwelling with all the sacred objects and utensils that are
in it."

4, 11: *The golden altar:* the altar of incense.
4, 13: *The altar:* the bronze altar of holocausts.
4, 14: *Forks:* used in turning over the sacrificial animal on the fire of the altar. *Basins:* to receive the sacrificial blood.

17.18 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "Do not let the group
19 of Caathite clans perish from the body of the Levites. That they
may live and not die when they approach the most sacred
objects, this is what you shall do for them: Aaron and his sons
shall go in and assign to each of them his task and what he
20 must carry; but the Caathites shall not go in to look upon the
sacred objects, even for an instant; if they do, they will die."
21.22 The Lord said to Moses, "Take a total among the Ger-
23 sonites also, by ancestral houses and clans, | of all the men
between thirty and fifty years of age; these are to undertake
24 obligatory tasks in the Meeting Tent. This is the task of the
clans of the Gersonites, what they must do and what they must
25 carry: they shall carry the sheets of the Dwelling, the Meeting
Tent with its covering and the outer wrapping of thahas skin,
26 the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent, | the hangings
of the court, the curtain at the entrance of the court that en-
closes both the Dwelling and the altar, together with their ropes
and all other objects necessary in their use. Whatever is to be
27 done with these things shall be their task. The service of the
Gersonites shall be entirely under the direction of Aaron and
his sons, with regard to what they must do and what they must
carry; you shall make each man of them responsible for what
28 he is to carry. This, then, is the task of the Gersonites in the
Meeting Tent; and they shall be under the supervision of
Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.
29 "Among the Merarites, too, you shall enroll by clans and
30 ancestral houses | all their men between thirty and fifty years
of age; these are to undertake obligatory tasks in the Meeting
31 Tent. This is what they shall be responsible for carrying, all
the years of their service in the Meeting Tent: the boards of the
32 Dwelling with its bars, columns and pedestals, and the columns
of the surrounding court with their pedestals, pegs and ropes.
You shall designate for each man of them all the objects con-
nected with his service, which he shall be responsible for carrying.
33 This, then, is the task of the clans of the Merarites during all
their service in the Meeting Tent under the supervision of
Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest."

34 ***Number of Adult Levites*** So Moses and Aaron and the
princes of the community made a registration among the
35 Caathites, by clans and ancestral houses, | of all the men be-
tween thirty and fifty years of age. These were to undertake
36 obligatory tasks in the Meeting Tent; as registered by clans,
37 they numbered two thousand seven hundred and fifty. Such
was the census of all the men of the Caathite clans who were to

serve in the Meeting Tent, which Moses took, together wi
Aaron, as the Lord bade him.
38 The registration was then made among the Gersonites,
39 clans and ancestral houses, | of all the men between thirty a
fifty years of age. These were to undertake obligatory tasks
40 the Meeting Tent; as registered by clans and ancestral hous
41 they numbered two thousand six hundred and thirty. Su
was the census of all the men of the Gersonite clans who we
to serve in the Meeting Tent, which Moses took, together wi
Aaron, at the Lord's bidding.
42 Then the registration was made among the Merarites, l
43 clans and ancestral houses, | of all the men from thirty up
fifty years of age. These were to undertake obligatory tasks
44 the Meeting Tent; as registered by clans, they numbered thr
45 thousand two hundred. Such was the census of the men of tl
Merarite clans which Moses took, together with Aaron, as tl
Lord bade him.
46 Therefore, when Moses and Aaron and the Israelite princ
had completed the registration among the Levites, by clans an
47 ancestral houses, | of all the men between thirty and fifty yea
of age who were to undertake tasks of service or transport a
48 the Meeting Tent, the total number registered was eight thou
49 sand five hundred and eighty. According to the Lord's biddin
to Moses, they gave them their individual assignments fo
service and for transport; so the Lord had commanded Mose

5

1.2 ***The Unclean Expelled*** The Lord said to Moses: "Orde
the Israelites to expel from camp every leper, and everyon
suffering from a discharge, and everyone who has becom
3 unclean by contact with a corpse. Male and female alike, you
shall compel them to go out of the camp; they are not to defil
4 the camp in which I dwell." The Israelites obeyed the com-
mand that the Lord had given Moses; they expelled them from
the camp.

5.6 ***Unjust Possession*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the
Israelites: If a man (or woman) commits a fault against his
fellow man and wrongs him, thus breaking faith with the
7 Lord, | he shall confess the wrong he has done, restore his ill-
gotten goods in full, and in addition give one fifth of their
8 value to the one he has wronged. However, if the latter has no
next of kin to whom restoration of the ill-gotten goods can be
made, the goods to be restored shall be the Lord's and shall fall
to the priest; this is apart from the atonement ram with which

9 the priest makes amends for the guilty man. Likewise, every
sacred contribution that the Israelites are bound to make shall
10 fall to the priest. Each Israelite man may dispose of his own
sacred contributions; they become the property of the priest
to whom he gives them."

11 ***Ordeal for a Suspected Adulteress*** The Lord said to
12 Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: If a man's wife
13 goes astray and becomes unfaithful to him | by having inter-
course with another man, though her husband has not sufficient
evidence of the fact, so that her impurity remains unproved for
14 lack of a witness who might have caught her in the act; or if a
man is overcome by a feeling of jealousy that makes him suspect
15 his wife, whether she was actually impure or not: he shall bring
his wife to the priest and shall take along as an offering for her
a tenth of an epha of barley meal. However, he shall not pour
oil on it nor put frankincense over it, since it is a cereal offering
of jealousy, a cereal offering for an appeal in a question of guilt.
16 "The priest shall first have the woman come forward and
17 stand before the Lord. In an earthen vessel he shall meanwhile
put some holy water, as well as some dust that he has taken
18 from the floor of the Dwelling. Then, as the woman stands
before the Lord, the priest shall uncover her head and place in
her hands the cereal offering of her appeal, that is, the cereal
offering of jealousy, while he himself shall hold the bitter water
19 that brings a curse. Then he shall adjure the woman, saying
to her, 'If no other man has had intercourse with you, and you
have not gone astray by impurity while under the authority of
your husband, be immune to the curse brought by this bitter
20 water. But if you have gone astray while under the authority
of your husband and have acted impurely by letting a man
21 other than your husband have intercourse with you'—so shall
the priest adjure the woman with this oath of imprecation—
'may the Lord make you an example of malediction and impre-
cation among your people by causing your thighs to waste away
22 and your belly to swell! May this water, then, that brings a
curse, enter your body to make your belly swell and your thighs
23 waste away!' And the woman shall say, 'Amen, amen!' The
priest shall put these imprecations in writing and shall then
24 wash them off into the bitter water, | which he is to have the

5, 11-31: The sacred writer "baptizes" or legitimizes this magical ordeal with an orthodox ritual. V. 21 exemplifies this orthodoxy by attributing the penalty to God and not to magic. The ordeal was known in the Middle Ages and survives today in Africa.

woman drink, so that it may go into her with all its bitter curs
25 But first he shall take the cereal offering of jealousy from th
woman's hand, and having waved this offering before the Lor
26 shall put it near the altar, | where he shall take a handful o
the cereal offering as its token offering and burn it on the alta
27 Only then shall he have the woman drink the water. Once sh
has done so, if she has been impure and unfaithful to he
husband, this bitter water that brings a curse will go into he
and her belly will swell and her thighs will waste away, s
that she will become an example of imprecation among he
28 people. If, however, the woman has not defiled herself, but i
still pure, she will be immune and will still be able to bea
children.
29 "This, then, is the law for jealousy: When a woman goe
astray while under the authority of her husband and act
30 impurely, or when such a feeling of jealousy comes over a
man that he becomes suspicious of his wife, he shall have he
stand before the Lord, and the priest shall apply this law in
31 full to her. The man shall be free from guilt, but the woman
shall bear such guilt as she may have."

6

1.2 ***Laws concerning Nazirites*** The Lord said to Moses:
"Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When a man (or a
woman) solemnly takes the Nazirite vow to dedicate himself to
3 the Lord, he shall abstain from wine and strong drink; he may
neither drink wine vinegar, other vinegar, or any kind of grape
4 juice, nor eat either fresh or dried grapes. As long as he is a
Nazirite he shall not eat anything of the produce of the vine;
5 not even unripe grapes or grapeskins. While he is under the
Nazirite vow, no razor shall touch his hair. Until the period of
his dedication to the Lord is over, he shall be sacred, and shall
6 let the hair of his head grow freely. As long as he is dedicated
7 to the Lord, he shall not enter where a dead person is. Not even
for his father or mother, his sister or brother, should they die,
may he become unclean, since his head bears his dedication to
8 God. As long as he is a Nazirite he is sacred to the Lord.
9 "If someone dies very suddenly in his presence, so that his
dedicated head becomes unclean, he shall shave his head on
10 the day of his purification, that is, on the seventh day. On the

6, 1-21: Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist, and many early Christians were Nazirites. They were the forerunners of the Christian monks. The offering of the hair signified the offering of the person himself (v. 5).

eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two pigeons to the
11 priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. The priest shall offer
up the one as a sin offering and the other as a holocaust, thus
making atonement for him for the sin he has committed by
reason of the dead person. On the same day he shall reconse-
12 crate his head | and begin anew the period of his dedication to
the Lord as a Nazirite, bringing a yearling lamb as a guilt offer-
ing. The previous period is not valid, because his dedicated
head became unclean.

13 "This is the ritual for the Nazirite: On the day he completes
the period of his dedication he shall go to the entrance of the
14 Meeting Tent, bringing as his offering to the Lord one unblem-
ished yearling lamb for a holocaust, one unblemished yearling
ewe lamb for a sin offering, one unblemished ram as a peace
15 offering, along with their cereal offerings and libations, and a
basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and of
16 unleavened wafers spread with oil. The priest shall present them
before the Lord, and shall offer up the sin offering and the holo-
17 caust for him. He shall then offer up the ram as a peace offering
to the Lord, with its cereal offering and libation, and the basket
18 of unleavened cakes. Then at the entrance of the Meeting Tent
the Nazirite shall shave his dedicated head, collect the hair,
19 and put it in the fire that is under the peace offering. After the
Nazirite has shaved off his dedicated hair, the priest shall take
a boiled shoulder of the ram, as well as one unleavened cake
and one unleavened wafer from the basket, and shall place
20 them in the hands of the Nazirite. The priest shall then wave
them as a wave offering before the Lord. They become sacred
and shall belong to the priest, along with the breast of the wave
offering and the leg of the raised offering. Only after this may
the Nazirite drink wine.

21 "This, then, is the law for the Nazirite; this is the offering
to the Lord which is included in his vow of dedication apart
from anything else which his means may allow. Thus shall he
carry out the law of his dedication in keeping with the vow he
has taken."

22-23 ***The Priestly Blessing*** The Lord said to Moses: "Speak
to Aaron and his sons and tell them: This is how you shall bless
24 the Israelites. Say to them: The Lord bless you and keep you!
25 The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!

6, 22-26: This blessing of material and spiritual things is used today by Jews and Catholics. To the latter it is known as the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

26.27 The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace! So shal
they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them.

7

1 ***Offerings of Princes*** Now, when Moses had completed th
erection of the Dwelling and had anointed and consecrated i
with all its equipment (as well as the altar with all its equip
2 ment), an offering was made by the princes of Israel, who wer
heads of ancestral houses; the same princes of the tribes wh
3 supervised the census. The offering they brought before th
Lord consisted of six baggage wagons and twelve oxen, that is
a wagon for every two princes, and an ox for every prince
These they presented as their offering before the Dwelling
4.5 The Lord then said to Moses, "Accept their offering, that
these things may be put to use in the service of the Meeting
Tent. Assign them to the Levites, to each group in proportion
6 to its duties." So Moses accepted the wagons and oxen, and
7 assigned them to the Levites. He gave two wagons and four
8 oxen to the Gersonites in proportion to their duties, and four
wagons and eight oxen to the Merarites in proportion to their
duties, under the supervision of Ithamar, son of Aaron the
9 priest. He gave none to the Caathites, because they had to carry
on their shoulders the sacred objects which were their charge.
10 For the dedication of the altar also, the princes brought
11 offerings before the altar on the day it was anointed. But the
Lord said to Moses, "Let one prince a day present his offering
for the dedication of the altar."
12 The one who presented his offering on the first day was
Nahasson, son of Amminadab, prince of the tribe of Juda.
13 His offering consisted of one silver plate weighing a hundred
and thirty shekels according to the sanctuary standard and one
silver basin weighing seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour
14 mixed with oil for a cereal offering; one gold cup of ten shekels'
15 weight filled with incense; one young bull, one ram, and one
16 yearling lamb for a holocaust; one goat for a sin offering;
17 and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for
a peace offering. This was the offering of Nahasson, son of
Amminadab.
18 On the second day Nathanael, son of Suar, prince of
19 Issachar, made his offering. He presented as his offering one
silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according
to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy
shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
20 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
21 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holocaust;

22.23 one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the offering of Nathanael, son of Suar.

24 On the third day it was the turn of Eliab, son of Helon,
25 prince of the Zabulonites. His offering consisted of one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
26 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
27 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holocaust;
28.29 one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the offering of Eliab, son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day it was the turn of Elisur, son of Sedeur,
31 prince of the Rubenites. His offering consisted of one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
32 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
33 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holo-
34.35 caust; one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the offering of Elisur, son of Sedeur.

36 On the fifth day it was the turn of Salamiel, son of Surisaddai,
37 prince of the Simeonites. His offering consisted of one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
38 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
39 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holo-
40.41 caust; one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the offering of Salamiel, son of Surisaddai.

42 On the sixth day it was the turn of Eliasaph, son of Raguel,
43 prince of the Gadites. His offering consisted of one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy shekels, both
44 filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal offering; one
45 gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense; one young
46 bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holocaust; one
47 goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the offering of Eliasaph, son of Raguel.

48 On the seventh day it was the turn of Elisama, son of
49 Ammiud, prince of the Ephraimites. His offering consisted of

one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels accor
ing to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighin
seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for
50 cereal offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled wit
51 incense; one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb fo
52.53 a holocaust; one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, fiv
rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering
This was the offering of Elisama, son of Ammiud.
54 On the eighth day it was the turn of Gamaliel, son o
55 Phadasur, prince of the Manasseites. His offering consiste
of one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekel
according to the sanctuary standard, one silver basin weighin
seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil fo
56 a cereal offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight fille
57 with incense; one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lam
58.59 for a holocaust; one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen
five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering
This was the offering of Gamaliel, son of Phadasur.
60 On the ninth day it was the turn of Abidan, son of Gedeoni
61 prince of the Benjaminites. His offering consisted of one silve
plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according to the
sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy
shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
62 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
63 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holocaust;
64.65 one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five
goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the
offering of Abidan, son of Gedeoni.
66 On the tenth day it was the turn of Ahiezer, son of Ammi-
67 saddai, prince of the Danites. His offering consisted of one
silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according to
the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy
shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
68 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
69 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holocaust;
70.71 one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five
goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the
offering of Ahiezer, son of Ammisaddai.
72 On the eleventh day it was the turn of Phagiel, son of
73 Ochran, prince of the Aserites. His offering consisted of one
silver plate weighing one hundred and thirty shekels according
to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy
shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
74 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
75 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holocaust;

76.77 one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the offering of Phagiel, son of Ochran.

78 On the twelfth day it was the turn of Ahira, son of Enan,
79 prince of the Nephthalites. His offering consisted of one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels according to the sanctuary standard and one silver basin weighing seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a cereal
80 offering; one gold cup of ten shekels' weight filled with incense;
81 one young bull, one ram, and one yearling lamb for a holocaust;
82.83 one goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five yearling lambs for a peace offering. This was the offering of Ahira, son of Enan.

84 These were the offerings for the dedication of the altar, given by the princes of Israel on the occasion of its anointing: twelve
85 silver plates, twelve silver basins, and twelve gold cups. Each silver plate weighed a hundred and thirty shekels, and each silver basin seventy, so that all the silver of these vessels amounted to two thousand four hundred shekels, according to
86 the sanctuary standard. The twelve gold cups that were filled with incense weighed ten shekels apiece, according to the sanctuary standard, so that all the gold cups amounted to one
87 hundred and twenty shekels. The animals for the holocausts were, in all, twelve young bulls, twelve rams, and twelve yearling lambs, with their cereal offerings; those for the sin
88 offerings were twelve goats. The animals for the peace offerings were, in all, twenty-four oxen, sixty rams, sixty goats, and sixty yearling lambs. These, then, were the offerings for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed.

89 ***The Voice*** When Moses entered the Meeting Tent to speak with him, he heard the voice addressing him from above the propitiatory on the Ark of the Commandments, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him. . . .

8

1 ***The Lamps Set Up*** The Lord spoke to Moses, and said,
2 "Give Aaron this command: When you set up the seven lamps, have them throw their light toward the front of the lampstand."
3 Aaron did so, setting up the lamps to face toward the front of
4 the lampstand, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. The lampstand was made of beaten gold in both its shaft and its branches, according to the pattern which the Lord had shown

5 ***Purification of the Levites*** The Lord said to Mose
6 "Take the Levites from among the Israelites and purify ther
7 This is what you shall do to them to purify them. Sprink
them with the water of remission; then have them shave the
whole bodies and wash their clothes, and so purify themselve
8 They shall take a young bull, along with its cereal offering c
fine flour mixed with oil; you shall take another young bull fc
9 a sin offering. Then have the Levites come forward in front c
the Meeting Tent, where you shall assemble also the whol
10 community of the Israelites. While the Levites are present befor
11 the Lord, the Israelites shall lay their hands upon them. Lc
Aaron then offer the Levites before the Lord as a wave offerin
from the Israelites, thus devoting them to the service of th
12 Lord. The Levites in turn shall lay their hands on the head
of the bullocks, which shall then be immolated, the one as a sir
offering and the other as a holocaust to the Lord, in atonemen
13 for the Levites. Thus, then, shall you have the Levites stanc
before Aaron and his sons, to be offered as a wave offering tc
14 the Lord; and thus shall you set aside the Levites from the res
of the Israelites, that they may be mine.
15 "Only then shall the Levites enter upon their service in the
Meeting Tent. You shall purify them and offer them as a wave
16 offering; because they, among the Israelites, are strictly dedi-
cated to me; I have taken them for myself in place of every
17 first-born that opens the womb among the Israelites. Indeed,
all the first-born among the Israelites, both of man and of
beast, belong to me; I consecrated them to myself on the day I
18 slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt. But in place of all
19 the first-born Israelites I have taken the Levites; and I have
given these dedicated Israelites to Aaron and his sons to dis-
charge the duties of the Israelites in the Meeting Tent and to
make atonement for them, so that no plague may strike among
the Israelites should they come near the sanctuary."
20 Thus, then, did Moses and Aaron and the whole com-
munity of the Israelites deal with the Levites, carrying out
exactly the command which the Lord had given Moses con-
21 cerning them. When the Levites had cleansed themselves of
sin and washed their clothes, Aaron offered them as a wave

8, 6: *Purify them:* in the language of the Pentateuch, only the priests were "consecrated," that is, made sacred or set aside for the Lord, in an elaborate ceremony. The Levites were merely "purified," that is, made ritually clean for their special work.

8, 7: *Water of remission:* this means: for the remission of sins.

8, 21: *Cleansed themselves of sin:* by having the "water of remission" sprinkled on them as prescribed in v. 7.

offering before the Lord, and made atonement for them to
22 purify them. Only then did they enter upon their service in
the Meeting Tent under the supervision of Aaron and his sons.
The command which the Lord had given Moses concerning
the Levites was carried out.

23 ***Age Limits for Levitical Service*** The Lord said to Moses:
24 "This is the rule for the Levites. Each from his twenty-fifth
year onward shall perform the required service in the Meeting
25 Tent. When he is fifty years old, he shall retire from the
26 required service and work no longer. His service with his
fellow Levites shall consist in sharing their responsibilities in
the Meeting Tent, but he shall not do the work. This, then, is
how you are to regulate the duties of the Levites."

9

1 ***Second Passover*** In the first month of the year following
their departure from the land of Egypt, the Lord said to Moses
2 in the desert of Sinai, "Tell the Israelites to celebrate the Pass-
3 over at the prescribed time. The evening twilight of the four-
teenth day of this month is the prescribed time when you shall
4 celebrate it, observing all its rules and regulations." Moses,
5 therefore, told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover. And they
did so, celebrating the Passover in the desert of Sinai during the
evening twilight of the fourteenth day of the first month, just
as the Lord had commanded Moses.

6 There were some, however, who were unclean because of a
human corpse and so could not keep the Passover that day.
7 These men came up to Moses and Aaron that same day | and
said, "Although we are unclean because of a corpse, why
should we be deprived of presenting the Lord's offering at its
proper time along with the other Israelites?" Moses answered
8 them, "Wait until I learn what the Lord will command in your
regard."

9,10 The Lord then said to Moses: "Speak to the Israelites and
say: If any one of you or of your descendants is unclean be-
cause of a corpse, or if he is absent on a journey, he may still
11 keep the Lord's Passover. But he shall keep it in the second
month, during the evening twilight of the fourteenth day of
that month, eating it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs,
12 and not leaving any of it over till morning, nor breaking any
13 of its bones, but observing all the rules of the Passover. How-
ever, anyone who is clean and not away on a journey, who yet
fails to keep the Passover, shall be cut off from his people,

because he did not present the Lord's offering at the prescribe
time. That man shall bear the consequences of his sin.
14 "If an alien who lives among you wishes to keep the Lord
Passover, he too shall observe the rules and regulations for tl
Passover. You shall have the same law for the resident alie
as for the native of the land."

15 ***The Fiery Cloud*** On the day when the Dwelling w:
erected, the cloud covered the Dwelling, the Tent of the Con
mandments; but from evening until morning it took on the ap
16 pearance of fire over the Dwelling. It was always so: durin
the day the Dwelling was covered by the cloud, which at nigl
17 had the appearance of fire. Whenever the cloud rose from th
Tent, the Israelites would break camp; wherever the cloud cam
18 to rest, they would pitch camp. At the bidding of the Lord th
Israelites moved on, and at his bidding they encamped. As lon
as the cloud stayed over the Dwelling, they remained in camp
19 Even when the cloud tarried many days over the Dwelling
20 the Israelites obeyed the Lord and would not move on; ye
sometimes the cloud was over the Dwelling only for a few
days. It was at the bidding of the Lord that they stayed in camp
21 and it was at his bidding that they departed. Sometimes th
cloud remained there only from evening until morning; anc
when it rose in the morning, they would depart. Or if the
cloud lifted during the day, or even at night, they would then
22 set out. Whether the cloud tarried over the Dwelling for two
days or a month or longer, the Israelites remained in camp
23 and did not depart; but when it lifted, they moved on. Thus,
it was always at the bidding of the Lord that they encamped,
and at his bidding that they set out; ever heeding the charge
of the Lord, as he had bidden them through Moses.

10

1.2 ***The Silver Trumpets*** The Lord said to Moses: "Make
two trumpets of beaten silver, which you shall use in assem-
3 bling the community and in breaking camp. When both are
blown, the whole community shall gather round you at the
4 entrance of the Meeting Tent; but when one of them is blown,
only the princes, the chiefs of the troops of Israel, shall gather
5 round you. When you sound the first alarm, those encamped
6 on the east side shall set out; when you sound the second
alarm, those encamped on the south side shall set out; when

10—21: The author teaches obedience by listing a series of sad episodes in which the people disobey their leaders and are punished.

you sound the third alarm, those encamped on the west side shall set out; when you sound the fourth alarm, those encamped on the north side shall set out. Thus shall the alarm
7 be sounded for them to depart. But in calling forth an assembly you are to blow an ordinary blast, without sounding the alarm.
8 "It is the sons of Aaron, the priests, who shall blow the trumpets; and the use of them is prescribed by perpetual statute for
9 you and your descendants. When in your own land you go to war against an enemy that is attacking you, you shall sound the alarm on the trumpets, and the Lord, your God, will re-
10 member you and save you from your foes. On your days of celebration, your festivals, and your new-moon feasts, you shall blow the trumpets over your holocausts and your peace offerings; this will serve as a reminder of you before your God. I, the Lord, am your God."

II. FROM SINAI TO THE PLAINS OF MOAB

11 ***Departure from Sinai*** In the second year, on the twentieth day of the second month, the cloud rose from the Dwelling of
12 the Commandments. The Israelites moved on from the desert of Sinai by stages, until the cloud came to rest in the desert of Pharan.
13 The first time that they broke camp at the bidding of the
14 Lord through Moses, | the camp of the Judaites, under its own standard and arranged in companies, was the first to set
15 out. Nahasson, son of Amminadab, was over their host, | and Nathanael, son of Suar, over the host of the tribe of Issachar,
16 | and Eliab, son of Helon, over the host of the tribe of Zabulon.
17 Then, after the Dwelling was dismantled, the clans of Gerson
18 and Merari set out, carrying the Dwelling. The camp of the Rubenites, under its own standard and arranged in companies, was the next to set out, with Elisur, son of Sedeur, over their
19 host, | and Salamiel, son of Surisaddai, over the host of the
20 tribe of Simeon, | and Eliasaph, son of Raguel, over the host
21 of the tribe of Gad. The clan of Caath then set out, carrying the sacred objects for the Dwelling, which was to be erected
22 before their arrival. The camp of the Ephraimites next set out, under its own standard and arranged in companies, with
23 Elisama, son of Ammiud, over their host, | and Gamaliel, son
24 of Phadasur, over the host of the tribe of Manasse, | and Abidan, son of Gedeoni, over the host of the tribe of Benjamin.
25 Finally, as rear guard for all the camps, the camp of the Danites set out, under its own standard and arranged in com-

26 panies, with Ahiezer, son of Ammisaddai, over their host, | ar
27 Phagiel, son of Ochran, over the host of the tribe of Aser, | ar
Ahira, son of Enan, over the host of the tribe of Nephtha
28 This was the order of departure for the Israelites, company
company.

29 ***Hobab as Guide*** As they were setting out, | Moses said
his brother-in-law Hobab, son of Raguel the Madianite, "W
are setting out for the place which the Lord has promised
give us. Come with us, and we will be generous toward yo
30 for the Lord has promised prosperity to Israel." But he a
swered, "No, I will not come. I am going instead to my ow
31 country and to my own kindred." Moses said, "Please, do n
leave us; you know where we can camp in the desert, and yc
32 will serve as eyes for us. If you come with us, we will sha
with you the prosperity the Lord will bestow on us."

33 ***Into the Desert*** They moved on from the mountain of th
Lord, a three days' journey, and the Ark of the Covenant c
the Lord which was to seek out their resting place went th
34 three days' journey with them. And when they set out fro
camp, the cloud of the Lord was over them by day.
35 Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, "Arise, O Lorc
that your enemies may be scattered, and those who hate yo
36 may flee before you." And when it came to rest, he would say
"Return, O Lord, you who ride upon the clouds, to the troop
of Israel."

11

1 ***Discontent of the People*** Now the people complained in
the hearing of the Lord; and when he heard it his wrath flarec
up so that the fire of the Lord burned among them and con
2 sumed the outskirts of the camp. But when the people cried
3 out to Moses, he prayed to the Lord and the fire died out. Hence
that place was called Thabera, because there the fire of the Lord
burned among them.
4 The foreign elements among them were so greedy for meat
that even the Israelites lamented again, "Would that we had
5 meat for food! We remember the fish we used to eat without

11, 1-3: The deep faith of the sacred authors often interprets events as divine, though they are natural, e.g., a probable lightning storm which caused a fire. Because of the fire the author called the place "Thabera," a Hebrew word having some connection with the meaning "to burn." This is an example of a popular etymology.

11, 5-9: See Ex 16, 4-36 n.

cost in Egypt, and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the
16 onions, and the garlic. But now we are famished; we see noth-
ing before us but this manna."
17 Manna was like coriander seed and had the appearance of
18 bdellium. When they had gone about and gathered it up, the
people would grind it between millstones or pound it in a
mortar, then cook it in a pot and make it into loaves, which
19 tasted like cakes made with oil. At night, when the dew fell
upon the camp, the manna also fell.
10 When Moses heard the people, family after family, crying
at the entrance of their tents, so that the Lord became very
1 angry, he was grieved. "Why do you treat your servant so
badly?" Moses asked the Lord. "Why are you so displeased
2 with me that you burden me with all this people? Was it I
who conceived all this people? or was it I who gave them
birth, that you tell me to carry them at my bosom, like a foster
father carrying an infant, to the land you have promised under
3 oath to their fathers? Where can I get meat to give to all this
people? For they are crying to me, 'Give us meat for our food.'
4 I cannot carry all this people by myself, for they are too heavy
5 for me. If this is the way you will deal with me, then please
do me the favor of killing me at once, so that I need no longer
face this distress."

16 ***The Seventy Elders*** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Assem-
ble for me seventy of the elders of Israel, men you know for
true elders and authorities among the people, and bring them
17 to the Meeting Tent. When they are in place beside you, I will
come down and speak with you there. I will also take some of
the spirit that is on you and will bestow it on them, that they
may share the burden of the people with you. You will then
not have to bear it by yourself.
18 "To the people, however, you shall say: Sanctify yourselves
for tomorrow, when you shall have meat to eat. For in the hear-
ing of the Lord you have cried, 'Would that we had meat for
food! Oh, how well off we were in Egypt!' Therefore the Lord
19 will give you meat for food, | and you will eat it, not for one
20 day, or two days, or five, or ten, or twenty days, | but for a
whole month—until it comes out of your very nostrils and be-
comes loathsome to you. For you have spurned the Lord who is
in your midst, and in his presence you have wailed, 'Why did
we ever leave Egypt?' "
21 But Moses said, "The people around me include six hun-
dred thousand soldiers; yet you say, 'I will give them meat to

22 eat for a whole month.' Can enough sheep and cattle be slau
tered for them? If all the fish of the sea were caught for th
23 would they have enough?" The Lord answered Moses,
this beyond the Lord's reach? You shall see now whether
not what I have promised you takes place."

24 ***The Spirit on the Elders*** So Moses went out and told
people what the Lord had said. Gathering seventy elders of
25 people, he had them stand around the tent. The Lord t
came down in the cloud and spoke to him. Taking some of
spirit that was on Moses, he bestowed it on the seventy elde
and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied.
26 Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, w
not in the gathering but had been left in the camp. They
had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent; yet
spirit came to rest on them also, and they prophesied in
27 camp. So, when a young man quickly told Moses, "Eldad a
28 Medad are prophesying in the camp," | Josue, son of Nu
who from his youth had been Moses' aide, said, "Moses,
29 lord, stop them." But Moses answered him, "Are you jealo
for my sake? Would that all the people of the Lord we
prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on the
30 all!" Then Moses retired to the camp, along with the elders
Israel.

31 ***The Quail*** There arose a wind sent by the Lord, that dro
in quail from the sea and brought them down over the can
site at a height of two cubits from the ground for the distan
32 of a day's journey all around the camp. All that day, all nigh
and all the next day the people gathered in the quail. Even t
one who got the least gathered ten homors of them. Then the
33 spread them out all around the camp. But while the meat wa
still between their teeth, before it could be consumed, the Lord
wrath flared up against the people, and he struck them with
34 very great plague. So that place was named Cibroth-Hatthaav
because it was there that the greedy people were buried.
35 From Cibroth-Hatthaava the people set out for Haseroth

11, 31-35: This seems to be the same event as in Ex 16, 13. Annually during March to April, quails migrated from Arabia and from other southern countries to Europe. During September to October they returned from Europe to the south. They are easily captured. The sacred writers interpret the appearance of the quails as a proof of God's protection. The intensity and timeliness of this occurrence and other similar events may be miraculous.

12

Jealousy of Aaron and Mariam While they were in Haseroth, | Mariam and Aaron spoke against Moses on the pretext of the marriage he had contracted with a Chusite woman. They complained, "Is it through Moses alone that the Lord speaks? Does he not speak through us also?" And the Lord heard this. Now, Moses himself was by far the meekest man on the face of the earth. So at once the Lord said to Moses and Aaron and Mariam, "Come out, you three, to the Meeting Tent." And the three of them went. Then the Lord came down in the column of cloud, and standing at the entrance of the tent, called Aaron and Mariam. When both came forward, | he said, "Now listen to the words of the Lord:

Should there be a prophet among you, in visions will I reveal myself to him, in dreams will I speak to him; | not so with my servant Moses! Throughout my house he bears my trust: | face to face I speak to him, plainly and not in riddles. The presence of the Lord he beholds. Why, then, did you not fear to speak against my servant Moses?"

Mariam's Leprosy So angry was the Lord against them that when he departed, and the cloud withdrew from the Tent, there was Mariam, a snow-white leper! When Aaron turned and saw her a leper, "Ah, my lord!" he said to Moses, "please do not charge us with the sin that we have foolishly committed." Let her not thus be like the stillborn babe that comes forth from its mother's womb with its flesh half consumed." Then Moses cried to the Lord, "Please, not this! Pray, heal her!" | But the Lord answered Moses, "Suppose her father had spit in her face, would she not hide in shame for seven days? Let her be confined outside the camp for seven days; only then may she be brought back." So Mariam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not start out again until she was brought back.

After that the people set out from Haseroth and encamped in the desert of Pharan.

13

The Twelve Scouts The Lord said to Moses, "Send men to reconnoiter the land of Chanaan, which I am giving the Israelites. You shall send one man from each ancestral tribe, all of them princes." So Moses dispatched them from the desert of

12, 10: *Snow-white leper:* king Ozias (2 Par 26, 20) was similarly punished for violating the cult.

Pharan, as the Lord had ordered. All of them were lead
4 among the Israelites; by name they were: Sammua, son
5 Zacchur, of the tribe of Ruben; | Saphat, son of Huri, of
6 tribe of Simeon; | Caleb, son of Jephonne, of the tribe of Ju
7.10 | Igal [son of Joseph], of the tribe of Issachar; | Gadd
11 son of Sodi, of the tribe of Zabulon; | Gaddi, son of Susi,
8 the tribe of Manasse, for the Josephites, with | Osee, son
9 Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim; | Phalti, son of Raphu, of
12 tribe of Benjamin; | Ammiel, son of Gemalli, of the tribe
13 Dan; | Sathur, son of Michael, of the tribe of Aser
14.15 Nahabi, son of Vaphsi, of the tribe of Nephthali; | Gu
16 son of Machi, of the tribe of Gad. These are the names of t
men whom Moses sent out to reconnoiter the land. But Os
son of Nun, Moses called Josue.

17 In sending them to reconnoiter the land of Chanaan, Mo
said to them, "Go up here in the Negeb, up into the highlan
18 | and see what kind of land it is. Are the people living the
19 strong or weak, few or many? Is the country in which they li
good or bad? Are the towns in which they dwell open or for
20 fied? Is the soil fertile or barren, wooded or clear? And do yo
best to get some of the fruit of the land." It was then the se
son for early grapes.

21 So they went up and reconnoitered the land from the dese
22 of Sin as far as Rohob, at the entrance to Hamath. Going
by way of the Negeb, they reached Hebron, where Ahima
Sesai and Tholmai, descendants of the Enacim, were livin
[Hebron had been built seven years before Soan in Egypt
23 They also reached the Wadi Eschol, where they cut down
branch with a single cluster of grapes on it, which two of the
24 carried on a pole, as well as some pomegranates and figs.
was because of the cluster the Israelites cut there that the
called the place Wadi Eschol.

25 ***Their Return*** After reconnoitering the land for forty da
26 they returned, met Moses and Aaron and the whole communit
of the Israelites in the desert of Pharan at Cades, made a repo
27 to them all, and showed them the fruit of the country. The
told Moses: "We went into the land to which you sent u
It does indeed flow with milk and honey, and here is its frui
28 However, the people who are living in the land are fierce, an
the towns are fortified and very strong. Besides, we saw de
29 scendants of the Enacim there. Amalecites live in the regio
of the Negeb; Hethites, Jebusites and Amorrites dwell in th
highlands, and Chanaanites along the seacoast and the bank
of the Jordan."

30 Caleb, however, to quiet the people toward Moses, said, "We
ought to go up and seize the land, for we can certainly do so."
31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We cannot
32 attack these people; they are too strong for us." So they spread
discouraging reports among the Israelites about the land they
had scouted, saying, "The land that we explored is a country
that consumes its inhabitants. And all the people we saw there
33 are huge men, | veritable giants [the Enacim were a race of
giants]; we felt like mere grasshoppers, and so we must have
seemed to them."

14

1 ***Threats of Revolt*** At this, the whole community broke out
2 with loud cries, and even in the night the people wailed. All the
Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, the whole com-
munity saying to them, "Would that we had died in the land
3 of Egypt, or that here in the desert we were dead! Why is the
Lord bringing us into this land only to have us fall by the
sword? Our wives and little ones will be taken as booty. Would
4 it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one
another, "Let us appoint a leader and go back to Egypt."
5 But Moses and Aaron fell prostrate before the whole assem-
6 bled community of the Israelites; while Josue, son of Nun, and
Caleb, son of Jephonne, who had been in the party that scouted
7 the land, tore their garments | and said to the whole com-
munity of the Israelites, "The country which we went through
8 and explored is a fine, rich land. If the Lord is pleased with us,
he will bring us in and give us that land, a land flowing with
9 milk and honey. | But do not rebel against the Lord! You need
not be afraid of the people of that land; they are but food for
us! Their defense has left them, but the Lord is with us. There-
fore, do not be afraid of them." In answer, the whole com-
munity threatened to stone them.

10 ***The Lord's Sentence*** But then the glory of the Lord ap-
1 peared at the Meeting Tent to all the Israelites. And the Lord
said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn me? How
long will they refuse to believe in me, despite all the signs I
2 have performed among them? I will strike them with pestilence
and wipe them out. Then I will make of you a nation greater
and mightier than they."
3 But Moses said to the Lord: "Are the Egyptians to hear of
this? For by your power you brought out this people from
4 among them. And are they to tell of it to the inhabitants of
this land? It has been heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst

of this people; you, Lord, who plainly reveal yourself! You
cloud stands over them, and you go before them by day in
14.13 column of cloud and by night in a column of fire. If now you
slay this whole people, the nations who have heard such re-
14.16 ports of you will say, 'The Lord was not able to bring the
people into the land he swore to give them; that is why he
14.17 slaughtered them in the desert.' Now then, let the power of
my Lord be displayed in its greatness, even as you have said
14.18 'The Lord is slow to anger and rich in kindness, forgiving
wickedness and crime; yet not declaring the guilty guiltless;
but punishing children to the third and fourth generation for
14.19 their fathers' wickedness.' Pardon, then, the wickedness of this
people in keeping with your great kindness, even as you have
forgiven them from Egypt until now."

14.20 The Lord answered: "I pardon them as you have asked.
14.21 Yet, by my life and the Lord's glory that fills the whole earth,
14.22 of all the men who have seen my glory and the signs I worked
in Egypt and in the desert, and who nevertheless have put me
to the test ten times already and have failed to heed my voice,
14.23 not one shall see the land which I promised on oath to their
14.24 fathers. None of these who have spurned me shall see it. But
because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows
me unreservedly, I will bring him into the land where he has
14.25 just been, and his descendants shall possess it. But now, since
the Amalecites and Chanaanites are living in the valleys, turn
away tomorrow and set out in the desert on the Red Sea road."

14.26,27 The Lord also said to Moses and Aaron: "How long will
this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the
14.28 grumblings of the Israelites against me. Tell them: By my life,
says the Lord, I will do to you just what I have heard you say.
14.29 Here in the desert shall your dead bodies fall. Of all your men
of twenty years or more, registered in the census, who grumbled
14.30 against me, | not one shall enter the land where I solemnly
swore to settle you, except Caleb, son of Jephonne, and Josue,
14.31 son of Nun. Your little ones, however, who you said would be
taken as booty, I will bring in, and they shall appreciate the
14.32 land you spurned. But as for you, your bodies shall fall here in
14.33 the desert, here where your children must wander for forty
years, suffering for your faithlessness, till the last of you lies
14.34 dead in the desert. Forty days you spent in scouting the land;
forty years shall you suffer for your crimes: one year for each
14.35 day. Thus you will realize what it means to oppose me. I, the
Lord, have sworn to do this to all this wicked community that
conspired against me: here in the desert they shall die to the
last man."

36 And so it happened to the men whom Moses had sent to
reconnoiter the land and who on returning had set the whole
community grumbling against him by spreading discouraging
37 reports about the land; these men who had given out the bad
report about the land were struck down by the Lord and died.
38 Of all the men who had gone to reconnoiter the land, only
Josue, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephonne, survived.

39 ***Unsuccessful Invasion*** When Moses repeated these words
40 to all the Israelites, the people felt great remorse. Early the
next morning they started up into the foothills, saying, "Here
we are, ready to go up to the place that the Lord spoke of:
41 for we were indeed doing wrong." But Moses said, "Why are
you again disobeying the Lord's orders? This cannot succeed.
42 Do not go up, because the Lord is not in your midst; if you go,
43 you will be beaten down before your enemies. For there the
Amalecites and Chanaanites face you, and you will fall by the
sword. You have turned back from following the Lord; there-
fore the Lord will not be with you."
44 Yet they dared to go up into the foothills, even though
neither the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord nor Moses left
45 the camp. And the Amalecites and Chanaanites who dwelt in
that hill country came down and defeated them, beating them
back as far as Horma.

15

1.2 ***Secondary Offerings*** The Lord said to Moses, "Give the
Israelites these instructions: When you have entered the land
3 that I will give you for your homesteads, if you make to the
Lord a sweet-smelling oblation from the herd or from the flock,
in holocaust, in fulfillment of a vow, or as a freewill offering,
4 or for one of your festivals, | whoever does so shall also pre-
sent to the Lord a cereal offering consisting of a tenth of an
5 epha of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil, as well
as a libation of a fourth of a hin of wine, with each lamb sac-
6 rificed in holocaust or otherwise. With each sacrifice of a ram
you shall present a cereal offering of two tenths of an epha
7 of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil, and a libation of
a third of a hin of wine, thus making a sweet-smelling offering
8 to the Lord. When you sacrifice an ox as a holocaust, or in
9 fulfillment of a vow, or as a peace offering to the Lord, | with
it you shall present a cereal offering of three tenths of an epha
10 of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil, and a libation of half
11 a hin of wine, as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord. The

12 same is to be done for each ox, ram, lamb or goat. Whatev
the number you offer, do the same for each of them.
13 "All the native-born shall make these offerings in the sam
way, whenever they present a sweet-smelling oblation to th
14 Lord. Likewise, in any future generation, any alien residin
with you permanently or for a time, who presents a swee
15 smelling oblation to the Lord, shall do as you do. There is bu
one rule for you and for the resident alien, a perpetual rule fo
all your descendants. Before the Lord you and the alien ar
16 alike, with the same law and the same application of it for th
alien residing among you as for yourselves."
17.18 The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and tel
them: When you enter the land into which I will bring you
19 and begin to eat of the food of that land, you shall offer th
20 Lord a contribution | consisting of a cake of your first batch o
dough. You shall offer it just as you offer a contribution from
21 the threshing floor. Throughout your generations you shall giv
a contribution to the Lord from your first batch of dough.

22 ***Sin Offerings*** "When through inadvertence you fail to carr
out any of these commandments which the Lord gives to Moses
23 and through Moses to you, from the time the Lord first issue
24 the commandment down through your generations: if th
community itself unwittingly becomes guilty of the fault of in
advertence, the whole community shall offer the holocaust o
one young bull as a sweet-smelling oblation pleasing to th
Lord, along with its prescribed cereal offering and libation, a
25 well as one he-goat as a sin offering. Then the priest shall make
atonement for the whole Israelite community; thus they will
be forgiven the inadvertence for which they have brought their
26 holocaust as an oblation to the Lord. Not only the whole Is-
raelite community, but also the aliens residing among you
shall be forgiven, since the fault of inadvertence affects all the
people.
27 "However, if it is an individual who sins inadvertently, he
28 shall bring a yearling she-goat as a sin offering, and the priest
shall make atonement before the Lord for him who sinned in-
advertently; when atonement has been made for him, he will
29 be forgiven. You shall have but one law for him who sins
inadvertently, whether he be a native Israelite or an alien resid-
ing with you.
30 "But anyone who sins defiantly, whether he be a native or an
alien, insults the Lord, and shall be cut off from among his
31 people. Since he has despised the word of the Lord and has

broken his commandment, he must be cut off. He has only himself to blame."

32 ***The Sabbath-breaker*** While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was discovered gathering wood on the Sabbath day.
33 Those who caught him at it brought him to Moses and Aaron
34 and the whole assembly. But they kept him in custody, for there was no clear decision as to what should be done with him.
35 Then the Lord said to Moses, "This man shall be put to death;
36 let the whole community stone him outside the camp." So the whole community led him outside the camp and stoned him to death as the Lord had commanded Moses.

37-38 ***Tassels on the Cloak*** The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them that they and their descendants must put tassels on the corners of their garments, fastening
39 each corner tassel with a violet cord. When you use these tassels, let the sight of them remind you to keep all the commandments of the Lord, without going wantonly astray after the
40 desires of your hearts and eyes. Thus you will remember to
41 keep all my commandments and be holy to your God. I, the Lord, am your God who, as God, brought you out of Egypt that I, the Lord, may be your God."

16

1 ***Rebellion of Core*** Core, son of Isaar, son of Caath, son of Levi, [and Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, son of Phallu,
2 son of Ruben] took | two hundred and fifty Israelites who were leaders in the community, members of the council and men of
3 note. They stood before Moses, | and held an assembly against Moses and Aaron, to whom they said, "Enough from you! The whole community, all of them, are holy; the Lord is in their midst. Why then should you set yourselves over the Lord's congregation?"
4-5 When Moses heard this, he fell prostrate. Then he said to Core and to all his band, "May the Lord make known tomorrow morning who belongs to him and who is the holy one and whom he will have draw near to him! Whom he chooses, he
6 will have draw near /him. Do this: take your censers [Core
7 and all his band] | and put fire in them and place incense in

15, 37-41: Jesus observed this practice (Mt 9, 20), but he warned against affectation (Mt 23, 5). See Dt 22, 12.

16, 1—17, 15: Two rebellions, as told by three traditions, are fused in this section.

them before the Lord tomorrow. He whom the Lord ther
chooses is the holy one. Enough from you Levites!"
8.9 Moses also said to Core, "Listen to me, you Levites! | Is it
too little for you that the God of Israel has singled you out
from the community of Israel, to have you draw near him for
the service of the Lord's Dwelling and to stand before the com-
10 munity to minister for them? He has allowed you and your
kinsmen, the descendants of Levi, to approach him, and yet you
11 now seek the priesthood too. It is therefore against the Lord
that you and all your band are conspiring. For what has Aaron
done that you should grumble against him?"

12 ***Rebellion of Dathan and Abiram*** Moses summoned Da-
than and Abiram, sons of Eliab, but they answered, "We will
13 not go. Are you not satisfied with having led us here away
from a land flowing with milk and honey, to make us perish in
14 the desert, that you must now lord it over us? Far from bring-
ing us to a land flowing with milk and honey, or giving us fields
and vineyards for our inheritance, will you also gouge out our
eyes? No, we will not go."
15 Then Moses became very angry and said to the Lord, "Pay
no heed to their offering. I have never taken a single ass from
them, nor have I wronged any one of them."

16 ***Core*** Moses said to Core, "You and all your band shall ap-
pear before the Lord tomorrow—you and they and Aaron too.
17 Then each of your two hundred and fifty followers shall take
his own censer, put incense in it, and offer it to the Lord; and
you and Aaron, each with his own censer, shall do the same."
18 So they all took their censers, and laying incense on the fire they
had put in them, they took their stand by the entrance of the
19 Meeting Tent along with Moses and Aaron. Then, when Core
had assembled all his band against them at the entrance of the
Meeting Tent, the glory of the Lord appeared to the entire com-
20.21 munity, and the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, | "Stand
22 apart from this band, that I may consume them at once." But
they fell prostrate and cried out, "O God, God of the spirits of
all mankind, will one man's sin make you angry with the whole
23.24 community?" The Lord answered Moses, "Speak to the com-
munity and tell them: Withdraw from the space around the
Dwelling" [of Core, Dathan and Abiram].

25 ***Punishment of Dathan and Abiram*** Moses, followed by
the elders of Israel, arose and went to Dathan and Abiram.
26 Then he warned the community, "Keep away from the tents

of these wicked men and do not touch anything that is theirs:
otherwise you too will be swept away because of all their sins."
27 When Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing
at the entrances of their tents with their wives and sons and
28 little ones, Moses said, "This is how you shall know that it was
the Lord who sent me to do all I have done, and that it was
29 not I who planned it: If these men die an ordinary death,
merely suffering the fate common to all mankind, then it was
30 not the Lord who sent me. But if the Lord does something
entirely new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows
them alive down into the nether world, with all belonging to
them, then you will know that these men have defied the Lord."
31 No sooner had he finished saying all this than the ground be-
32 neath them split open, and the earth opened its mouth and
swallowed them and their families [and all of Core's men]
33 and all their possessions. They went down alive to the nether
world with all belonging to them; the earth closed over them,
34 and they perished from the community. But all the Israelites
near them fled at their shrieks, saying, "The earth might swal-
low us too!"

35 ***Punishment of Core*** So they withdrew from the space around the Dwelling [of Core, Dathan and Abiram]. And fire from the Lord came forth which consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.

17

1.2 The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Eleazar, son of Aaron the
priest, to remove the censers from the embers; and scatter the
3 fire some distance away, for these sinners have consecrated the
censers at the cost of their lives. Have them hammered into
plates to cover the altar, because in being presented before the
Lord they have become sacred. In this way they shall serve as
4 a sign to the Israelites." So Eleazar the priest had the bronze
censers of those burned during the offering hammered into a
5 covering for the altar, | in keeping with the orders which the
Lord had given him through Moses. This cover was to be a

16, 32: *The earth opened its mouth:* perhaps an earthquake is interpreted as God's vengeance. *And their families:* God did not really punish entire families because of the sins of individual members, but the ancient Semites thought so.

16, 33: *They went down alive to the nether world:* it is not clear from the Hebrew just what these words mean.

16, 35: Continues from v. 24. Perhaps a miraculous fire destroyed them.

reminder to the Israelites that no layman, no one who was not a descendant of Aaron, should approach the altar to offer incense before the Lord, lest he meet the fate of Core and his band.

6 The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "It is you who have slain
7 the Lord's people." But while the community was deliberating against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the Meeting Tent, and the cloud now covered it and the glory of the Lord
8 appeared. Then Moses and Aaron came to the front of the
9.10 Meeting Tent, and the Lord said to them, "Depart from this community, that I may consume them at once." But they fell prostrate.

11 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer, put fire from the altar in it, lay incense on it, and bring it quickly to the community to make atonement for them; for wrath has come
12 forth from the Lord and the blow is falling." Obeying the orders of Moses, Aaron took his censer and ran in among the community, where the blow was already falling on the people. Then, as he offered the incense and made atonement for the
13 people, standing there between the living and the dead, the
14 scourge was checked. Yet fourteen thousand seven hundred died from the scourge, in addition to those who died because
15 of Core. When the scourge had been checked, Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

16.17 ***Aaron's Staff*** The Lord now said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and get one staff from them for each ancestral house, twelve staffs in all, one from each of their tribal princes. Mark
18 each man's name on his staff; and mark Aaron's name on Levi's staff, for the head of Levi's ancestral house shall also have a
19 staff. Then lay them down in the Meeting Tent, in front of
20 the Commandments, where I meet you. There the staff of the man of my choice shall sprout. Thus will I suppress from my my presence the Israelites' grumbling against you."

21 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and their princes gave him staffs, twelve in all, one from each tribal prince; and Aaron's
22 staff was with them. Then Moses laid the staffs down before
23 the Lord in the Tent of the Commandments. The next day, when Moses entered the Tent, Aaron's staff, representing the

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17, 16-26: Jewish and Christian legends of blossoming rods or spears, e.g., the legend of St. Joseph's rod, had developed from this account of Aaron's rod. These legends do not necessarily prove that this passage also narrates a complete legend.

house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth not only shoots, but
24 blossoms as well, and even bore ripe almonds! Moses there-
upon brought out all the staffs from the Lord's presence to the
Israelites. After each prince identified his own staff and took it,
25 the Lord said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the
Commandments, to be kept there as a warning to the rebellious,
so that their grumbling may cease before me; if it does not, they
26 will die." And Moses did as the Lord had commanded him.

41 ***Charge of the Sacred Things*** Then the Israelites cried
out to Moses, "We are perishing; we are lost, we are all lost!
28 Every time anyone approaches the Dwelling of the Lord, he
dies! Are we to perish to the last man?"

18

1 The Lord said to Aaron, "You and your sons as well as the
other members of your ancestral house shall be responsible
for the sanctuary; but the responsibility of the priesthood shall
2 rest on you and your sons alone. Bring with you also your
other kinsmen of the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, as
your associates and assistants, while you and your sons are in
3 front of the Tent of the Commandments. They shall look
after your persons and the whole Tent; however, they shall
not come near the sacred vessels or the altar, lest both they and
4 you die. As your associates they shall have charge of all the
work connected with the Meeting Tent. But no layman shall
5 come near you. | You shall have charge of the sanctuary and of
the altar, that wrath may not fall again upon the Israelites.
6 "Remember, it is I who have taken your kinsmen, the Levites,
from the body of the Israelites; they are a gift to you, dedi-
7 cated to the Lord for the service of the Meeting Tent. But only
you and your sons are to have charge of performing the priestly
functions in whatever concerns the altar and the room within
the veil. I give you the priesthood as a gift. Any layman who
draws near shall be put to death."

8 ***The Priests' Share of the Sacrifices*** The Lord said to
Aaron, "I myself have given you charge of the contributions
made to me in the various sacred offerings of the Israelites; by

18, 4: *Layman:* here, "one who is not a Levite," in v. 7, "one who is not a priest."

18, 8ff: Two classes of offerings are here distinguished: the *most sacred* offering, which only the male members of the priestly families could eat (vv. 8ff), and the other offerings, which even the women of the priestly families could eat (vv. 11-19).

perpetual ordinance I have assigned them to you and to your
9 sons as your priestly share. You shall have the right to share
in the oblations that are most sacred, in whatever they offer
me as cereal offerings or sin offerings or guilt offerings; these
10 shares shall accrue to you and to your sons. In eating them you
shall treat them as most sacred; every male among you may
partake of them. As sacred, they belong to you.
11 "You shall also have what is removed from the gift in every
wave offering of the Israelites; by perpetual ordinance I have
assigned it to you and to your sons and daughters. All in your
12 family who are clean may partake of it. | I have also assigned
to you all the best of the new oil and of the new wine and grain
13 that they give to the Lord as their first fruits; and likewise, of
whatever grows on their land, the first products that they bring
in to the Lord shall be yours; all of your family who are clean
14 may partake of them. Whatever is doomed in Israel shall be
15 yours. Every living thing that opens the womb, whether of man
or of beast, such as are to be offered to the Lord, shall be yours;
but you must let the first-born of man, as well as of unclean
16 animals, be redeemed. The ransom for a boy is to be paid
when he is a month old; it is fixed at five silver shekels accord-
ing to the sanctuary standard, twenty geras to the shekel.
17 But the first-born of cattle, sheep or goats shall not be re-
deemed; they are sacred. Their blood you must splash on the
altar and their fat you must burn as a sweet-smelling oblation
18 to the Lord. Their meat, however, shall be yours, just as the
breast and the right leg of the wave offering belong to you.
19 By perpetual ordinance I have assigned to you and to your
sons and daughters all the contributions from the sacred gifts
which the Israelites make to the Lord; this is an inviolable
covenant to last forever before the Lord, for you and for your
20 descendants." Then the Lord said to Aaron, "You shall not
have any heritage in the land of the Israelites nor hold any
portion among them; I will be your portion and your heritage
among them.

21 ***Tithes Due the Levites*** "To the Levites, however, I here-
by assign all tithes in Israel as their heritage in recompense for
22 the service they perform in the Meeting Tent. The Israelites
may no longer approach the Meeting Tent; else they will incur
23 guilt deserving death. Only the Levites are to perform the serv-
ice of the Meeting Tent, and they alone shall be held responsi-
ble; this is a perpetual ordinance for all your generations. The
Levites, therefore, shall not have any heritage among the Is-
24 raelites, for I have assigned to them as their heritage the tithes

which the Israelites give as a contribution to the Lord. That is why I have ordered that they are not to have any heritage among the Israelites."

18.25.26 ***Tithes Paid by the Levites*** The Lord said to Moses, "Give the Levites these instructions: When you receive from the Israelites the tithes I have assigned you from them as your heritage, you are to make a contribution from them to the Lord, a
27 tithe of the tithes; and your contribution will be credited to you as if it were grain from the threshing floor or new wine from the
28 press. Thus you too shall make a contribution from all the tithes you receive from the Israelites, handing over to Aaron
29 the priest the part to be contributed to the Lord. From all the gifts that you receive, and from the best parts, you are to consecrate to the Lord your own full contribution.
30 "Tell them also: Once you have made your contribution from the best part, the rest of the tithes will be credited to you Levites as if it were produce of the threshing floor or of
31 the wine press. Your families, as well as you, may eat them anywhere, since they are your recompense for service at the
32 Meeting Tent. You will incur no guilt so long as you make a contribution of the best part. Do not profane the sacred gifts of the Israelites and so bring death on yourselves."

19

1 ***Ashes of the Red Heifer*** The Lord said to Moses and
2 Aaron: "This is the regulation which the law of the Lord prescribes. Tell the Israelites to procure for you a red heifer that is free from every blemish and defect and on which no yoke has
3 ever been laid. This is to be given to Eleazar the priest, to be
4 led outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle
5 it seven times toward the front of the Meeting Tent. Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight, with its hide and flesh,
6 its blood and offal; and the priest shall take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet yarn and throw them into the fire in which
7 the heifer is being burned. The priest shall then wash his garments and bathe his body in water. He remains unclean until the evening, and only afterward may he return to the camp.
8 Likewise, he who burned the heifer shall wash his garments,
9 bathe his body in water, and be unclean until evening. Finally, a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them in a clean place outside the camp. There they are to be kept for preparing lustral water for the Israelite com-
10 munity. The heifer is a sin offering. He who has gathered up

the ashes of the heifer shall also wash his garments and be unclean until evening. This is a perpetual ordinance, both for the Israelites and for the aliens residing among them.

11 *Use of the Ashes* "Whoever touches the dead body of any
12 human being shall be unclean for seven days; he shall purify himself with the water on the third and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean again. But if he fails to purify himself on the third and on the seventh day, he will not become clean.
13 Everyone who fails to purify himself after touching the body of any deceased person, defiles the Dwelling of the Lord and shall be cut off from Israel. Since the lustral water has not been splashed over him, he remains unclean: his uncleanness still clings to him.
14 "This is the law: When a man dies in a tent, everyone who enters the tent, as well as everyone already in it, shall be un-
15 clean for seven days; likewise, every vessel that is open, or
16 with its lid unfastened, shall be unclean. Moreover, everyone who in the open country touches a dead person, whether he was slain by the sword or died naturally, or who touches a hu-
17 man bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days. For anyone who is thus unclean, ashes from the sin offering shall be put in a vessel, and spring water shall be poured on them.
18 Then a man who is clean shall take some hyssop, dip it in this water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the vessels and persons that were in it, or on him who touched a bone, a slain
19 person or other dead body, or a grave. The clean man shall sprinkle the unclean on the third and on the seventh day; thus purified on the seventh day, he shall wash his garments and bathe his body in water, and in the evening he will be clean
20 again. Any unclean man who fails to have himself purified shall be cut off from the community, because he defiles the sanctuary of the Lord. As long as the lustral water has not been
21 splashed over him, he remains unclean. This shall be a perpetual ordinance for you.

"One who sprinkles the lustral water shall wash his garments, and anyone who comes in contact with this water shall
22 be unclean until evening. Moreover, whatever the unclean person touches becomes unclean itself, and anyone who touches it becomes unclean until evening."

20

1 *Death of Mariam* The whole Israelite community arrived in

20, 1-13: See Ex 17, 1-7. In the description of this miracle there

the desert of Sin in the first month, and the people settled at Cades. It was here that Mariam died, and here that she was buried.

2 ***Water Famine at Cades*** As the community had no water,
3 they held a council against Moses and Aaron. The people contended with Moses, exclaiming, "Would that we too had
4 perished with our kinsmen in the Lord's presence! Why have you brought the Lord's community into this desert where
5 we and our livestock are dying? Why did you lead us out of Egypt, only to bring us to this wretched place which has neither grain nor figs nor vines nor pomegranates? Here there is
6 not even water to drink!" But Moses and Aaron went away from the assembly to the entrance of the Meeting Tent, where they fell prostrate.

7 ***Sin of Moses and Aaron*** Then the glory of the Lord ap-
8 peared to them, and the Lord said to Moses, | "Take the staff and assemble the community, you and your brother Aaron, and in their presence order the rock to yield its waters. From the rock you shall bring forth water for the community and
9 their livestock to drink." So Moses took the staff from its place
10 before the Lord, as he was ordered. He and Aaron assembled the community in front of the rock, where he said to them, "Listen to me, you rebels! Are we to bring water for you out
11 of this rock?" Then, raising his hand, Moses struck the rock twice with his staff, and water gushed out in abundance for
12 the community and their livestock to drink. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you were not faithful to me in showing forth my sanctity before the Israelites, you shall not lead this community into the land I will give them."
13 These are the waters of Meriba, where the Israelites contended against the Lord, and where he revealed his sanctity among them.

14 ***Edom's Refusal*** From Cades Moses sent men to the king of Edom with the message: "Your brother Israel has this to say:
15 You know of all the hardships that have befallen us, how our fathers went down to Egypt, where we stayed a long time, how

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are several conjectures to show what Moses and Aaron did wrong (v. 12). One conjecture is: instead of making this a peaceful occasion to illustrate God's power, they remonstrated with the people. Another conjecture is: Moses doubted God's power or mercy. In 1 Cor 10, 4, Paul alludes to a Jewish legend about the rock of this episode.

16 the Egyptians maltreated us and our fathers, | and how,
when we cried to the Lord, he heard our cry and sent an angel
who led us out of Egypt. Now here we are at the town of Cades
17 at the edge of your territory. | Kindly let us pass through your
country. We will not cross any fields or vineyards, nor drink
any well water, but we will go straight along the royal road
without turning to the right or to the left, until we have passed
through your territory."
18 But Edom answered him, "You shall not pass through here;
19 if you do, I will advance against you with the sword." The Is-
raelites insisted, "We want only to go up along the highway.
If we or our livestock drink any of your water, we will pay
for it. Surely there is no harm in merely letting us march
20 through." But Edom still said, "No, you shall not pass
through," and advanced against them with a large and heavily
21 armed force. Therefore, since Edom refused to let them pass
through their territory, Israel detoured around them.

22 ***Death of Aaron*** Setting out from Cades, the whole Israelite
23 community came to Mount Hor. There at Mount Hor, on the
border of the land of Edom, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron,
24 "Aaron is about to be taken to his people; he shall not enter
the land I am giving to the Israelites, because you both rebelled
25 against my commandment at the waters of Meriba. Take Aaron
26 and his son Eleazar and bring them up on Mount Hor. Then
strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar;
for there Aaron shall be taken in death."
27 Moses did as the Lord commanded. When they had climbed
Mount Hor in view of the whole community, Moses stripped
28 Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. Then
Aaron died there on top of the mountain. When Moses and
29 Eleazar came down from the mountain, all the community un-
derstood that Aaron had passed away; and for thirty days the
whole house of Israel mourned him.

21

1 ***Victory over Arad*** When the Chanaanite king of Arad,
who lived in the Negeb, heard that the Israelites were coming
along the way of Atharim, he engaged them in battle and took
2 some of them captive. Israel then made this vow to the Lord:
"If you deliver this people into my hand, I will doom their cit-
3 ies." Later, when the Lord heeded Israel's prayer and deliv-
ered up the Chanaanites, they doomed them and their cities.
Hence that place was named Horma.

4 ***The Bronze Serpent*** From Mount Hor they set out on the
Red Sea road, to by-pass the land of Edom. But with their pa-
5 tience worn out by the journey, the people complained against
God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt
to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are
disgusted with this wretched food!"
6 In punishment the Lord sent among the people saraph ser-
7 pents, which bit the people so that many of them died. Then
the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in com-
plaining against the Lord and you. Pray the Lord to take the
8 serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people, | and
the Lord said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a
pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will re-
9 cover." Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted
it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a
serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he recovered.

10 ***Journey around Moab*** The Israelites moved on and en-
11 camped in Oboth. Setting out from Oboth, they encamped in
12 Ijeabarim in the desert fronting Moab on the east. Setting out
13 from there, they encamped in the Wadi Zared. Setting out
from there, they encamped on the other side of the Arnon, in
the desert that extends from the territory of the Amorrites; for
14 the Arnon forms Moab's boundary with the Amorrites. Hence
it is said in the "Book of the Wars of the Lord": "Vaheb in
15 Supha and the wadies, Arnon and the wadi gorges that reach
back toward the site of Ar and slant to the border of Moab."
16 From there they went to Beer, where there was the well of
which the Lord said to Moses, "Bring the people together, and
17 I will give them water." Then it was that Israel sang this song:
18 "Spring up, O well!—so sing to it— | the well that the
princes sank, that the nobles of the people dug, with their scep-
ters and their staffs."
19 From Beer they went to Matthana, | from Matthana to Na-
20 haliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, | from Bamoth to the cleft
in the plateau of Moab at the headland of Phasga that over-
looks Jesimon.

21, 4-5: Complaining is perhaps the most accurate description of the people's conduct during the journey.

21, 6-9: The sacred writers interpret the snakebites of the numerous serpents found in southern Palestine as a divine punishment. Regardless of what the people considered the reason for their cure, the writer wants his readers in his day to attribute the cure to God. Wis 16, 5ff; Jn 3, 14f interprets this bronze serpent spiritually (v. 9).

21 ***Victory over Sehon*** Now Israel sent men to Sehon, king o
22 the Amorrites, with the message, "Let us pass through your country. We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, nor will we drink any well water, but we will go straight along the
23 royal road until we have passed through your territory." Sehon, however, would not let Israel pass through his territory, but mustered all his forces and advanced into the desert against Israel. When he reached Jahas, he engaged Israel in battle.
24 But Israel defeated him at the point of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jaboc and as far as the country of the Ammonites, whose boundary was at Ja-
25 zer. Israel seized all the towns here and settled in these towns
26 of the Amorrites, in Hesebon and all its dependencies. Now, Hesebon was the capital of Sehon, king of the Amorrites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had seized
27 all his land from Jazer to the Arnon. That is why the poets say: "Come to Hesebon, let it be rebuilt, let Sehon's capital be
28 firmly constructed. For fire went forth from Hesebon and a blaze from the city of Sehon; it consumed the cities of Moab
29 and swallowed up the high places of the Arnon. | Woe to you, O Moab! You are ruined, O people of Chamos! He let his sons become fugitives and his daughters be taken captive by the
30 Amorrite king Sehon. | Their plowland is ruined from Hesebon to Dibon; Ar is laid waste; fires blaze as far as Medaba."
31 When Israel had settled in the land of the Amorrites, |
32 Moses sent spies to Jazer; Israel then captured it with its dependencies and dispossessed the Amorrites who were there.

33 ***Victory over Og*** Then they turned and went up along the road to Basan. But Og, king of Basan, advanced against them
34 with all his people to give battle at Edrai. The Lord, however, said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him; for into your hand I will deliver him with all his people and his land. Do to him as you did to Sehon, king of the Amorrites, who lived in Hese-
35 bon." So they struck him down with his sons and all his people, until not a survivor was left to him, and they took possession of his land.

22

1 Then the Israelites moved on and encamped in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jericho stretch of the Jordan.

III. ON THE PLAINS OF MOAB

2 ***Balaam Summoned*** Now Balac, son of Sepphor, saw all

3 that Israel did to the Amorrites. Indeed, Moab feared the Is-
raelites greatly because of their numbers, and detested them.
4 So Moab said to the elders of Madian, "Soon this horde will
devour all the country around us as an ox devours the grass
of the field." And Balac, Sepphor's son, who was king of Moab
5 at that time, sent messengers to Balaam, son of Beor, at Pha-
thur on the Euphrates, in the land of the Amauites, summoning
him with these words, "A people has come here from Egypt
who now cover the face of the earth and are settling down op-
6 posite us! Please come and curse this people for us; they are
stronger than we are. We may then be able to defeat them and
drive them out of the country. For I know that whoever you
7 bless is blessed and whoever you curse is cursed." Then the
elders of Moab and of Madian left with the divination fee in
hand and went to Balaam. When they had given him Balac's
8 message, | he said to them in reply, "Stay here overnight, and
I will give you whatever answer the Lord gives me." So the
princes of Moab lodged with Balaam.
9 Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men
10 visiting you?" | Balaam answered God, "Balac, son of Sep-
11 phor, king of Moab, sent me the message: 'This people that
came here from Egypt now cover the face of the earth. Please
come and lay a curse on them for us; we may then be able to
12 give them battle and drive them out.'" But God said to Ba-
laam, "Do not go with them and do not curse this people, for
13 they are blessed." The next morning Balaam arose and told the
princes of Balac, "Go back to your own country, for the Lord
14 has refused to let me go with you." So the princes of Moab
went back to Balac with the report, "Balaam refused to come
with us."

15 ***Second Appeal to Balaam*** Balac again sent princes, who
were more numerous and more distinguished than the others.
16 On coming to Balaam they told him, "This is what Balac, son
of Sepphor, has to say: Please do not refuse to come to me.
17 I will reward you very handsomely and will do anything you
ask of me. Please come and lay a curse on this people for me."
18 But Balaam replied to Balac's officials, "Even if Balac gave
me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything,
small or great, contrary to the command of the Lord, my God.

22, 5: *In the land of the Amauites:* northern Syria, close to the Euphrates River.

22, 8: *The Lord:* the sacred writer knows that Balaam did not believe in Yahweh, but this is a device to say that even a pagan's decisions are ruled by God.

19 But, you too shall stay here overnight, till I learn what else the
Lord may tell me."
20 That night God came to Balaam and said to him, "If these
men have come to summon you, you may go with them; yet
21 only on the condition that you do exactly as I tell you." So the
next morning when Balaam arose, he saddled his ass, and went
off with the princes of Moab.

22 ***The Talking Ass*** But now the anger of God flared up at
him for going, and the angel of the Lord stationed himself on
the road to hinder him as he was riding along on his ass, accom-
23 panied by two of his servants. When the ass saw the angel of
the Lord standing on the road with sword drawn, she turned
off the road and went into the field, and Balaam had to beat
24 her to bring her back on the road. Then the angel of the Lord
took his stand in a narrow lane between vineyards with a
25 stone wall on each side. When the ass saw the angel of the
Lord there, she shrank against the wall; and since she squeezed
26 Balaam's leg against it, he beat her again. The angel of the
Lord then went ahead, and stopped next in a passage so narrow
that there was no room to move either to the right or to the left.
27 When the ass saw the angel of the Lord there, she cowered un-
der Balaam. So, in anger, he again beat the ass with his stick.
28 But now the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she
asked Balaam, "What have I done to you that you should beat
29 me these three times?" "You have acted so willfully against
me," said Balaam to the ass, "that if I but had a sword at
30 hand, I would kill you here and now." But the ass said to Ba-
laam, "Am I not your own beast, and have you not always rid-
den upon me until now? Have I been in the habit of treating
you this way before?" "No," replied Balaam.
31 Then the Lord removed the veil from Balaam's eyes, so that
he too saw the angel of the Lord standing on the road with
sword drawn; and he fell on his knees and bowed to the
32 ground. But the angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have
you beaten your ass these three times? It is I who have come
armed to hinder you because this rash journey of yours is di-
33 rectly opposed to me. When the ass saw me, she turned away
from me these three times. If she had not turned away from me,

22, 22-35: The writer does not believe in the talking ass and the obstructing angel. He humorously dubbed in this folktale to illustrate the power of God's word. It is so forceful that it can be heard through the mouth of an animal. This example is in preparation for God's blessings later in the narrative. We would not now use such an example to illustrate the power of God's words.

34 I would have killed you; her I would have spared." Then Ba-
laam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned. Yet I did
not know that you stood against me to oppose my journey.
35 Since it has displeased you, I will go back home." But the angel
of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the men; but you may
say only what I tell you." So Balaam went on with the princes
of Balac.
36 When Balac heard that Balaam was coming, he went out
to meet him at he boundary city Ir-Moab on the Arnon at the
37 end of the Moabite territory. And he said to Balaam, "I sent
an urgent summons to you! Why did you not come to me? Did
38 you think I could not reward you?" | Balaam answered him,
"Well, I have come to you after all. But what power have I
to say anything? I can speak only what God puts in my mouth."
39 Then Balaam went with Balac, and they came to Cariath-Hu-
40 soth. Here Balac slaughtered oxen and sheep, and sent portions
to Balaam and to the princes who were with him.

41 ***The First Oracle*** The next morning Balac took Balaam up
on Bamoth-Baal, and from there he saw some of the clans.

23

1 Then Balaam said to Balac, "Build me seven altars, and
2 prepare seven bullocks and seven rams for me here." So he
did as Balaam had ordered, offering a bullock and a ram on
3 each altar. And Balac said to him, "I have erected the seven
4 altars, and have offered a bullock and a ram on each." Balaam
then said to him, "Stand here by your holocaust while I go
over there. Perhaps the Lord will meet me, and then I will tell
you whatever he lets me see." He went out on the barren height,
5 and God met him. When he had put an utterance in Balaam's
mouth, the Lord said to him, "Go back to Balac, and speak
6 accordingly." So he went back to Balac, who was still standing
7 by his holocaust together with all the princes of Moab. Then
Balaam gave voice to his oracle:

From Aram has Balac brought me here, Moab's king, from
the Eastern Mountains: "Come and lay a curse for me on Ja-
8 cob, come and denounce Israel." How can I curse whom God
has not cursed? How denounce whom the Lord has not de-
9 nounced? For from the top of the crags I see him, from the
heights I behold him. Here is a people that lives apart and
10 does not reckon itself among the nations. Who has ever counted

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22, 38: The writer stresses here that Yahweh decrees the destiny of peoples; prophets are only His instruments.

the dust of Jacob, or numbered Israel's wind-borne particles?
May I die the death of the just, may my descendants be as
many as theirs!
11 "What have you done to me?" cried Balac to Balaam. "It
was to curse my foes that I brought you here; instead, you
12 have even blessed them." Balaam replied, "Is it not what the
Lord puts in my mouth that I must repeat with care?"

13 ***The Second Oracle*** Then Balac said to him, "Please come
with me to another place from which you can see only some
14 and not all of them, and from there curse them for me." So
he brought him to the lookout field on the top of Phasga, where
he built seven altars and offered a bullock and a ram on each of
15 them. Balaam then said to Balac, "Stand here by your holo-
16 caust, while I seek a meeting over there." Then the Lord met
Balaam, and having put an utterance in his mouth, he said to
17 him, "Go back to Balac, and speak accordingly." So he went
back to Balac, who was still standing by his holocaust to-
gether with the princes of Moab. When Balac asked him,
18 "What did the Lord say?" Balaam gave voice to his oracle:

Be aroused, O Balac, and hearken; give ear to my testimony,
19 O son of Sepphor! God is not man that he should speak falsely,
nor human, that he should change his mind. Is he one to speak
20 and not act, to decree and not fulfill? It is a blessing I have been
21 given to pronounce; a blessing which I cannot restrain. Mis-
fortune is not observed in Jacob, nor misery seen in Israel. The
Lord, his God, is with him; with him is the triumph of his King.
22 It is God who brought him out of Egypt, a wild bull of tower-
23 ing might. | No, there is no sorcery against Jacob, nor omen
against Israel. It shall yet be said of Jacob, and of Israel, "Be-
24 hold what God has wrought!" Here is a people that springs
up like a lioness, and stalks forth like a lion; it rests not till
it has devoured its prey and has drunk the blood of the slain.
25 "Even though you cannot curse them," said Balac to Ba-
26 laam, "at least do not bless them." But Balaam answered Ba-
lac, "Did I not warn you that I must do all that the Lord tells
me?"

27 ***The Third Oracle*** Then Balac said to Balaam, "Come, let
me bring you to another place; perhaps God will approve of

23, 13: *To another place:* Balac thought that if Balaam would view Israel from a different site, he could forecast a different kind of omen.

23, 22: *A wild bull of towering might:* the reference is to Israel, rather than to God.

28 your cursing them for me from there." So he took Balaam to
29 the top of Phogor, that overlooks Jesimon. Balaam then said
to him, "Here build me seven altars; and here prepare for me
30 seven bullocks and seven rams." And Balac did as Balaam
had ordered, offering a bullock and a ram on each altar.

24

1 Balaam, however, perceiving that the Lord was pleased to
bless Israel, did not go aside as before to seek omens, but
2 turned his gaze toward the desert. When he raised his eyes
and saw Israel encamped, tribe by tribe, the spirit of God
3 came upon him, and he gave voice to his oracle:

The utterance of Balaam, son of Beor, the utterance of the
4 man whose eye is true, | the utterance of one who hears
what God says, and knows what the Most High knows, of
one who sees what the Almighty sees, enraptured, and with
5 eyes unveiled: How goodly are your tents, O Jacob; your en-
6 campments, O Israel! They are like gardens beside a stream,
7 like the cedars planted by the Lord. His wells shall yield free-
flowing waters, he shall have the sea within reach; his king
shall rise higher than . . . and his royalty shall be exalted.
8 It is God who brought him out of Egypt, a wild bull of tower-
ing might. He shall devour the nations like grass, their bones
9 he shall strip bare. He lies crouching like a lion, or like a lion-
ess; who shall arouse him? Blessed is he who blesses you, and
cursed is he who curses you!

10 Balac beat his palms together in a blaze of anger at Balaam
and said to him, "It was to curse my foes that I summoned you
here; yet three times now you have even blessed them instead!
11 Be off at once, then, to your home. I promised to reward you
12 richly, but the Lord has withheld the reward from you!" Ba-
laam replied to Balac, "Did I not warn the very messengers
13 whom you sent to me, 'Even if Balac gave me his house full
of silver and gold, I could not of my own accord do anything,
good or evil, contrary to the command of the Lord'? Whatever
the Lord says I must repeat.

14 ***The Fourth Oracle*** "But now that I am about to go to my
own people, let me first warn you what this people will do to
15 your people in the days to come." Then Balaam gave voice to
his oracle:

The utterance of Balaam, son of Beor, the utterance of the
16 man whose eye is true, | the utterance of one who hears what
God says, and knows what the Most High knows, of one who
sees what the Almighty sees, enraptured and with eyes unveiled.

17 I see him, though not now; I behold him, though not near: A
star shall advance from Jacob, and a staff shall rise from Is
rael, that shall smite the brows of Moab, and the skulls of al
18 the Suthites, | till Edom is dispossessed, and no fugitive is
19 left in Seir. Israel shall do valiantly | and Jacob shall over-
come his foes.
20 Upon seeing Amalec, Balaam gave voice to his oracle: First
of the peoples was Amalec, but his end is to perish forever.
21 Upon seeing the Cinites, he gave voice to his oracle: Your
abode is enduring, O smith, and your nest is set on a cliff; |
22 yet destined for burning—even as I watch—are your inhabi-
tants.
23 Upon seeing . . . he gave voice to his oracle: Alas, who shall
24 survive of Ismael, | to deliver his people from the hands of
the Chittim? When they have conquered Assur and con-
quered Heber, he too shall perish forever.
25 Then Balaam set out on his journey home; and Balac also
went his way.

25

1 ***Worship of Baal-Phogor*** While Israel was living at Sattim,
the people degraded themselves by having illicit relations with
2 the Moabite women. These then invited the people to the sac-
rifices of their god, and the people ate of the sacrifices and
3 worshiped their god. When Israel thus submitted to the rites
4 of Baal-Phogor, the Lord's anger flared up against Israel, | and
he said to Moses, "Gather all the leaders of the people, and
hold a public execution of the guilty ones before the Lord, that
5 his blazing wrath may be turned away from Israel." So Moses
told the Israelite judges, "Each of you shall kill those of his
men who have submitted to the rites of Baal-Phogor."

6 ***Zeal of Phinees*** Yet a certain Israelite came and brought
in a Madianite woman to his family in the view of Moses and
of the whole Israelite community, while they were weeping at

24, 17: The writer puts on the lips of Balaam the "star" and "staff," royal emblems, as alluding to David's conquest of Moab and Edom. All four oracles were probably written during David's reign (1000-961 B.C.). However, some scholars translate: "When the stars of Jacob shall prevail, and the tribes of Israel shall arise," and give the thirteenth or twelfth century as the date for this verse. If this be so, then the verse does not refer to any king or monarchy.

24, 18-24: Prophecies of the ruin of Israel's enemies. A frequent biblical notion is that the enemies of the people are likewise the enemies of God.

the entrance of the Meeting Tent. When Phinees, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, and taking a lance in hand, | followed the Israelite into his retreat where he pierced the pair of them, the Israelite and the woman. Thus the slaughter of Israelites was checked; but only after twenty-four thousand had died.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Phinees, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned my anger from the Israelites by his zeal for my honor among them; that is why I did not put an end to the Israelites for the offense to my honor. Announce, therefore, that I hereby give him my pledge of friendship, which shall be for him and for his descendants after him the pledge of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous on behalf of his God and thus made amends for the Israelites."

The Israelite slain with the Madianite woman was Zamri, son of Salu, prince of an ancestral house of the Simeonites. The slain Madianite woman was Chozbi, daughter of Sur, who was head of a clan, an ancestral house, in Madian.

Vengeance on the Madianites The Lord then said to Moses, "Treat the Madianites as enemies and crush them, for they have been your enemies by their wily dealings with you as regards Phogor and as regards their kinswoman Chozbi, the daughter of a Madianite prince, who was killed at the time of the slaughter because of Phogor."

6

The Second Census After the slaughter the Lord said to Moses and Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, "Take a census, by ancestral houses, throughout the community of the Israelites of all those of twenty years or more who are fit for military service in Israel." So on the plains of Moab along the Jericho stretch of the Jordan, Moses and the priest Eleazar registered | those of twenty years or more, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt were as follows:

Of Ruben, the first-born of Israel, the Rubenites by clans were: through Henoch the clan of the Henochites, through Phallu the clan of the Phalluites, | through Hesron the clan of the Hesronites, through Charmi the clan of the Charmites. These were the clans of the Rubenites, of whom forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty men were registered.

From Phallu descended Eliab, and the descendants of Eliab

were Dathan and Abiram—the same Dathan and Abiram
councilors of the community, who revolted against Moses and
10 Aaron [like Core's band when it rebelled against the Lord]. The
earth opened its mouth and swallowed them as a warning [Core
too and the band that died when the fire consumed two hun-
11 dred and fifty men. The descendants of Core, however, did not
die out].
12 The Simeonites by clans were: through Namuel the clan
of the Namuelites, through Jamin the clan of the Jaminites,
13 through Jachin the clan of the Jachinites, | through Sohar the
clan of the Soharites, through Saul the clan of the Saulites.
14 These were the clans of the Simeonites, of whom twenty-two
thousand two hundred men were registered.
15 The Gadites by clans were: through Sephon the clan of the
Sephonites, through Haggi the clan of the Haggites, through
16 Suni the clan of the Sunites, | through Ozni the clan of the
17 Oznites, through Heri the clan of the Herites, | through Arod
the clan of the Arodites, through Ariel the clan of the Arielites.
18 These were the clans of the Gadites, of whom forty thousand
five hundred men were registered.
19 The sons of Juda who died in the land of Chanaan were Her
20 and Onan. The Judaites by clans were: through Sela the clan of
Selaites, through Phares the clan of the Pharesites, through
21 Zara the clan of the Zaraites. The Pharesites were: through
Hesron the clan of the Hesronites, through Hamul the clan of
22 the Hamulites. These were the clans of Juda, of whom seventy-
six thousand five hundred men were registered.
23 The Issacharites by clans were: through Thola the clan of
24 the Tholaites, through Phua the clan of the Phuaites, | through
Jasub the clan of the Jasubites, through Semron the clan of the
25 Semronites. These were the clans of Issachar, of whom sixty-
four thousand three hundred men were registered.
26 The Zabulonites by clans were: through Sared the clan of
the Saredites, through Elon the clan of the Elonites, through
27 Jahelel the clan of the Jahelelites. These were the clans of the
Zabulonites, of whom sixty thousand five hundred men were
registered.
28.29 The sons of Joseph were Manasse and Ephraim. The Ma-
nasseites by clans were: through Machir the clan of the Ma-
chirites, through Galaad, a descendant of Machir, the clan of
30 the Galaadites. The Galaadites were: through Abiezer the clan
of the Abiezerites, through Helec the clan of the Helecites,
31 through Esriel the clan of the Esrielites, through Sichem the
32 clan of the Sichemites, | through Semida the clan of the Semi-

daites, through Hepher the clan of the Hepherites. Salphahad,
son of Hepher, had no sons, but only daughters, whose names
were Mahala, Noa, Hegla, Melcha and Thersa. These were the
clans of Manasse, of whom fifty-two thousand seven hundred
men were registered.

The Ephraimites by clans were: through Suthala the clan of
the Suthalaites, through Becher the clan of the Becherites,
through Thahan the clan of the Thahanites. The Suthalaites
were: through Heran the clan of the Heranites. These were the
clans of the Ephraimites, of whom thirty-two thousand five
hundred men were registered.

These were the descendants of Joseph by clans.

The Benjaminites by clans were: through Bala the clan of
the Balaites, through Asbel the clan of the Asbelites, through
Ahiram the clan of the Ahiramites, | through Supham the
clan of the Suphamites, through Hupham the clan of the Hu-
phamites. The descendants of Bala were Arad and Naaman:
through Arad the clan of the Aradites, through Naaman the
clan of the Naamanites. These were the Benjaminites by clans,
of whom forty-five thousand six hundred men were regis-
tered.

The Danites by clans were: through Suham the clan of the
Suhamites. These were the clans of Dan, | of whom sixty-
four thousand four hundred men were registered.

The Aserites by clans were: through Jemna the clan of the
Jemnaites, through Jesui the clan of the Jesuites, through Baria
the clan of the Bariaites, through Heber the clan of the He-
berites, through Melchiel the clan of the Melchielites. The
name of Aser's daughter was Sara. These were the clans of
Aser, of whom fifty-three thousand four hundred men were
registered.

The Nephthalites by clans were: through Jahesel the clan
of the Jaheselites, through Guni the clan of the Gunites, |
through Jeser the clan of the Jeserites, through Sellum the clan
of the Sellumites. These were the clans of Nephthali, of whom
forty-five thousand four hundred men were registered.

These six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty
were the Israelites who were registered.

Allotment of the Land The Lord said to Moses, "Among
these groups the land shall be divided as their heritage in
keeping with the number of individuals in each group. To a
large group you shall assign a large heritage, to a small group
a small heritage, each group receiving its heritage in propor-
tion to the number of men registered in it. But the land shall

be divided by lot, as the heritage of the various ancestral tribes
56 As the lot falls shall each group, large or small, be assigned
its heritage."

57 ***Census of the Levites*** The Levites registered by clans were
through Gerson the clan of the Gersonites, through Caath the
clan of the Caathites, through Merari the clan of the Merarites
58 These also were clans of Levi: the clan of the Lebnites, the
clan of the Hebronites, the clan of the Moholites, the clan of
the Musites, the clan of the Coreites.
59 Among the descendants of Caath was Amram, | whose wife
was named Jochabed. She also was of the tribe of Levi, born
to the tribe in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron and Moses
60 and their sister Mariam. To Aaron were born Nadab and
61 Abiu, Eleazar and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abiu died when
they offered profane fire before the Lord.
62 The total number of male Levites one month or more of age,
who were registered, was twenty-three thousand. They were not
registered with the other Israelites, however, for no heritage
was given them among the Israelites.
63 These, then, were the men registered by Moses and the priest
Eleazar in the census of the Israelites taken on the plains of
64 Moab along the Jericho stretch of the Jordan. Among them
there was not a man of those who had been registered by
Moses and the priest Aaron in the census of the Israelites tak-
65 en in the desert of Sinai. For the Lord had told them that
they would surely die in the desert, and not one of them was
left except Caleb, son of Jephonne, and Josue, son of Nun.

27

1 ***Salphahad's Daughters*** Salphahad, son of Hepher, son of
Galaad, son of Machir, son of Manasse, son of Joseph, had
daughters named Mahala, Noa, Hegla, Melcha and Thersa.
2 They came forward, and standing in the presence of Moses, the
priest Eleazar, the princes, and the whole community at the
3 entrance of the Meeting Tent, said: "Our father died in the
desert. Although he did not join those who banded together
against the Lord [in Core's band], he died for his own sin
4 without leaving any sons. But why should our father's name be
withdrawn from his clan merely because he had no son? Let
us, therefore, have property among our father's kinsmen."

5 ***Laws concerning Heiresses*** When Moses laid their case
6.7 before the Lord, | the Lord said to him, | "The plea of Sal-

phahad's daughters is just; you shall give them hereditary property among their father's kinsmen, letting their father's
8 heritage pass on to them. Therefore, tell the Israelites: If a man dies without leaving a son, you shall let his heritage pass
9 on to his daughter; if he has no daughter, you shall give his
10 heritage to his brothers; if he has no brothers, you shall give
11 his heritage to his father's brothers; if his father had no brothers, you shall give his heritage to his nearest relative in his clan, who shall then take possession of it." This is the legal norm for the Israelites, as the Lord commanded Moses.

12 ***Josue to Succeed Moses*** The Lord said to Moses, "Go up here into the Abarim Mountains and view the land that I am
13 giving to the Israelites. When you have viewed it, you too shall
14 be taken to your people, as was your brother Aaron, because in the rebellion of the community in the desert of Sin you both rebelled against my order to manifest my sanctity to them by means of the water." [This is the water of Meribath-Cades in the desert of Sin.]
15.16 Then Moses said to the Lord, "May the Lord, the God of
17 the spirits of all mankind, set over the community | a man who shall act as their leader in all things, to guide them in all their actions; that the Lord's community may not be like sheep
18 without a shepherd." And the Lord replied to Moses, "Take Josue, son of Nun, a man of spirit, and lay your hand upon
19 him. Have him stand in the presence of the priest Eleazar and of the whole community, and commission him before their eyes.
20 Invest him with some of your own dignity, that the whole Is-
21 raelite community may obey him. He shall present himself to the priest Eleazar, to have him seek out for him the decisions of the Urim in the Lord's presence; and as he directs, Josue, all the Israelites with him, and the community as a whole shall perform all their actions."
22 Moses did as the Lord had commanded him. Taking Josue and having him stand in the presence of the priest Eleazar and
23 of the whole community, he laid his hands on him and gave him his commission, as the Lord had directed through Moses.

28
2 ***General Sacrifices*** The Lord said to Moses, "Give the Israelites this commandment: At the times I have appointed, you shall be careful to present to me the food offerings that are offered to me as sweet-smelling oblations.

27, 21: *Urim:* see Lv 8, 8 n.

3 ***Each Morning and Evening*** "You shall tell them there-
fore: This is the oblation which you shall offer to the Lord,
two unblemished yearling lambs each day as the established
4 holocaust, offering one lamb in the morning and the other dur-
5 ing the evening twilight, each with a cereal offering of one tenth
of an apha of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil of
6 crushed olives. This is the established holocaust that was of-
fered at Mount Sinai as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.
7 And as the libation for the first lamb, you shall pour out to
8 the Lord in the sanctuary a fourth of a hin of wine. The other
lamb, to be offered during the evening twilight, you shall offer
with the same cereal offering and the same libation as in the
morning, as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.

9 ***On the Sabbath*** "On the Sabbath day you shall offer two
unblemished yearling lambs, with their cereal offering, two
tenths of an epha of fine flour mixed with oil, and with their
10 libations. Each Sabbath there shall be the Sabbath holocaust
in addition to the established holocaust and its libation.

11 ***At the New Moon Feast*** "On the first of each month you
shall offer as a holocaust to the Lord two bullocks, one ram,
12 and seven unblemished yearling lambs, with three tenths of an
epha of fine flour mixed with oil as the cereal offering for each
bullock, two tenths of an epha of fine flour mixed with oil as
13 the cereal offering for the ram, and one tenth of an epha of
fine flour mixed with oil as the cereal offering for each lamb,
that the holocaust may be a sweet-smelling oblation to the
14 Lord. Their libations shall be half a hin of wine for each bul-
lock, a third of a hin for the ram, and a fourth of a hin for each
lamb. This is the new moon holocaust for every new moon of
15 the year. Moreover, one goat shall be sacrificed as a sin offer-
ing to the Lord. These are to be offered in addition to the es-
tablished holocaust and its libation.

16 ***At the Passover*** "On the fourteenth day of the first month
17 falls the Passover of the Lord, and the fifteenth day of this
month is the pilgrimage feast. For seven days unleavened
18 bread is to be eaten. On the first of these days you shall hold
19 a sacred assembly, and do no sort of work. As an oblation you
shall offer a holocaust to the Lord, which shall consist of two
bullocks, one ram, and seven yearling lambs that you are sure
20 are unblemished, with their cereal offerings of fine flour mixed
with oil; offering three tenths of an epha for each bullock,
21 two tenths for the ram, | and one tenth for each of the seven

22 lambs; and offer one goat as a sin offering in atonement for
23 yourselves. These offerings you shall make in addition to the
24 established morning holocaust: you shall make exactly the
same offerings each day for seven days as food offerings, in
addition to the established holocaust with its libation, for a
25 sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord. On the seventh day you
shall hold a sacred assembly, and do no sort of work.

26 ***At Pentecost*** "On the day of first fruits, on your feast of
Weeks, when you present to the Lord the new cereal offering,
27 you shall hold a sacred assembly, and do no sort of work. You
shall offer as a sweet-smelling holocaust to the Lord two bul-
locks, one ram, and seven yearling lambs that you are sure
28 are unblemished, with their cereal offerings of fine flour mixed
with oil; offering three tenths of an epha for each bullock,
29 two tenths for the ram, | and one tenth for each of the seven
30 lambs. Moreover, one goat shall be offered as a sin offering in
31 atonement for yourselves. You shall make these offerings, to-
gether with their libations, in addition to the established holo-
caust with its cereal offering.

29

1 ***On New Year's Day*** "On the first day of the seventh month
you shall hold a sacred assembly, and do no sort of work; it
2 shall be a day on which you sound the trumpet. You shall
offer as a sweet-smelling holocaust to the Lord one bullock, one
3 ram, and seven unblemished yearling lambs, with their cereal
offerings of fine flour mixed with oil; offering three tenths of
4 an epha for the bullock, two tenths for the ram, and one tenth
5 for each of the seven lambs. Moreover, one goat shall be of-
6 fered as a sin offering in atonement for yourselves. These are
to be offered in addition to the ordinary new moon holocaust
with its cereal offering, and in addition to the established holo-
caust with its cereal offering, together with the libations pre-
scribed for them, as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord.

7 ***On the Day of Atonement*** "On the tenth day of this sev-
enth month you shall hold a sacred assembly, and mortify your-
8 selves, and do no sort of work. You shall offer as a sweet-
smelling holocaust to the Lord one bullock, one ram, and seven
9 yearling lambs that you are sure are unblemished, with their
cereal offerings of fine flour mixed with oil; offering three
tenths of an epha for the bullock, two tenths for the ram, |
10.11 and one tenth for each of the seven lambs. Moreover, one
goat shall be sacrificed as a sin offering. These are to be of-

fered in addition to the atonement sin offering, the establishe
holocaust with its cereal offering, and their libations.

12 ***On the Feast of Booths*** "On the fifteenth day of the sev
enth month you shall hold a sacred assembly, and do no sor
of work; then, for seven days following, you shall celebrate
13 pilgrimage feast to the Lord. You shall offer as a sweet-smell
ing holocaust to the Lord thirteen bullocks, two rams, an
14 fourteen yearling lambs that are unblemished, | with thei
cereal offerings of fine flour mixed with oil; offering thre
15 tenths of an epha for each of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth
for each of the two rams, | and one tenth for each of th
16 fourteen lambs. Moreover, one goat shall be sacrificed as a sir
offering. These are to be offered in addition to the establishec
holocaust with its cereal offering and libation.
17 "On the second day you shall offer twelve bullocks, twc
18 rams, and fourteen unblemished yearling lambs, | with thei
cereal offerings and libations as prescribed for the bullocks,
19 rams and lambs in proportion to their number, | as well as one
goat for a sin offering, besides the established holocaust with
its cereal offering and libation.
20 "On the third day you shall offer eleven bullocks, two rams,
21 and fourteen unblemished yearling lambs, | with their cereal
offerings and libations as prescribed for the bullocks, rams and
22 lambs in proportion to their number, | as well as one goat
for a sin offering, besides the established holocaust with its
cereal offering and libation.
23 "On the fourth day you shall offer ten bullocks, two rams,
24 and fourteen unblemished yearling lambs, | with their cereal
offerings and libations as prescribed for the bullocks, rams and
25 lambs in proportion to their number, | as well as one goat
for a sin offering, besides the established holocaust with its
cereal offering and libation.
26 "On the fifth day you shall offer nine bullocks, two rams,
27 and fourteen unblemished yearling lambs, | with their cereal
offerings and libations as prescribed for the bullocks, rams
28 and lambs in proportion to their number, | as well as one goat
for a sin offering, besides the established holocaust with its
cereal offering and libation.
29 "On the sixth day you shall offer eight bullocks, two rams,
30 and fourteen unblemished yearling lambs, | with their cereal
offerings and libations as prescribed for the bullocks, rams and
31 lambs in proportion to their number, | as well as one goat
for a sin offering, besides the established holocaust with its
cereal offering and libation.

32 "On the seventh day you shall offer seven bullocks, two
33 rams, and fourteen unblemished yearling lambs, | with their
cereal offerings and libations as prescribed for the bullocks,
34 rams and lambs in proportion to their number, | as well as
one goat for a sin offering, besides the established holocaust
with its cereal offering and libation.
35 "On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn meeting, and
36 do no sort of work. You shall offer up in holocaust as a sweet-
smelling oblation to the Lord one bullock, one ram, and seven
37 unblemished yearling lambs, | with their cereal offerings and
libations as prescribed for the bullocks, rams and lambs in
38 proportion to their number, as well as one goat for a sin offer-
ing, besides the established holocaust with its cereal offering and
libation.
39 "These are the offerings you shall make to the Lord on
your festivals, besides whatever holocausts, cereal offerings,
libations, and peace offerings you present as your votive or
freewill offerings."

30

1 Moses then gave the Israelites these instructions, just as the
Lord had ordered him.

2 ***Validity and Annulment of Vows*** Moses said to the heads
of the Israelite tribes, "This is what the Lord has commanded:
3 When a man makes a vow to the Lord or binds himself under
oath to a pledge of abstinence, he shall not violate his word,
but must fulfill exactly the promise he has uttered.
4 "When a woman, while still a maiden in her father's house,
5 makes a vow to the Lord, or binds herself to a pledge, if her
father learns of her vow or the pledge to which she bound
herself and says nothing to her about it, then any vow or any
6 pledge she has made remains valid. But if on the day he learns
of it her father expresses to her his disapproval, then any
vow or any pledge she has made becomes null and void; and the
Lord releases her from it, since her father has expressed to her
his disapproval.
7 "If she marries while under a vow or under a rash pledge to
8 which she bound herself, and her husband learns of it, yet says
nothing to her that day about it, then the vow or pledge she
9 had made remains valid. But if on the day he learns of it her

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29, 35: *A solemn meeting:* the Hebrew word is the technical term for the closing celebration of the three major feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and Booths, or of other special feasts that lasted for a week.

husband expresses to her his disapproval, he thereby annul
the vow she had made or the rash pledge to which she ha
10 bound herself, and the Lord releases her from it. The vo
of a widow or of a divorced woman, or any pledge to whic
such a woman binds herself, is valid.
11 "If it is in her husband's house that she makes a vow o
12 binds herself under oath to a pledge, and her husband learns o
it yet says nothing to express to her his disapproval, then an
13 vow or any pledge she has made remains valid. But if on th
day he learns of them her husband annuls them, then whateve
she has expressly promised in her vow or in her pledge be
comes null and void; since her husband has annulled them, th
Lord releases her from them.
14 "Any vow or any pledge that she makes under oath to mor
tify herself, her husband can either allow to remain valid o
15 render null and void. But if her husband, day after day, says
nothing at all to her about them, he thereby allows as valid any
vow or any pledge she has made; he has allowed them to re-
main valid, because on the day he learned of them he said
16 nothing to her about them. If, however, he countermands them
some time after he first learned of them, he is responsible for
her guilt."
17 These are the statutes which the Lord prescribed through
Moses concerning the relationship between a husband and his
wife, as well as between a father and his daughter while she
is still a maiden in her father's house.

31

1 ***Extermination of the Madianites*** The Lord said to Moses,
2 "Avenge the Israelites on the Madianites, and then you shall
3 be taken to your people." So Moses told the people, "Select men
from your midst and arm them for war, to attack the Madian-
4 ites and execute the Lord's vengeance on them. From each of
the tribes of Israel you shall send a band of one thousand men
5 to war." From the clans of Israel, therefore, a thousand men
of each tribe were levied, so that there were twelve thousand
6 men armed for war. Moses sent them out on the campaign, a
thousand from each tribe, with Phinees, son of Eleazar, the
priest for the campaign, who had with him the sacred vessels
7 and the trumpets for sounding the alarm. They waged war
against the Madianites, as the Lord had commanded Moses,

31, 1-54: The sacred writer wants to attribute the victory to God. In so doing he also ascribes to God the command of the massacre and the barbarous rules of the holy war.

8 and killed every male among them. Besides those slain in bat-
tle, they killed the five Madianite kings: Evi, Recem, Sur, Hur
and Rebe; and they also executed Balaam, son of Beor, with
9 the sword. But the Israelites kept the women of the Madianites
with their little ones as captives, and all their herds and flocks
10 and wealth as spoil, while they set on fire all the towns where
11 they had settled and all their encampments. Then they took
all the booty, with the people and beasts they had captured,
and brought the captives, together with the spoils and booty,
12 to Moses and the priest Eleazar and to the Israelite community
at their camp on the plains of Moab, along the Jericho stretch
of the Jordan.

13 ***Treatment of the Captives*** When Moses and the priest
Eleazar, with all the princes of the community, went outside the
14 camp to meet them, Moses became angry with the officers of
the army, the clan and company commanders, who were re-
15 turning from combat. "So you have spared all the women!"
16 he exclaimed. "Why, they are the very ones who on Balaam's
advice prompted the unfaithfulness of the Israelites toward the
Lord in the Phogor affair, which began the slaughter of the
17 Lord's community. Slay, therefore, every male child and every
18 woman who has had intercourse with a man. But you may
spare and keep for yourselves all girls who had no intercourse
with a man.

19 ***Purification after Combat*** "Moreover, you shall stay out-
side the camp for seven days, and those of you who have
slain anyone or touched anyone slain in battle shall purify
yourselves on the third and on the seventh day. This applies
20 both to you and to your captives. You shall also purify every
article of cloth, leather, goats' hair, or wood."
21 Eleazar the priest told the soldiers who had returned from
combat: "This is what the law, as prescribed by the Lord to
22 Moses, ordains: Whatever can stand fire, such as gold, silver,
23 bronze, iron, tin and lead, | you shall put into the fire, that
it may become clean; however, it must also be purified with
lustral water. But whatever cannot stand fire you shall put
24 into the water. On the seventh day you shall wash your clothes,
and then you will again be clean. After that you may enter
the camp."

25.26 ***Division of the Booty*** The Lord said to Moses: "With
the help of the priest Eleazar and of the heads of the ancestral
houses, count up all the human captives and the beasts that

27 have been taken; then divide them evenly, giving half to those
who took active part in the war by going out to combat, and
28 half to the rest of the community. You shall levy a tax for
the Lord on the warriors who went out to combat: one out of
29 every five hundred persons, oxen, asses and sheep | in their
half of the spoil you shall turn over to the priest Eleazar as a
30 contribution to the Lord. From the Israelites' half you shall
take one out of every fifty persons, and the same from the
different beasts, oxen, asses and sheep, and give them to the
31 Levites, who have charge of the Lord's Dwelling." So Moses
and the priest Eleazar did this, as the Lord had commanded
Moses.

32 ***Amount of Booty*** This booty, what was left of the loot
which the soldiers had taken, amounted to six hundred and
33.34 seventy-five thousand sheep, seventy-two thousand oxen, sixty-
35 one thousand asses, and thirty-two thousand girls who were still
virgins.
36 The half that fell to those who had gone out to combat
was: three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred
37 sheep, of which six hundred and seventy-five fell as tax to
38 the Lord; thirty-six thousand oxen, of which seventy-two
39 fell as tax to the Lord; thirty thousand five hundred asses,
40 of which sixty-one fell as tax to the Lord; and sixteen thousand
41 persons, of whom thirty-two fell as tax to the Lord. The taxes
contributed to the Lord, Moses gave to the priest Eleazar, as
the Lord had commanded him.
42 The half for the other Israelites, which fell to the community
43 when Moses had taken it from the soldiers, was: three hundred
44 and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, thirty-six thou-
45.46 sand oxen, thirty thousand five hundred asses, and sixteen
47 thousand persons. From this, the Israelites' share, Moses, as the
Lord had ordered, took one out of every fifty, both of persons
and of beasts, and gave them to the Levites, who had charge
of the Lord's Dwelling.

48 ***Gifts of the Officers*** Then the officers who had been clan
and company commanders of the army came up to Moses |
49 and said to him, "Your servants have counted up the soldiers
50 under our command, and not one is missing. So, to make atone-
ment for ourselves before the Lord, each of us will bring as an
offering to the Lord some gold article he has picked up, such as
51 an anklet, a bracelet, a ring, an earring, or a necklace." Moses
and the priest Eleazar accepted this gold from them, all of it
52 in well-wrought articles. The gold that they gave as a con-

tribution to the Lord amounted in all to sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. This was from the clan and company
53 commanders; | what the common soldiers had looted each
54 one kept for himself. Moses, then, and the priest Eleazar accepted the gold from the clan and company commanders, and put it in the Meeting Tent as a memorial for the Israelites before the Lord.

32

1 ***Request of Gad and Ruben*** Now the Rubenites and Gadites had a very large number of livestock. Noticing that the
2 land of Jazer and of Galaad was grazing country, they came to Moses and the priest Eleazar and to the princes of the com-
3 munity and said, "The region of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nemra,
4 Hesebon, Eleale, Sabama, Nebo and Baal-Maon, which the Lord has laid low before the community of Israel, is grazing
5 country. Now, since your servants have livestock," | they continued, "if we find favor with you, let this land be given to your servants as their property. Do not make us cross the Jordan."

6 ***Moses' Rebuke*** But Moses answered the Gadites and Rubenites: "Are your kinsmen, then, to engage in war, while you re-
7 main here? Why do you wish to discourage the Israelites from
8 crossing to the land the Lord has given them? That is just what your fathers did when I sent them from Cadesbarne to
9 reconnoiter the land. They went up to the Wadi Eschol and reconnoitered the land, then so discouraged the Israelites that
10 they would not enter the land the Lord had given them. At
11 that time the wrath of the Lord flared up, and he swore, 'Because they have not followed me unreservedly, none of these men of twenty years or more who have come up from Egypt shall ever see this country I promised under oath to Abraham
12 and Isaac and Jacob, | except the Cenezite Caleb, son of Jephonne, and Josue, son of Nun, who have followed the Lord
13 unreservedly.' So in his anger with the Israelites the Lord made them wander in the desert forty years, until the whole generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord had died out.
14 And now here you are, a brood of sinners, rising up in your fathers' place to add still more to the Lord's blazing wrath
15 against the Israelites. If you turn away from following him, he will make them stay still longer in the desert, and so you will bring about the ruin of this whole nation."

16 ***Counter Proposal*** But they were insistent with him: "We

wish only to build sheepfolds here for our flocks, and towns
17 for our families; but we ourselves will march as troops in the
van of the Israelites, until we have led them to their destination.
Meanwhile our families can remain here in the fortified towns,
18 safe from attack by the natives. We will not return to our
homes until every one of the Israelites has taken possession of
19 his heritage, and will not claim any heritage with them once
we cross the Jordan, so long as we receive a heritage for our-
selves on this eastern side of the Jordan."

20 ***Agreement Reached*** Moses said to them in reply: "If you
keep your word to march as troops in the Lord's vanguard |
21 and to cross the Jordan in full force before the Lord until he
22 has driven his enemies out of his way | and the land is sub-
dued before him, then you may return here, quit of every
obligation to the Lord and to Israel, and this region shall be
23 your possession before the Lord. But if you do not do this,
you will sin against the Lord, and you can be sure that you will
24 not escape the consequences of your sin. Build the towns, then,
for your families, and the folds for your flocks, but also fulfill
your express promise."

25 The Gadites and Rubenites answered Moses, "Your serv-
26 ants will do as you command, my lord. While our wives and
children, our herds and other livestock remain in the towns of
27 Galaad, all your servants will go across as armed troops to
battle before the Lord, just as your lordship says."

28 Moses, therefore, gave this order in their regard to the priest
Eleazar, to Josue, son of Nun, and to the heads of the an-
29 cestral tribes of the Israelites: "If all the Gadites and Rubenites
cross the Jordan with you as combat troops before the Lord,
you shall give them Galaad as their property when the land
30 has been subdued before you. But if they will not go across
with you as combat troops before the Lord, you shall bring
their wives and children and livestock across before you into
Chanaan, and they shall have their property with you in the
land of Chanaan."

31 To this the Gadites and Rubenites replied, "We will do
32 what the Lord has commanded us, your servants. We our-
selves will go across into the land of Chanaan as troops before
the Lord, but we will retain our hereditary property on this
33 side of the Jordan." So Moses gave them [the Gadites and
Rubenites, as well as half the tribe of Manasse, son of Joseph,
the kingdom of Sehon, king of the Amorrites, and the kingdom
of Og, king of Basan,] the land with its towns and the dis-
tricts that surrounded them.

34 The Gadites rebuilt the fortified towns of Dibon, Ataroth,
35,36 Aroer, | Ataroth-sophan, Jazer, Jegbaa, | Beth-Nemra and
37 Beth-Haran, and they built sheepfolds. The Rubenites rebuilt
38 Hesebon, Eleale, Cariathaim, | Nebo, Baal-Maon [names to be changed!], and Sabama. These towns, which they rebuilt, they called by their old names.

39 ***Other Conquests*** The descendants of Machir, son of Manasse, invaded Galaad and captured it, driving out the Amorrites who
40 were there. [Moses gave Galaad to Machir, son of Manasse,
41 and he settled there.] Jair, a Manasseite clan, campaigned against the tent villages, captured them and called them Ha-
42 voth-Jair. Nobe also campaigned against Canath, captured it with its dependencies and called it Nobe after his own name.

33

1 ***Stages on the Journey*** The following are the stages by which the Israelites journeyed up by companies from the land of
2 Egypt under the guidance of Moses and Aaron. By the Lord's command Moses recorded the starting places of the various stages. The starting places of the successive stages were:
3 They set out from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. On the Passover morrow the
4 Israelites went forth in triumph, in view of all Egypt, | while the Egyptians buried their first-born all of whom the Lord had struck down; on their gods, too, the Lord executed judgments.

5 ***From Egypt to Sinai*** Setting out from Rameses, the Isra-
6 elites camped at Socchoth. Setting out from Socchoth, they
7 camped at Etham near the edge of the desert. Setting out from Etham, they turned back to Phi-hahiroth, which is opposite
8 Baal-Saphon, and they camped opposite Magdol. Setting out from Phi-hahiroth, they crossed over through the sea into the desert, and after a three days' journey in the desert of Etham,
9 they camped at Mara. Setting out from Mara, they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy
10 palm trees, and they camped there. Setting out from Elim,
11 they camped beside the Red Sea. Setting out from the Red
12 Sea, they camped in the desert of Sin. Setting out from the
13 desert of Sin, they camped at Dephca. Setting out from Dephca,
14 they camped at Alus. Setting out from Alus, they camped at Raphidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.
15 Setting out from Raphidim, they camped in the desert of Sinai.

16 ***From Sinai to Cades*** Setting out from the desert of Sinai,
17 they camped at Cibroth-Hatthaava. Setting out from Cibroth-
18 Hatthaava, they camped at Haseroth. Setting out from Hase-
19 roth, they camped at Rethma. Setting out from Rethma, they
20 camped at Remmon-Phares. Setting out from Remmon-Phares,
21 they camped at Lebna. Setting out from Lebna, they camped at
22 Ressa. Setting out from Ressa, they camped at Ceelatha.
23 Setting out from Ceelatha, they camped at Mount Sepher.
24 Setting out from Mount Sepher, they camped at Harada.
25.26 Setting out from Harada, they camped at Maceloth. Setting
27 out from Maceloth, they camped at Thahath. Setting out from
28 Thahath, they camped at Thare. Setting out from Thare, they
29 camped at Methca. Setting out from Methca, they camped at
30 Hesmona. Setting out from Hesmona,—

From Mount Hor to Asiongaber They camped at Mose-
31 roth. | Setting out from Moseroth, they camped at Bene-
32 Jaacan. Setting out from Bene-Jaacan, they camped at Mount
33 Gadgad. Setting out from Mount Gadgad, they camped at
34 Jetabatha. Setting out from Jetabatha, they camped at He-
35 brona. Setting out from Hebrona, they camped at Asiongaber.
36 Setting out from Asiongaber,—

From Cades to Mount Hor They camped in the desert of
37 Sin, at Cades. Setting out from Cades, | they camped at Mount
38 Hor on the border of the land of Edom. [Aaron ascended
Mount Hor at the Lord's command, and there he died in the
fortieth year from the departure of the Israelites from the land
39 of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. Aaron was a
hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount
40 Hor. Now, when the Chanaanite king of Arad, who lived in
the Negeb in the land of Chanaan, heard that the Israelites were
41 coming . . . .] Setting out from Mount Hor,—

From Asiongaber to the Plains of Moab They camped
42 at Salmona. | Setting out from Salmona, they camped at Phinon.
43.44 Setting out from Phinon, they camped at Oboth. Setting out
from Oboth, they camped at Ijeabarim on the border of Moab.
45 Setting out from Ijeabarim, they camped at Dibon-Gad.
46 Setting out from Dibon-Gad, they camped at Helmon-Debla-
47 thaim. Setting out from Helmon-Deblathaim, they camped in
48 the Abarim Mountains opposite Nebo. Setting out from the
Abarim Mountains, they camped on the plains of Moab along
49 the Jericho stretch of the Jordan. Their camp along the Jordan
on the plains of Moab extended from Beth-Jesimoth to Abel-
Sattim.

50 *Conquest and Division of Chanaan* The Lord spoke to
Moses on the plains of Moab beside the Jericho stretch of the
51 Jordan and said to him: "Tell the Israelites: When you go
52 across the Jordan into the land of Chanaan, drive out all the
inhabitants of the land before you; destroy all their stone fig-
ures and molten images, and demolish all their high places.
53 "You shall take possession of the land and settle in it, for
54 I have given you the land as your property. You shall appor-
tion the land among yourselves by lot, clan by clan, assigning
a large heritage to a large group and a small heritage to a
small group. Whenever anyone's lot falls, there shall his prop-
erty be within the heritage of his ancestral tribe.
55 "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land
before you, those whom you allow to remain will become as
barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they will harass
56 you in the country where you live, and I will treat you as I
had intended to treat them."

34

1-2 *The Boundaries* The Lord said to Moses, "Give the Israel-
ites this order: When you enter the land of Chanaan, this is
the territory that shall fall to you as your heritage—the land
of Chanaan with its boundaries:
3 "Your southern boundary shall be at the desert of Sin along
the border of Edom; on the east it shall begin at the end of the
4 Salt Sea, and turning south of the Acrabbim Pass, it shall cross
Sin, and extend south of Cadesbarne to Hasar-Addar; thence
5 it shall cross to Asemon, | and turning from Asemon to the
Wadi of Egypt, shall terminate at the Sea.
6 "For your western boundary you shall have the Great Sea
with its coast; this shall be your western boundary.
7 "The following shall be your boundary on the north: from
the Great Sea you shall draw a line to Mount Hor, and shall
8 continue it from Mount Hor to the entrance of Hamath, with
9 the boundary extending through Sedada. Thence the boundary
shall reach to Zephrona and terminate at Hasar-Enan. This
shall be your northern boundary.
10 "For your eastern boundary you shall draw a line from Ha-
11 sar-Enan to Sepham. From Sepham the boundary shall go down
to Ar-Baal, east of Ain, and descending further, shall strike
12 the ridge on the east side of the Sea of Chenereth; thence the
boundary shall continue along the Jordan and terminate with
the Salt Sea.
"This is the land that shall be yours, with the boundaries that
surround it."

13 Moses also gave this order to the Israelites: "This is the land
to be apportioned among you by lot, which the Lord has com
14 manded to be given to the nine and one half tribes. For al
the ancestral houses of the tribe of Ruben, and the ancestra
houses of the tribe of Gad, as well as half of the tribe of
15 Manasse, have already received their heritage; these two and
one half tribes have received their heritage on the eastern side
of the Jericho stretch of the Jordan, toward the sunrise."

16 ***Supervisors of the Allotment*** The Lord said to Moses,
17 "These are the names of the men who shall apportion the land
18 among you: Eleazar the priest, and Josue, son of Nun, | and one
prince from each of the tribes whom you shall designate for
19 this task. These shall be as follows: from the tribe of Juda:
20 Caleb, son of Jephonne; | from the tribe of Simeon: Samuel,
21 son of Ammiud; | from the tribe of Benjamin: Elidad, son of
22 Chaslon; | from the tribe of Dan: Bocci, son of Jogli; |
23.24 from the tribe of Manasse: Hanniel, son of Ephod; | and
from the tribe of Ephraim: Camuel, son of Sephtan, for the
25 descendants of Joseph; | from the tribe of Zabulon: Elisa-
26 phan, son of Pharnach; | from the tribe of Issachar: Phaltiel,
27 son of Ozan; | from the tribe of Aser: Ahiud, son of Salomi;
28 | from the tribe of Nephthali; Phedael, son of Ammiud."
29 These are they whom the Lord commanded to assign the Is-
raelites their heritage in the land of Chanaan.

35

1 ***Cities for the Levites*** The Lord gave these instructions to
Moses on the plains of Moab beside the Jericho stretch of the
2 Jordan: "Tell the Israelites that out of their hereditary prop-
erty they shall give the Levites cities for homes, as well as
3 pasture lands around the cities. The cities shall serve them to
dwell in, and the pasture lands shall serve their herds and
4 flocks and other animals. The pasture lands of the cities to be
assigned the Levites shall extend a thousand cubits from the
5 city walls in each direction. Thus you shall measure out two
thousand cubits outside the city along each side—east, south,
west and north—with the city lying in the center. This shall
serve them as the pasture lands of their cities.
6 "Now these are the cities you shall give to the Levites: the
six cities of asylum which you must establish as places where
a homicide can take refuge, and in addition forty-two other
7 cities—a total of forty-eight cities with their pasture lands to
8 be assigned the Levites. In assigning the cities from the prop-

erty of the Israelites, take more from a larger group and fewer from a smaller one, so that each group will cede cities to the Levites in proportion to its own heritage."

9.10 ***Cities of Asylum*** The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites: When you go across the Jordan into the land of Cha-
11 naan, select for yourselves cities to serve as cities of asylum, where a homicide who has killed someone unintentionally may
12 take refuge. These cities shall serve you as places of asylum from the avenger of blood, so that a homicide shall not be put
13 to death unless he is first tried before the community. Six cities
14 of asylum shall you assign: three beyond the Jordan, and
15 three in the land of Chanaan. These six cities of asylum shall serve not only the Israelites but all the resident or transient aliens among them, so that anyone who has killed another unintentionally may take refuge there.

16 ***Murder and Manslaughter*** "If a man strikes another with an iron instrument and causes his death, he is a murderer and
17 shall be put to death. If a man strikes another with a death-dealing stone in his hand and causes his death, he is a murderer
18 and shall be put to death. If a man strikes another with a death-dealing club in his hand and causes his death, he is a murderer
19 and shall be put to death. The avenger of blood may execute the murderer, putting him to death on sight.
20 "If a man pushes another out of hatred, or after lying in wait for him throws something at him, and causes his death,
21 or if he strikes another out of enmity and causes his death, he shall be put to death as a murderer. The avenger of blood may execute the murderer on sight.
22 "However, if a man pushes another accidentally and not out of enmity, or if without lying in wait for him he throws some
23 object at him, or without seeing him throws a death-dealing stone which strikes him and causes his death, although he was
24 not his enemy nor seeking to harm him: then the community, deciding the case between the slayer and the avenger of blood
25 in accordance with these norms, shall free the homicide from the avenger of blood and shall remand him to the city of asylum where he took refuge; and he shall stay there until the death of the high priest who has been anointed with sacred oil.
26 If the homicide of his own accord leaves the bounds of the
27 city of asylum where he has taken refuge, and the avenger of blood finds him beyond these bounds and kills him, the aven-
28 ger incurs no bloodguilt; the homicide was bound to stay in his city of asylum until the death of the high priest. Only after the

death of the high priest may the homicide return to his own district.

29 "These shall be norms for you and all your descendants wherever you live, for rendering judgment.

30 ***Witnesses*** "Whenever someone kills another, the evidence of witnesses is required for the execution of the murderer. The evidence of a single witness is not sufficient for putting a person to death.

31 ***No Indemnity*** "You shall not accept indemnity in place of the life of a murderer who deserves the death penalty; he must
32 be put to death. Nor shall you accept indemnity to allow a refugee to leave his city of asylum and again dwell elsewhere
33 in the land before the death of the high priest. You shall not desecrate the land where you live. Since bloodshed desecrates the land, the land can have no atonement for the blood shed
34 on it except through the blood of him who shed it. Do not defile the land in which you live and in the midst of which I dwell; for I am the Lord who dwells in the midst of the Israelites."

36

1 ***Property of Heiresses*** The heads of the ancestral houses in the clan of descendants of Galaad, son of Machir, son of Manasse—one of the Josephite clans—came up and laid this plea before Moses and the priest Eleazar and before the princes who were the heads of the ancestral houses of the other Israelites.
2 They said: "The Lord commanded you, my lord, to apportion the land by lot among the Israelites; and you, my lord, were also commanded by the lord to give the heritage of our kinsman
3 Salphahad to his daughters. But if they marry into one of the other Israelite tribes, their heritage will be withdrawn from our ancestral heritage and will be added to that of the tribe into which they marry; thus the heritage that fell to us by lot will
4 be diminished. When the Israelites celebrate the jubilee year, the heritage of these women will be permanently added to that of the tribe into which they marry and will be withdrawn from that of our ancestral tribe."

5 So Moses gave this regulation to the Israelites according to the instructions of the Lord: "The tribe of the Josephites are
6 right in what they say. This is what the Lord commands with regard to the daughters of Salphahad: They may marry anyone they please, provided they marry into a clan of their an-
7 cestral tribe, so that no heritage of the Israelites will pass from one tribe to another, but all the Israelites will retain their own

8 ancestral heritage. Therefore, every daughter who inherits
property in any of the Israelite tribes shall marry someone be-
longing to a clan of her own ancestral tribe, in order that all
the Israelites may remain in possession of their own ancestral
9 heritage. Thus, no heritage can pass from one tribe to another,
but all the Israelite tribes will retain their own ancestral heri-
tage."
10 The daughters of Salphahad obeyed the command which the
11 Lord had given to Moses. Mahala, Thersa, Hegla, Melcha and
Noa, Salphahad's daughters, married relatives on their father's
12 side | within the clans of the descendants of Manasse, son of
Joseph; hence their heritage remained in the tribe of their fa-
ther's clan.

13 ***Conclusion*** These are the commandments and decisions
which the Lord prescribed for the Israelites through Moses, on
the plains of Moab beside the Jericho stretch of the Jordan.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

INTRODUCTION

"Deuteronomy," literally "second law," refers to the first law given at Sinai, which is here recast in an exhortatory mold. The law is enshrined within three extensive speeches of Moses. Naturally, the book bears an oratorical stamp in its urging to observe the original Mosaic Law. This exhortation is the chief purpose of Deuteronomy. The frequent expressions, "Hear, O Israel," "attaching oneself to God," "Yahweh, your God," "to love God," etc., illustrate the affectionate vocabulary of the book. Hence, Deuteronomy sets the spiritual tone of the Pentateuch by expressing God's love and demanding that the people return His love. Although there is no agreement among scholars on the time of Deuteronomy's composition, it probably underwent two editions: the first edition may date from before king Josia's religious reform in 622 B.C. or the same time; the second edition seems to have appeared after the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.

Main divisions of the Book of Deuteronomy are:

1. Historical Review and Exhortation, 1, 1—4, 43
2. God and His Covenant, 4, 44—11, 32
3. Exposition of the Law, 12, 1—26, 19
4. Final Words of Moses, 27, 1—34, 12

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW AND EXHORTATION

1

1 ***Introduction*** These are the words which Moses spoke to
all Israel beyond the Jordan [in the desert, in the Araba, op-
posite Supha, between Pharan and Thophel, Laban, Haseroth
2 and Dizahab; | it is a journey of eleven days from Horeb to
Cadesbarne by way of the highlands of Seir].
3 In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month,
Moses spoke to the Israelites all the commands that the Lord
4 had given him in their regard. After he had defeated Sehon,
king of the Amorrites, who lived in Hesebon, and Og, king of
5 Basan, who lived in Astharoth and in Edrai, Moses began to
explain the law in the land of Moab beyond the Jordan, as fol-
lows:

6 ***Departure from Horeb*** "The Lord, our God, said to us at
7 Horeb, 'You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Leave
here and go to the hill country of the Amorrites and to all the
surrounding regions, the land of the Chanaanites in the Araba,

the mountains, the foothills, the Negeb and the seacoast; to
8 Lebanon, and as far as the Great River [the Euphrates]. I
have given that land over to you. Go now and occupy the land
I swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I would
give to them and to their descendants.'

9 ***Appointment of Elders*** "At that time I said to you, 'Alone,
10 I am unable to carry you. The Lord, your God, has so mul-
tiplied you that you are now as numerous as the stars in the
11 sky. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, increase you a
12 thousand times over, and bless you as he promised! But how
can I alone bear the crushing burden that you are, along with
13 your bickering? Choose wise, intelligent and experienced men
from each of your tribes, that I may appoint them as your
14 leaders.' You answered me, 'We agree to do as you have pro-
15 posed.' So I took outstanding men of your tribes, wise and ex-
perienced, and made them your leaders as officials over thou-
sands, over hundreds, over fifties and over tens, and other tri-
16 bal officers. I charged your judges at that time, 'Listen to com-
plaints among your kinsmen, and administer true justice to
17 both parties even if one of them is an alien. In rendering judg-
ment, do not consider who a person is; give ear to the lowly
and to the great alike, fearing no man, for judgment is God's.
Refer to me any case that is too hard for you and I will hear it.'
18 Thereupon I gave you all the commands you were to fulfill.

19 ***The Twelve Scouts*** "Then, in obedience to the command of
the Lord, our God, we set out from Horeb and journeyed
through the whole desert, vast and fearful as you have seen, in
the direction of the hill country of the Amorrites. We had
20 reached Cadesbarne | when I said to you, 'You have come to
the hill country of the Amorrites, which the Lord, our God, is
21 giving us. The Lord, your God, has given this land over to you.
Go up and occupy it, as the Lord, the God of your fathers,
22 commands you. Do not fear or lose heart.' Then all of you
came up to me and said, 'Let us send men ahead to reconnoiter
the land for us and report to us on the road we must follow and
23 the cities we must take.' Agreeing with the proposal, I chose
24 twelve men from your number, one from each tribe. They set
out into the hill country as far as the Wadi Eschol, and ex-
25 plored it. Then, taking along some of the fruit of the land, they
brought it down to us and reported, 'The land which the Lord,
our God, gives us is good.'

1, 19-46: For an expanded account see Nm 13—14.

26 ***Threats of Revolt*** "But you refused to go up, and after
27 fying the command of the Lord, your God, | you set to m
muring in your tents, 'Out of hatred for us the Lord has brou
us up out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hands of
28 Amorrites and destroy us. What shall we meet with up the
Our kinsmen have made us fainthearted by reporting that
people are stronger and taller than we, and their cities
large and fortified to the sky; besides, they saw the Enac
there.'
29 "But I said to you, 'Have no dread or fear of the
30 The Lord, your God, who goes before you, will himself fig
for you, just as he took your part before your very eyes
31 Egypt, | as well as in the desert, where you saw how the Lo
your God, carried you, as a man carries his child, all along yo
32 journey until you arrived a this place.' Despite this, you wou
33 not trust the Lord, your God, | who journeys before you
find you a resting place—by day in the cloud, and by night
34 the fire, to show the way you must go. When the Lord hea
35 your words, he was angry; and he swore, 'Not one man of th
evil generation shall look upon the good land I swore to give
36 your fathers, | except Caleb, son of Jephonne; he shall see
For to him and to his sons I will give the land he trod upo
because he has followed the Lord unreservedly.'
37 "The Lord was angered against me also on your accour
38 and said, 'Not even you shall enter there, | but your ai
Josue, son of Nun, shall enter. Encourage him, for he is
39 give Israel its heritage. Your little ones, who you said wou
become booty, and your children, who as yet do not know goc
from bad—they shall enter; to them I will give it, and the
40 shall occupy it. But as for yourselves: turn about and proce
into the desert on the Red Sea road.'

41 ***Unsuccessful Invasion*** "In reply you said to me, 'We hav
sinned against the Lord. We will go up ourselves and figh
just as the Lord, our God, commanded us.' And each of yo
girded on his weapons, making light of going up into the hi
42 country. But the Lord said to me, 'Warn them: Do not go u
and fight, lest you be beaten down before your enemies, for
43 will not be in your midst.' I gave you this warning but yo
would not listen. In defiance of the Lord's command you a

1, 28: *Enacim:* the Enacim and other peoples (see 2, 10f. 20; 3, 11 represent the prehistoric peoples of Chanaan and Transjordan.

1, 37: See 32, 50-52, and Nm 20, 11-12, for a very different reasc why Moses was excluded from the Promised Land. The sacred write wanted to preserve these precious different traditions.

44 rogantly marched off into the hill country. Then the Amor-
45 rites living there came out against you, and, like bees, chased
you, cutting you down in Seir as far as Horma. On your re-
46 turn you wept before the Lord, but he did not listen to your
cry or give ear to you. That is why you had to stay as long as
you did at Cades.

2

1 ***Northward along Edom*** "When we did turn and pro-
ceed into the desert on the Red Sea road, as the Lord had com-
manded me, we circled around the highlands of Seir for a
2-3 long time. Finally the Lord said to me, | 'You have wandered
4 round these highlands long enough; turn and go north. Give
this order to the people: You are now about to pass through
the territory of your kinsmen, the descendants of Esau, who live
5 in Seir. Though they are afraid of you, be very careful | not
to come in conflict with them, for I will not give you so much
as a foot of their land, since I have already given Esau pos-
6 session of the highlands of Seir. You shall purchase from them
7 with silver the food you eat and the well water you drink. The
Lord, your God, has blessed you in all your undertakings; he
has been concerned about your journey through this vast desert.
It is now forty years that he has been with you, and you have
never been in want.'

8 ***Along Moab*** "Then we left behind us the Araba route,
Elath, Asiongaber, and Seir, where our kinsmen, the descendants
9 of Esau, live; and we went on toward the desert of Moab. And
the Lord said to me, 'Do not show hostility to the Moabites or
engage them in battle, for I will not give you possession of any
of their land, since I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as
10 their own. (Formerly the Emim lived there, a people strong and
11 numerous and tall like the Enacim; | like them they were con-
sidered Raphaim. It was the Moabites who called them Emim.
12 In Seir, however, the former inhabitants were the Horrites; the
descendants of Esau dispossessed them, clearing them out of
the way and taking their place, just as the Israelites have done
in the land of their heritage which the Lord has given them.)
13 | Get ready, then, to cross the Wadi Zared.' So we crossed it.
14 Thirty-eight years had elapsed between our departure from
Cadesbarne and that crossing; in the meantime the whole gen-
eration of soldiers had perished from the camp, as the Lord had
15 sworn they should. For it was the Lord's hand that was against
them, till he wiped them out of the camp completely.

16 ***Along Ammon*** "When at length death had put an end
17.18 all the soldiers among the people, the Lord said to me, 'Yo
are now about to leave Ar and the territory of Moab behin
19 As you come opposite the Ammonites, do not show hostility
come in conflict with them, for I will not give you possession
any land of the Ammonites, since I have given it to the descen
20 ants of Lot as their own. [This also was considered a counti
of the Raphaim from its former inhabitants, whom the Am
21 monites called Zomzommim, | a people strong and numerou
and tall like the Enacim. But these, too, the Lord cleared out
the way for the Ammonites, who ousted them and took the
22 place. He had done the same for the descendants of Esau, wh
dwell in Seir, by clearing the Horrites out of their way, so th
the descendants of Esau have taken their place down to th
23 present. So also the Caphthorim, migrating from Caphtho
cleared away the Avvim, who once dwelt in villages as far a
Gaza, and took their place.]

24 ***Defeat of Sehon*** "'Advance now across the Wadi Arnon
I now deliver into your hands Sehon, the Amorrite king o
Hesebon, and his land. Begin the occupation; engage him i
25 battle. This day I will begin to put a fear and dread of you in
to every nation under the heavens, so that at the mention o
your name they will quake and tremble before you.'
26 "So I sent messengers from the desert of Cedemoth to Se
27 hon, king of Hesebon, with this offer of peace: 'Let me pas
through your country by the highway; I will go along it with
28 out turning aside to the right or to the left. For the food I ea
which you will supply, and for the water you give me to drink
29 you shall be paid in silver. Only let me march through, as the
descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who
dwell in Ar have done, until I cross the Jordan into the lanc
30 which the Lord, our God, is about to give us.' But Sehon, king
of Hesebon, refused to let us pass through his land, becaus
the Lord, your God, made him stubborn in mind and obstin
ate in heart that he might deliver him up to you, as indeed he
has now done.
31 "Then the Lord said to me, 'Now that I have already begun
to hand over to you Sehon and his land, begin the actual oc

2, 23: *Caphthorim:* members of one of the groups of Philistines who invaded the coast of Egypt and the southern part of Palestine about 1200 B.C. *Caphthor:* the ancient name of the island of Crete.

2, 30: *Stubborn . . . obstinate:* see Ex 14, 4 n. The Semitic mentality does not distinguish between what God allows to happen by respecting man's free will (as in the text here), and what He actually prefers.

32 cupation.' So Sehon and all his people advanced against us
33 to join battle at Jahas; but since the Lord, our God, had de-
livered him to us, we defeated him and his sons and all his
34 people. At that time we seized all his cities and doomed them
all, with their men, women and children; we left no survivor.
35 Our only booty was the livestock and the loot of the captured
36 cities. From Aroer on the edge of the Wadi Arnon and from the
city in the wadi itself, as far as Galaad, no city was too well
37 fortified for us to whom the Lord had delivered them up. How-
ever, in obedience to the command of the Lord, our God, you
did not encroach upon any of the Ammonite land, neither the
region bordering on the Wadi Jaboc, nor the cities of the high-
lands.

3

1 ***Defeat of Og*** "Then we turned and proceeded toward Ba-
san. But Og, king of Basan, advanced against us with all his
2 people to give battle at Edrai. The Lord, however, said to me,
'Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your
hand with all his people and his land. Do to him as you did to
3 Sehon, king of the Amorrites, who lived in Hesebon.' And thus
the Lord, our God, delivered into our hands Og, king of Basan,
with all his people. We defeated him so completely that we
4 left him no survivor. At that time we captured all his cities,
none of them eluding our grasp, the whole region of Argob,
5 the kingdom of Og in Basan: sixty cities in all, | to say
nothing of the great number of unwalled towns. All the cities
6 were fortified with high walls and gates and bars. As we had
done to Sehon, king of Hesebon, so also here we doomed all
7 the cities, with their men, women and children; but all the live-
stock and the loot of each city we took as booty for ourselves.
8 "And so at that time we took from the two kings of the
Amorrites beyond the Jordan the territory from the Wadi Ar-
9 non to Mount Hermon [which is called Sarion by the Sidonians
10 and Sanir by the Amorrites], comprising all the cities of the
plateau and all Galaad and all the cities of the kingdom of
11 Og in Basan including Salecha and Edrai. [Og, king of Basan,
was the last remaining survivor of the Raphaim. He had a
bed of iron, nine regular cubits long and four wide, which is
still preserved in Rabba of the Ammonites.]

12 ***Allotment of the Conquered Lands*** "When we occu-
pied the land at that time, I gave Ruben and Gad the territory
from Aroer, on the edge of the Wadi Arnon, halfway up into
13 the highlands of Galaad, with the cities therein. The rest of

Galaad and all of Basan, the kingdom of Og, the whole Argob region, I gave to the half-trihe of Manasse. [All this region
14 of Basan was once called a land of the Raphaim. Jair, a Manasseite clan, took all the region of Argob as far as the border of the Gessurites and Maachathites, and called it after his own
15 name Basan Havoth-Jair, the name it bears today.] To Ma-
16 chir I gave Galaad, | and to Ruben and Gad the territory from Galaad to the Wadi Arnon—including the wadi bed and its banks—and to the Wadi Jaboc, which is the border of the Am-
17 monites, as well as the Araba with the Jordan and its eastern banks from Chenereth to the Salt Sea of the Araba, under the slopes of Phasga.

18 "At that time I charged them as follows: 'The Lord, your God, has given you this land as your own. But all you troops equipped for battle must cross over in the vanguard of your
19 brother Israelites. Only your wives and children, as well as your livestock, of which I know you have a large number, shall
20 remain behind in the towns I have given you, until the Lord has settled your kinsmen as well, and they too possess the land which the Lord, your God, will give them on the other side of the Jordan. Then you may all return to the possessions I have given you.'

21 "It was then that I instructed Josue, 'Your eyes have seen all that the Lord, your God, has done to both these kings; so, too, will the Lord do to all the kingdoms which you will en-
22 counter over there. Fear them not, for the Lord, your God, will fight for you.'

23 ***Refusal to Moses*** "And it was then that I besought the Lord,
24 'O Lord God, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and might. For what God in heaven or on earth can
25 perform deeds as mighty as yours? Ah, let me cross over and see this good land beyond the Jordan, this fine hill country, and
26 the Lebanon!' But the Lord was angry with me on your account and would not hear me. 'Enough!' the Lord said to me.
27 'Speak to me no more of this. Go up to the top of Phasga and look out to the west, and to the north, and to the south, and
28 to the east. Look well, for you shall not cross this Jordan. Commission Josue, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall cross at the head of this people and shall put them in posses-
29 sion of the land you are to see.' This was while we were in the ravine opposite Beth-Phogor.

4

1 ***Advantages of Fidelity*** "Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees which I am teaching you to observe, that you may

live, and may enter in and take possession of the land which
2 the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. In your ob-
servance of the commandments of the Lord, your God, which
I enjoin upon you, you shall not add to what I command you
3 nor subtract from it. You have seen with your own eyes what
the Lord did at Baal-Phogor: the Lord, your God, destroyed
from your midst everyone that followed the Baal of Phogor;
4 but you, who clung to the Lord, your God, are all alive today.
5 Therefore, I teach you the statutes and decrees as the Lord, my
God, has commanded me, that you may observe them in the
6 land you are entering to occupy. Observe them carefully, for
thus will you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to
the nations, who will hear of all these statutes and say, 'This
7 great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.' For what
great nation is there that has gods so close to it as the Lord,
8 our God, is to us whenever we call upon him? Or what great
nation has statutes and decrees that are as just as this whole
Law which I am setting before you today?

9 ***Revelation at Horeb*** "However, take care and be earnest-
ly on your guard not to forget the things which your own eyes
have seen, nor let them slip from your memory as long as you
live, but teach them to your children and to your children's
10 children: There was the day on which you stood before the
Lord, your God, at Horeb, and he said to me, 'Assemble the
people for me; I will have them hear my words, that they may
learn to fear me as long as they live in the land and may so
11 teach their children.' You came near and stood at the foot of
the mountain, which blazed to the very sky with fire and was
12 enveloped in a dense black cloud. Then the Lord spoke to you
from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words,
13 but saw no form; there was only a voice. He proclaimed to
you his covenant, which he commanded you to keep: the Ten
14 Commandments, which he wrote on two tablets of stone. The
Lord charged me at that time to teach you the statutes and de-
crees which you are to observe over in the land you will occupy.

15 ***Danger of Idolatry*** "You saw no form at all on the day the
Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire. Be
16 strictly on your guard, therefore, | not to degrade yourselves
by fashioning an idol to represent any figure, whether it be the
17 form of a man or of a woman, of any animal on the earth or
18 of any bird that flies in the sky, of anything that crawls on the
19 ground or of any fish in the waters under the earth. And when
you look up to the heavens and behold the sun or the moon or

any star among the heavenly hosts, do not be led astray in
adoring them and serving them. These the Lord, your Go
has let fall to the lot of all other nations under the heaven
20 but you he has taken and led out of that iron foundry, Egyp
21 that you might be his very own people, as you are today. Sinc
the Lord was angered against me on your account and swo
that I should not cross the Jordan nor enter the good land whic
22 he is giving you as a heritage, I myself shall die in this countr
without crossing the Jordan; but you will cross over and tak
23 possession of that good land. Take heed, therefore, lest, fo
getting the covenant which the Lord, your God, has made wit
you, you fashion for yourselves against his command an idc
24 in any form whatsoever. For the Lord, your God, is a con
suming fire, a jealous God.

25 ***God's Fidelity*** "When you have children and grandchildren
and have grown old in the land, should you then degrade your
selves by fashioning an idol in any form and by this evil don
26 in his sight provoke the Lord, your God, I call heaven and
earth this day to witness against you, that you shall all quickly
perish from the land which you will occupy when you cross th
Jordan. You shall not live in it for any length of time but shall
27 be promptly wiped out. The Lord will scatter you among th
nations, and there shall remain but a handful of you among th
28 nations to which the Lord will lead you. There you shall serv
gods fashioned by the hands of man out of wood and stone
gods which can neither see nor hear, neither eat nor smell
29 Yet there too you shall seek the Lord, your God; and you shall
indeed find him when you search after him with your whole
30 heart and your whole soul. In your distress, when all these
things shall have come upon you, you shall finally return to
31 the Lord, your God, and heed his voice. Since the Lord, your
God, is a merciful God, he will not abandon and destroy you
nor forget the covenant which under oath he made with your
fathers.

32 ***Proofs of God's Love*** "Ask now of the days of old, be
fore your time, ever since God created man upon the earth; ask
from one end of the sky to the other: Did anything so great
33 ever happen before? Was it ever heard of? | Did a people

4, 20: Egypt is called an *iron foundry*, or furnace for smelting iron because God allowed the Israelites to be afflicted there for the sake of their spiritual purification. The same expression for Egypt occurs also in 3 Kgs 8, 51; Jer 11, 4.

ever hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire, as
34 you did, and live? Or did any god venture to go and take a
nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by testings,
by signs and wonders, by war, with his strong hand and out-
stretched arm, and by great terrors, all of which the Lord, your
35 God, did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? All this you
were allowed to see that you might know the Lord is God and
36 there is no other. Out of the heavens he let you hear his voice
to discipline you; on earth he let you see his great fire, and you
37 heard him speaking out of the fire. For love of your fathers he
chose their descendants and personally led you out of Egypt
38 by his great power, driving out of your way nations greater and
mightier than you, so as to bring you in and to make their land
39 your heritage, as it is today. This is why you must now know,
and fix in your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above
40 and on earth below, and that there is no other. You must keep
his statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you today,
that you and your children after you may prosper, and that
you may have long life on the land which the Lord, your God,
is giving you forever."

41 ***Cities of Refuge*** Then Moses set apart three cities in the
42 region east of the Jordan, that a homicide might take refuge
there if he unwittingly killed his neighbor to whom he had pre-
viously borne no malice, and that he might save his life by
43 fleeing to one of these cities: Bosor in the desert, in the region
of the plateau, for the Rubenites; Ramoth in Galaad for the
Gadites; and Golan in Basan for the Manasseites.

II. GOD AND HIS COVENANT

44 ***Introduction*** This is the law which Moses set before the
45 Israelites. These are the ordinances, statutes and decrees which
he proclaimed to them when they had come out of Egypt |
46 and were beyond the Jordan in the ravine opposite Beth-Pho-
gor, in the land of Sehon, king of the Amorrites, who dwelt
in Hesebon and whom Moses and the Israelites defeated after
47 coming out of Egypt. They occupied his land and the land of
Og, king of Basan, as well—the land of these two kings of the
48 Amorrites in the region east of the Jordan: from Aroer on the
edge of the Wadi Arnon to Mount Sion (that is Hermon) |

4, 48: *Sion:* for other synonyms of Sion see those mentioned in 3, 9. In Hebrew the "S" of this word is different from the "S" in the "Sion" of Jerusalem.

49 and all the Araba east of the Jordan, as far as the Araba Se
under the slopes of Phasga.

5

1 ***The Covenant at Horeb*** Moses summoned all Israel an
said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and decrees whic
I proclaim in your hearing this day, that you may learn then
2 and take care to observe them. The Lord, our God, made
3 covenant with us at Horeb; not with our fathers did he mak
this covenant, but with us, all of us who are alive here thi
4 day. The Lord spoke with you face to face on the mountai
5 from the midst of the fire. Since you were afraid of the fir
and would not go up the mountain, I stood between the Lor
and you at that time, to announce to you these words of th
Lord:

6 ***The Decalogue*** 'I, the Lord, am your God, who brough
7 you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall
8 not have other gods besides me. You shall not carve idols for
yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the
9 earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not
bow down before them or worship them. For I, the Lord, your
God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishments for their fa-
thers' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to
10 the third and fourth generation | but bestowing mercy, down
to the thousandth generation, on the children of those who
love me and keep my commandments.
11 'You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
For the Lord will not leave unpunished him who takes his
name in vain.
12 'Take care to keep holy the Sabbath day as the Lord, your
13 God, commanded you. Six days you may labor and do all

5, 6-21: See Ex 20, 1-17 n.

5, 7: During the time of the patriarchs, Abraham and his people did not share our modern clearer notion of monotheism, even though God revealed Himself to Abraham. They may have considered God as a personal mysterious superhuman force. However, the Pentateuch writers stress that, regardless of the vague notion about God, Abraham was always communicating with Him. In the thirteenth century B.C., Moses and his followers held monotheism as verse 7 teaches, namely: acceptance of only one God to the exclusion of others. The prophets, from the eighth century onward, emphatically taught monotheism even more clearly.

5, 9f: God does not punish us for another's sins, but because of the solidarity of human society, the good or evil deeds of one generation may make their effects felt even on later generations. See Ex 20, 6 n.

14 your work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord,
your God. No work may be done then, whether by you, or your
son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or
ass or any of your beasts, or the alien who lives with you.
15 Your male and female slave should rest as you do. For re-
member that you too were once slaves in Egypt, and the Lord,
your God, brought you from there with his strong hand and
outstretched arm. That is why the Lord, your God, has com-
manded you to observe the Sabbath day.
16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord, your God,
has commanded you, that you may have a long life and pros-
perity in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.
17 'You shall not kill.
18 'You shall not commit adultery.
19 'You shall not steal.
20 'You shall not bear dishonest witness against your neighbor.
21 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
'You shall not desire your neighbor's house or field, nor his
male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything that be-
longs to him.'

22 ***Moses as Mediator*** "These words, and nothing more, the
Lord spoke with a loud voice to your entire assembly on the
mountain from the midst of the fire and the dense cloud. He
wrote them upon two tablets of stone and gave them to me.
23 But when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness,
while the mountain was ablaze with fire, you came to me in
24 the person of all your tribal heads and elders, | and said,
'The Lord, our God, has indeed let us see his glory and his
majesty! We have heard his voice from the midst of the fire
and have found out today that a man can still live after God
25 has spoken with him. But why should we die now? Surely this
great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord, our
26 God, any more, we shall die. For what mortal has heard, as we
have, the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of
27 fire, and survived? Go closer, you, and hear all that the Lord,
our God, will say, and then tell us what the Lord, our God,
tells you; we will listen and obey.'
28 "The Lord heard your words as you were speaking to me
and said to me, 'I have heard the words these people have spo-
29 ken to you, which are all well said. Would that they might
always be of such a mind, to fear me and to keep all my com-
mandments! Then they and their descendants would prosper
D 31 forever. Go, tell them to return to their tents. Then you wait
here near me and I will give you all the commandments, the

statutes and decrees you must teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I am giving them to possess.'
32 "Be careful, therefore, to do as the Lord, your God, has commanded you, not turning aside to the right or to the left
33 but following exactly the way prescribed for you by the Lord your God, that you may live and prosper, and may have long life in the land which you are to occupy.

6
1 "These then are the commandments, the statutes and decrees which the Lord, your God, has ordered that you be taught to observe in the land into which you are crossing for conquest,
2 so that you and your son and your grandson may fear the Lord, your God, and keep, throughout the days of your lives, all his statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you, and thus
3 have long life. Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe them, that you may grow and prosper the more, in keeping with the promise of the Lord, the God of your fathers, to give you a land flowing with milk and honey.

4 ***The Great Commandment*** "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is
5 our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and
6 with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I
7 enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of
8 them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on
9 your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

10 ***Fidelity in Prosperity*** "When the Lord, your God, brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that he would give you, a land with fine, large
11 cities that you did not build, with houses full of goods of all sorts that you did not garner, with cisterns that you did not

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6, 4: This is Israel's credo of monotheism. It was to become the opening of the Shema, a prayer of the later Jews.

6, 5: Only the Book of Deuteronomy explicitly contains this commandment (see also 6, 13; 10, 12-13; 11,1) of the love of God. Jesus quoted this verse (Mt 22,37) to express that the love of God is the greatest commandment. Love summarizes all the commandments (Rom 13, 8-10).

6, 8: Later Jews interpreted this literally. Even today they strap phylacteries (boxes containing parchments with these words) on their wrists and foreheads when at prayer. See Mt 23, 5.

dig, with vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant;
12 and when, therefore, you eat your fill, | take care not to for-
get the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that
13 place of slavery. The Lord, your God, shall you fear; him
14 shall you serve, and by his name shall you swear. You shall
not follow other gods, such as those of the surrounding nations,
15 lest the wrath of the Lord, your God, flare up against you and
be destroy you from the face of the land; for the Lord, your
God, who is in your midst, is a jealous God.
16 "You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test, as you
17 did at Massa. But keep the commandments of the Lord, your
God, and the ordinances and statutes he has enjoined on you.
18 Do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that you
may, according to his word, prosper, and may enter in and pos-
sess the good land which the Lord promised on oath to your
19 fathers, thrusting all your enemies out of your way.

20 ***Instruction to Children*** "Later on, when your son asks
you what these ordinances, statutes and decrees mean which
21 the Lord, our God, has enjoined on you, | you shall say to
your son, 'We were once slaves of Pharao in Egypt, but the
22 Lord brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand | and
wrought before our eyes signs and wonders, great and dire,
23 against Egypt and against Pharao and his whole house. He
brought us from there to lead us into the land he promised on
24 oath to our fathers, and to give it to us. Therefore, the Lord
commanded us to observe all these statutes in fear of the Lord,
our God, that we may always have as prosperous and happy
25 a life as we have today; and our justice before the Lord, our
God, is to consist in carefully observing all these command-
ments he has enjoined on us.'

7

1 ***Destruction of Pagans*** "When the Lord, your God, brings
you into the land which you are to enter and occupy, and dis-
lodges great nations before you—the Hethites, Gergesites,
Amorrites, Chanaanites, Pherezites, Hevites and Jebusites:
2 seven nations more numerous and powerful than you—and
when the Lord, your God, delivers them up to you and you
defeat them, you shall doom them. Make no covenant with
3 them and show them no mercy. You shall not intermarry with
them, neither giving your daughters to their sons nor taking
4 their daughters for your sons. For they would turn your sons
from following me to serving other gods, and then the wrath of
the Lord would flare up against you and quickly destroy you.

5 "But this is how you must deal with them: Tear down their
altars, smash their sacred pillars, chop down their sacred poles,
6 and destroy their idols by fire. For you are a people sacred to
the Lord, your God; he has chosen you from all the nations
7 on the face of the earth to be a people peculiarly his own. It
was not because you are the largest of all nations that the
Lord set his heart on you and chose you, for you are really the
8 smallest of all nations. It was because the Lord loved you and
because of his fidelity to the oath he had sworn to your fathers,
that he brought you out with his strong hand from the place
of slavery, and ransomed you from the hand of Pharao, king
9 of Egypt. Understand, then, that the Lord, your God, is God
indeed, the faithful God who keeps his merciful covenant down
to the thousandth generation toward those who love him and
10 keep his commandments, but who repays with destruction the
person who hates him; he does not dally with such a one,
11 but makes him personally pay for it. You shall therefore care-
fully observe the commandments, the statutes and the decrees
which I enjoin on you today.

12 ***Blessings of Obedience*** "As your reward for heeding these
decrees and observing them carefully, the Lord, your God, will
keep with you the merciful covenant which he promised on
13 oath to your fathers. He will love and bless and multiply you;
he will bless the fruit of your womb and the produce of your
soil, your grain and wine and oil, the issue of your herds and
the young of your flocks, in the land which he swore to your
14 fathers he would give you. You will be blessed above all peo-
ples; no man or woman among you shall be childless nor shall
15 your livestock be barren. The Lord will remove all sickness
from you; he will not afflict you with any of the malignant
diseases that you know from Egypt, but will leave them with
all your enemies.
16 "You shall consume all the nations which the Lord, your
God, will deliver up to you. You are not to look on them with
17 pity, lest you be ensnared into serving their gods. Perhaps you
will say to yourselves, 'These nations are greater than we.
18 How can we dispossess them?' | But do not be afraid of them.
Rather, call to mind what the Lord, your God, did to Pharao
19 and to all Egypt: the great testings which your own eyes have
seen, the signs and wonders, his strong hand and outstretched
arm with which the Lord, your God, brought you out. The same

7, 8: This is perhaps the most lucid text in the entire Bible on why God chose the Jews.

also will he do to all the nations of whom you are now afraid.
20 Moreover, the Lord, your God, will send hornets among them,
until the survivors who have hidden from you are destroyed.
21 Therefore, do not be terrified by them, for the Lord, your God,
22 who is in your midst, is a great and awesome God. He will dislodge these nations before you little by little. You cannot exterminate them all at once, lest the wild beasts become too
23 numerous for you. The Lord, your God, will deliver them up to you and will rout them utterly until they are annihilated.
24 He will deliver their kings into your hand, that you may make their names perish from under the heavens. No man will be able
25 to stand up against you, till you have put an end to them. The images of their gods you shall destroy by fire. Do not covet the silver or gold on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord, your God.
26 You shall not bring any abominable thing into your house, lest you be doomed with it; loathe and abhor it utterly as a thing that is doomed.

8

1 ***God's Care*** "Be careful to observe all the commandments I enjoin on you today, that you may live and increase, and may enter in and possess the land which the Lord promised on oath
2 to your fathers. Remember how for forty years now the Lord, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was
3 your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that
4 comes forth from the mouth of the Lord. The clothing did not fall from you in tatters, nor did your feet swell these forty years.
5 So you must realize that the Lord, your God, disciplines you even as a man disciplines his son.

6 ***Danger of Prosperity*** "Therefore, keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, by walking in his ways and fearing
7 him. For the Lord, your God, is bringing you into a good coun-

7, 20: *Hornets:* afflictions, as in Ex 23, 28.

8, 3: *Not by bread alone . . . mouth of the Lord:* since God provided the wondrous manna, it should be evident that the nourishment which man obtains through natural means can sometimes fail him. In such circumstances he must appeal to God who can aid him by a mere word. This truth is frequently recalled in the Bible. See especially Mt 4, 4, where Christ Himself recalls it at the scene of the temptation.

try, a land with streams of water, with springs and fountains
8 welling up in the hills and valleys, a land of wheat and barley,
of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, of olive trees and of
9 honey, | a land where you can eat bread without stint and
where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones contain iron
10 and in whose hills you can mine copper. But when you have
eaten your fill, you must bless the Lord, your God, for the good
11 country he has given you. Be careful not to forget the Lord,
your God, by neglecting his commandments and decrees and
12 statutes which I enjoin on you today: lest, when you have
eaten your fill, and have built fine houses and lived in them, |
13 and have increased your herds and flocks, your silver and
14 gold, and all your property, | you then become haughty of
heart and unmindful of the Lord, your God, who brought you
15 out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided
you through the vast and terrible desert with its saraph ser-
pents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; who
16 brought forth water for you from the flinty rock | and fed
you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers,
that he might afflict you and test you, but also make you pros-
17 perous in the end. Otherwise, you might say to yourselves, 'It
is my own power and the strength of my own hand that has
18 obtained for me this wealth.' Remember then, it is the Lord,
your God, who gives you the power to acquire wealth, by ful-
filling, as he has now done, the covenant which he swore to
19 your fathers. But if you forget the Lord, your God, and follow
other gods, serving and worshiping them, I forewarn you this
20 day that you will perish utterly. Like the nations which the
Lord destroys before you, so shall you too perish for not heed-
ing the voice of the Lord, your God.

9

1 ***Unmerited Success*** "Hear, O Israel! You are now about to
cross the Jordan to enter in and dispossess nations greater and
stronger than yourselves, having large cities fortified to the
2 sky, | the Enacim, a people great and tall. You know of them
and have heard it said of them, 'Who can stand up against the
3 Enacim?' Understand, then, today that it is the Lord, your God,
who will cross over before you as a consuming fire; he it is
who will reduce them to nothing and subdue them before you,
so that you can drive them out and destroy them quickly, as
4 the Lord promised you. After the Lord, your God, has thrust

8, 15: *Saraph serpents:* see Nm 21, 6-9 n.
9, 2: *Enacim:* see 1, 28 n.

them out of your way, do not say to yourselves, 'It is because
of my merits that the Lord has brought me in to possess this
land'; for it is really because of the wickedness of these na-
5 tions that the Lord is driving them out before you. No, it is
not because of your merits or the integrity of your heart that
you are going in to take possession of their land; but the Lord,
your God, is driving these nations out before you on account of
their wickedness and in order to keep the promise which he
made on oath to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
6 Understand this, therefore: it is not because of your merits that
the Lord, your God, is giving you this good land to possess, for
you are a stiff-necked people.

7 ***The Golden Calf*** "Bear in mind and do not forget how you
angered the Lord, your God, in the desert. From the day you
left the land of Egypt until you arrived in this place, you have
8 been rebellious toward the Lord. At Horeb you so provoked
9 the Lord that he was angry enough to destroy you, when I had
gone up the mountain to receive the stone tablets of the cove-
nant which the Lord made with you. Meanwhile I stayed on the
mountain forty days and forty nights without eating or drink-
10 ing, till the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone inscribed, by
God's own finger, with a copy of all the words that the Lord
spoke to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the
11 day of the assembly. Then, at the end of the forty days and
forty nights, when the Lord had given me the two stone tab-
12 lets of the covenant, | he said to me, 'Go down from here now,
quickly, for your people whom you have brought out of Egypt
have become depraved; they have already turned aside from the
way I pointed out to them and have made for themselves a
13 molten idol. I have seen now how stiff-necked this people is,' the
14 Lord said to me. 'Let me be, that I may destroy them and blot
out their name from under the heavens. I will then make of
you a nation mightier and greater than they.'
15 "When I had come down again from the blazing, fiery moun-
tain, with the two tablets of the covenant in both my hands,
16 I saw how you had sinned against the Lord, your God: you
had already turned aside from the way which the Lord had
pointed out to you by making for yourselves a molten calf!
17 Raising the two tablets with both hands I threw them from me
18 and broke them before your eyes. Then, as before, I lay pros-
trate before the Lord for forty days and forty nights without
eating or drinking, because of all the sin you had committed in
the sight of the Lord and the evil you had done to provoke him.
19 For I dreaded the fierce anger of the Lord against you: his

wrath would destroy you. Yet once again the Lord listened to
20 me. With Aaron, too, the Lord was deeply angry, and would
have killed him had I not prayed for him also at that time.
21 Then, taking the calf, the sinful object you had made, and
fusing it with fire, I ground it down to powder as fine as dust,
which I threw into the wadi that went down the mountainside.
22 "At Thabera, at Massa, and at Cibroth-Hatthaava likewise,
23 you provoked the Lord to anger. And when he sent you up from
Cadesbarne to take possession of the land he was giving you,
you rebelled against this command of the Lord, your God, and
24 would not trust or obey him. Ever since I have known you, you
have been rebels against the Lord.
25 "Those forty days, then, and forty nights, I lay prostrate
before the Lord, because he had threatened to destroy you. |
26 This was my prayer to him: O Lord God, destroy not your peo-
ple, the heritage which your majesty has ransomed and brought
27 out of Egypt with your strong hand. | Remember your serv-
ants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Look not upon the stubborn-
28 ness of this people nor upon their wickedness and sin, lest the
people from whose land you have brought us say, 'The Lord
was not able to bring them into the land he promised them';
or 'Out of hatred for them, he brought them out to slay them in
29 the desert.' They are, after all, your people and your heritage,
whom you have brought out by your great power and with your
outstretched arm.

10

1 "At that time the Lord said to me, 'Cut two tablets of stone
like the former; then come up the mountain to me. Also make an
2 ark of wood. | I will write upon the tablets the commandments
that were on the former tablets that you broke, and you shall
3 place them in the ark.' So I made an ark of acacia wood, and
cut two tablets of stone like the former, and went up the moun-
4 tain carrying the two tablets. The Lord then wrote on them, as
he had written before, the Ten Commandments which he spoke
to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day
5 of the assembly. After the Lord had given them to me, | I
turned and came down the mountain, and placed the tablets in
the ark I had made. There they have remained, in keeping
with the command the Lord gave me.
6 [The Israelites set out from Beroth Bene-Jaacan for Moser,
where Aaron died and was buried, his son Eleazar succeeding
7 him in the priestly office. From there they set out for Gadgad,
and from Gadgad for Jetabatha, a region where there is water
in the wadies.]

8 "At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the
Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, to be in attendance before the
Lord and minister to him, and to give blessings in his name, as
9 they have done to this day. For this reason, Levi has no share
in the heritage with his brothers; the Lord himself is his heri-
tage, as the Lord, your God, has told him.
10 "After I had spent these other forty days and forty nights on
the mountain, and the Lord had once again heard me and de-
11 cided not to destroy you, he said to me, 'Go now and set out at
the head of your people, that they may enter in and occupy
the land which I swore to their fathers I would give them.'

12 ***The Lord's Majesty*** "And now, Israel, what does the Lord,
your God, ask of you but to fear the Lord, your God, and fol-
low his ways exactly, to love and serve the Lord, your God,
13 with all your heart and all your soul, to keep the command-
ments and statutes of the Lord which I enjoin on you today
14 for your own good? | Think! The heavens, even the highest
heavens, belong to the Lord, your God, as well as the earth
15 and everything on it. Yet in his love for your fathers the Lord
was so attached to them as to choose you, their descendants,
in preference to all other peoples, as indeed he has now done.
16 Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and be no longer stiff-necked.
17 For the Lord, your God, is the God of gods, the Lord of lords,
the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favorites, ac-
18 cepts no bribes; who executes justice for the orphan and the wid-
19 ow, and befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So you too
must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in
20 the land of Egypt. The Lord, your God, shall you fear, and him
21 shall you serve; hold fast to him and swear by his name. He is
your glory, he, your God, who has done for you those great
22 and terrible things which your own eyes have seen. Your an-
cestors went down to Egypt seventy strong, and now the Lord,
your God, has made you as numerous as the stars of the sky.

11

1 ***The Wonders of the Lord*** "Love the Lord, your God,
therefore, and always heed his charge: his statutes, decrees
2 and commandments. It is not your children, who have not
known it from experience, but you yourselves who must now
understand the discipline of the Lord, your God; his majesty, his
3 strong hand and outstretched arm; the signs and deeds he
wrought among the Egyptians, on Pharao, king of Egypt, and
4 on all his land; what he did to the Egyptian army and to their
horses and chariots, engulfing them in the water of the Red

Sea as they pursued you, and bringing ruin upon them even
5 to this day; what he did for you in the desert until you ar
6 rived in this place; and what he did to the Rubenites Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, when the ground opened its mouth and swallowed them up out of the midst of Israel, with their families and tents and every living thing that belonged to them
7 With your own eyes you have seen all these great deeds tha
8 the Lord has done. Keep all the commandments, then, which I enjoin on you today, that you may be strong enough to enter in and take possession of the land into which you are crossing
9 and that you may have long life on the land which the Lord swore to your fathers he would give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 ***The Gift of Rain*** "For the land which you are to enter and occupy is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you would sow your seed and then water it by
11 hand, as in a vegetable garden. No, the land into which you are crossing for conquest is a land of hills and valleys that drinks
12 in rain from the heavens, a land which the Lord, your God, looks after; his eyes are upon it continually from the beginning
13 of the year to the end. If, then, you truly heed my commandments which I enjoin on you today, loving and serving the Lord,
14 your God, with all your heart and all your soul, I will give the seasonal rain to your land, the early rain and the late rain, that
15 you may have your grain, wine and oil to gather in; and I will bring forth grass in your fields for your animals. Thus you may
16 eat your fill. But be careful lest your heart be so lured away
17 that you serve other gods and worship them. For then the wrath of the Lord will flare up against you and he will close up the heavens, so that no rain will fall, and the soil will not yield its crops, and you will soon perish from the good land he is giving you.

18 ***Reward of Fidelity*** "Therefore, take these words of mine into your heart and soul. Bind them at your wrist as a sign,
19 and let them be a pendant on your forehead. Teach them to your children, speaking of them at home and abroad, whether
20 you are busy or at rest. And write them on the doorposts of
21 your houses and on your gates, so that, as long as the heavens are above the earth, you and your children may live on in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers he would give them.

11, 18-21: See 6, 8 n.

22 "For if you are careful to observe all these commandments
I enjoin on you, loving the Lord, your God, and following his
23 ways exactly, and holding fast to him, | the Lord will drive
all these nations out of your way, and you will dispossess na-
24 tions greater and mightier than yourselves. Every place where
you set foot shall be yours: from the desert and from Lebanon,
from the Euphrates River to the Western Sea, shall be your
25 territory. None shall stand up against you; the Lord, your God,
will spread the fear and dread of you through any land where
you set foot, as he promised you.

26 ***A Blessing and a Curse*** "I set before you here, this day,
27 a blessing and a curse: a blessing for obeying the command-
28 ments of the Lord, your God, which I enjoin on you today; a
curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord, your
God, but turn aside from the way I ordain for you today, to
29 follow other gods, whom you have not known. When the Lord,
your God, brings you into the land which you are to enter and
occupy, then you shall pronounce the blessing on Mount Gari-
30 zim, the curse on Mount Ebal. [Are they not beyond the Jordan,
on the other side of the western road in the country of the Cha-
naanites who live in the Araba, opposite Galgal, beside the
31 terebinth of More?] For you are about to cross the Jordan to
enter and occupy the land which the Lord, your God, is giving
you. When, therefore, you take possession of it and settle
32 there, be careful to observe all the statutes and decrees that I
set before you today.

III. EXPOSITION OF THE LAW

12

1 ***One Sanctuary*** "These are the statutes and decrees which
you must be careful to observe in the land which the Lord, the
God of your fathers, has given you to occupy, as long as you
2 live on its soil. Destroy without fail every place on the high
mountains, on the hills, and under every leafy tree where the
3 nations you are to dispossess worship their gods. Tear down
their altars, smash their sacred pillars, destroy by fire their sa-
cred poles, and shatter the idols of their gods, that you may
stamp out the remembrance of them in any such place.

11, 24: *Western Sea:* the Mediterranean.
11, 26-32: See chs. 27—28.
12, 3: *Sacred pillars:* free standing slabs of stone connected with burial services. *Sacred poles:* wooden posts representing the mother goddess, Asherah.

4 "That is not how you are to worship the Lord, your God
5 Instead, you shall resort to the place which the Lord, your God
chooses out of all your tribes and designates as his dwelling
6 | and there you shall bring your holocausts and sacrifices, your
tithes and personal contributions, your votive and freewill of-
7 ferings, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks. There, too,
before the Lord, your God, you and your families shall eat
and make merry over all your undertakings, because the Lord,
8 your God, has blessed you. You shall not do as we are now
9 doing; here, everyone does what seems right to himself, since
you have not yet reached your resting place, the heritage which
10 the Lord, your God, will give you. But after you have crossed
the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord, your God,
is giving you as a heritage, when he has given you rest from all
11 your enemies round about and you live there in security, | then
to the place which the Lord, your God, chooses as the dwelling
place for his name you shall bring all the offerings I command
you: your holocausts and sacrifices, your tithes and personal
contributions, and every special offering you have vowed to
12 the Lord. You shall make merry before the Lord, your God,
with your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves,
as well as with the Levite who belongs to your community but
13 has no share of his own in your heritage. Take care not to of-
14 fer up your holocausts in any place you fancy, but offer them
up in the place which the Lord chooses from among your
tribes; there you shall make whatever offerings I enjoin upon
you.

15 ***Profane and Sacred Meals*** "However, in any of your
communities you may slaughter and eat to your heart's desire as
much meat as the Lord, your God, has blessed you with; and
the unclean as well as the clean may eat it, as they do the gazelle
16 or the deer. Only, you shall not partake of the blood, but must
17 pour it out on the ground like water. Moreover, you shall not,
in your own communities, partake of your tithe of grain or
wine or oil, of the first-born of your herd or flock, of any of-
fering you have vowed, of your freewill offerings, or of your
18 personal contributions. These you must eat before the Lord,
your God, in the place he chooses, along with your son and
daughter, your male and female slave, and the Levite who be-

12, 4-7: The people must worship God at only one sanctuary and not at pagan shrines. Dt never identifies the sanctuary geographically, but it was at Jerusalem. This centralized cult was not practiced at the times of the Judges (Jgs 6, 28; 13, 16), nor at the time of Solomon (3 Kgs 3, 4).

longs to your community; and there, before the Lord, you shall
19 make merry over all your undertakings. Take care, also, that
you do not neglect the Levite as long as you live in the land.
20 "After the Lord, your God, has enlarged your territory, as
he promised you, when you wish meat for food, you may eat it
21 at will, to your heart's desire; and if the place which the Lord,
your God, chooses for the abode of his name is too far, you may
slaughter in the manner I have told you any of your herd or
flock that the Lord has given you, and eat it to your heart's de-
sire in your own community. You may eat it as you would the
gazelle or the deer: the unclean and the clean eating it alike.
23 But make sure that you do not partake of the blood; for blood
is life, and you shall not consume this seat of life with the
24 flesh. Do not partake of the blood, therefore, but pour it out
25 on the ground like water. Abstain from it, that you and your
children after you may prosper for doing what is right in the
26 sight of the Lord. However, any sacred gifts or votive offerings
that you may have, you shall bring with you to the place
27 which the Lord chooses, and there you must offer both the
flesh and the blood of your holocausts on the altar of the Lord,
your God; of your other sacrifices the blood indeed must be
poured out against the altar of the Lord, your God, but their
28 flesh may be eaten. Be careful to heed all these command-
ments I enjoin on you, that you and your descendants may al-
ways prosper for doing what is good and right in the sight of
the Lord, your God.

29 ***Pagan Rites*** "When the Lord, your God, removes the na-
tions from your way as you advance to dispossess them, be on
your guard! Otherwise, once they have been wiped out before
you and you have replaced them and are settled in their land, |
30 you will be lured into following them. Do not inquire regarding
their gods, 'How did these nations worship their gods? I, too,
31 would do the same.' | You shall not thus worship the Lord, your
God, because they offered to their gods every abomination that
the Lord detests, even burning their sons and daughters to their
gods.

13

1 ***Penalties for Idolatry*** "Every command that I enjoin on
you, you shall be careful to observe, neither adding to it nor
subtracting from it.
2 "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer who
3 promises you a sign or wonder, urging you to follow other gods,

whom you have not known, and to serve them: even though the
4 sign or wonder he has foretold you comes to pass, pay no attention to the words of that prophet or that dreamer; for the Lord, your God, is testing you to learn whether you really love
5 him with all your heart and with all your soul. The Lord, your God, shall you follow, and him shall you fear; his commandment shall you observe, and his voice shall you heed,
6 serving him and holding fast to him alone. But that prophet or that dreamer shall be put to death, because, in order to lead you astray from the way which the Lord, your God, has directed you to take, he has preached apostasy from the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and ransomed you from that place of slavery. Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst.

7 "If your own full brother, or your son or daughter, or your beloved wife, or your intimate friend, entices you secretly to serve other gods, whom you and your fathers have not known,
8 | gods of any other nation, near at hand or far away, from
9 one end of the earth to the other: do not yield to him or listen to him, nor look with pity upon him, to spare or shield him, |
10 but kill him. Your hand shall be the first raised to slay him;
11 the rest of the people shall join in with you. You shall stone him to death, because he sought to lead you astray from the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
12 that place of slavery. And all Israel, hearing of it, shall fear and never again do such evil as this in your midst.

13 "If, in any of the cities which the Lord, your God, gives you
14 to dwell in, you hear it said | that certain scoundrels have sprung up among you and have led astray the inhabitants of
15 their city to serve other gods whom you have not known, you must inquire carefully into the matter and investigate it thoroughly. If you find that it is true and an established fact that
16 this abomination has been committed in your midst, you shall put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, dooming the city
17 and all life that is in it, even its cattle, to the sword. Having heaped up all its spoils in the middle of its square, you shall burn the city with all its spoils as a whole burnt offering to the Lord, your God. Let it be a heap of ruins forever, never to be
18 rebuilt. | You shall not retain anything that is doomed, that the blazing wrath of the Lord may die down and he may show you mercy and in his mercy for you may multiply you as he prom-
19 ised your fathers on oath; because you have heeded the voice of the Lord, your God, keeping all his commandments which I enjoin on you today, doing what is right in his sight.

14
1 ***Pagan Mourning Rites*** "You are children of the Lord,
your God. You shall not gash yourselves nor shave the hair
2 above your foreheads for the dead. For you are a people sacred
to the Lord, your God, who has chosen you from all the na-
tions on the face of the earth to be a people peculiarly his own.

4 ***Clean and Unclean Animals*** "You shall not eat any
abominable thing. These are the animals you may eat: the ox,
5 the sheep, the goat, | the red deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the
6 ibex, the addax, the oryx, and the mountain sheep. Any animal
that has hoofs you may eat, provided it is cloven-footed and
7 chews the cud. But you shall not eat any of the following that
only chew the cud or only have cloven hoofs: the camel, the
hare and the rock badger, which indeed chew the cud, but do
8 not have hoofs and are therefore unclean for you; and the pig,
which indeed has hoofs and is cloven-footed, but does not chew
the cud and is therefore unclean for you. Their flesh you shall
not eat, and their dead bodies you shall not touch.
9 "Of the various creatures that live in the water, whatever
10 has both fins and scales you may eat, but all those that lack
either fins or scales you shall not eat; they are unclean for you.
11,12 "You may eat all clean birds. But you shall not eat any of
13 the following: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, | the various
14,15 kites and falcons, all the various species of crows, | the ostrich,
16 the nightjar, the gull, the various species of hawks, | the owl,
17 the screech owl, the ibis, | the desert owl, the buzzard, the
18 cormorant, | the stork, the various species of herons, the hoo-
19 poe, and the bat. All winged insects, too, are unclean for you
20 and shall not be eaten. But you may eat any clean winged crea-
tures.
21 "You must not eat any animal that has died of itself, for
you are a people sacred to the Lord, your God. But you may
give it to an alien who belongs to your community, and he may
eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner.
"You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

22 ***Tithes*** "Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows
23 in the field you have sown; then in the place which the Lord,
your God, chooses as the dwelling place of his name you shall

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14, 19: The apparent contradiction is to be resolved in the light of Lv 11, 20-23; the *unclean winged insects* are those that walk on the ground; the *clean winged creatures* are those that leap on the ground, such as certain species of locusts.

eat in his presence your tithe of the grain, wine and oil, as well
as the firstlings of your herd and flock, that you may learn al-
24 ways to fear the Lord, your God. If, however, the journey
is too much for you and you are not able to bring your tithe,
because the place which the Lord, your God, chooses for the
abode of his name is too far for you, considering how the Lord
25 has blessed you, | you may exchange the tithe for money and,
with the purse of money in hand, go to the place which the
26 Lord, your God, chooses. You may then exchange the money
for whatever you desire; oxen or sheep, wine or strong drink,
or anything else you would enjoy, and there before the Lord,
your God, you shall partake of it and make merry with your
27 family. But do not neglect the Levite who belongs to your com-
munity, for he has no share in the heritage with you.
28 "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the
tithes of your produce for that year and deposit them in com-
29 munity stores, that the Levite who has no share in the heritage
with you, and also the alien, the orphan and the widow who
belong to your community, may come and eat their fill; so that
the Lord, your God, may bless you in all that you undertake.

15

1 ***Debts and the Poor*** "At the end of every seven-year period
2 you shall have a relaxation of debts, | which shall be observed
as follows. Every creditor shall relax his claim on what he has
loaned his neighbor; he must not press his neighbor, his kins-
man, because a relaxation in honor of the Lord has been pro-
3 claimed. You may press a foreigner, but you shall relax the
4 claim on your kinsman for what is yours. Nay, more! since the
Lord, your God, will bless you abundantly in the land he will
give you to occupy as your heritage, there should be no one of
5 you in need. If you but heed the voice of the Lord, your God,
and carefully observe all these commandments which I enjoin
6 on you today, | you will lend to many nations, and borrow
from none; you will rule over many nations, and none will rule
over you, since the Lord, your God, will bless you as he prom-
7 ised. If one of your kinsmen in any community is in need in the
land which the Lord, your God, is giving you, you shall not
harden your heart nor close your hand to him in his need.
8 Instead, you shall open your hand to him and freely lend him
9 enough to meet his need. Be on your guard lest, entertaining the
mean thought that the seventh year, the year of relaxation, is
near, you grudge help to your needy kinsman and give him
nothing; else he will cry to the Lord against you and you will

10 be held guilty. When you give to him, give freely and not with
ill will; for the Lord, your God, will bless you for this in all
11 your works and undertakings. The needy will never be lacking
in the land; that is why I command you to open your hand to
your poor and needy kinsman in your country.

12 ***Hebrew Slaves*** "If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman,
sells himself to you, he is to serve you for six years, but in
the seventh year you shall dismiss him from your service, a
13 free man. When you do so, you shall not send him away empty-
14 handed, but shall weight him down with gifts from your flock
and threshing floor and wine press, in proportion to the blessing
15 the Lord, your God, has bestowed on you. For remember that
you too were once slaves in the land of Egypt, and the Lord,
your God, ransomed you. That is why I am giving you this
16 command today. If, however, he tells you that he does not wish
to leave you, because he is devoted to you and your household,
17 since he fares well with you, | you shall take an awl and thrust
it through his ear into the door, and he shall then be your slave
forever. Your female slave, also, you shall treat in the same
18 way. You must not be reluctant to let your slave go free, since
the service he has given you for six years was worth twice a
hired man's salary; then also the Lord, your God, will bless
you in everything you do.

19 ***Firstlings*** "You shall consecrate to the Lord, your God,
all the male firstlings of your herd and of your flock. You shall
not work the firstlings of your cattle, nor shear the firstlings
20 of your flock. Year after year you and your family shall eat them
21 before the Lord, your God, in the place he chooses. If, however,
a firstling is lame or blind or has any other serious defect, you
22 shall not sacrifice it to the Lord, your God, but in your own
communities you may eat it, the unclean and the clean eating
23 it alike, as you would a gazelle or a deer. Only, you shall not
partake of its blood, which must be poured out on the ground
like water.

16

1 ***Feast of the Passover*** "Observe the month of Abib by keep-
ing the Passover of the Lord, your God, since it was in the
2 month of Abib that he brought you by night out of Egypt. You

16, 1: *Abib:* the name of the month in which the barley harvest fell, corresponding to our March and April; at a later period this month received the Babylonian name of "Nisan."

shall offer the Passover sacrifice from your flock or your herd
to the Lord, your God, in the place which he chooses as the
3 dwelling place of his name. You shall not eat leavened bread
with it. For seven days you shall eat with it only unleavened
bread, the bread of affliction, that you may remember as long
as you live the day of your departure from the land of Egypt;
4 for in frightened haste you left the land of Egypt. Nothing
leavened may be found in all your territory for seven days, and
none of the meat which you sacrificed on the evening of the first
day shall be kept overnight for the next day.
5 "You may not sacrifice the Passover in any of the commun-
6 ities which the Lord, your God, gives you; only at the place
which he chooses as the dwelling place of his name, and in the
evening at sunset, on the anniversary of your departure from
7 Egypt, shall you sacrifice the Passover. You shall cook and eat
it at the place the Lord, your God, chooses; then in the morn-
8 ing you may return to your tents. For six days you shall eat
unleavened bread, and on the seventh there shall be a solemn
meeting in honor of the Lord, your God; on that day you shall
not do any sort of work.

9 ***Feast of Weeks*** "You shall count off seven weeks, com-
puting them from the day when the sickle is first put to the
10 standing grain. You shall then keep the feast of Weeks in honor
of the Lord, your God, and the measure of your own freewill
offering shall be in proportion to the blessing the Lord, your
11 God, has bestowed on you. In the place which the Lord, your
God, chooses as the dwelling place of his name, you shall
make merry in his presence together with your son and daugh-
ter, your male and female slave, and the Levite who belongs
to your community, as well as the alien, the orphan and the
12 widow among you. Remember that you too were once slaves
in Egypt, and carry out these statutes carefully.

13 ***Feast of Booths*** "You shall celebrate the feast of Booths
for seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from
14 your threshing floor and wine press. You shall make merry at
your feast, together with your son and daughter, your male
and female slave, and also the Levite, the alien, the orphan and
15 the widow who belong to your community. For seven days you
shall celebrate this pilgrim feast in honor of the Lord, your
God, in the place which he chooses; since the Lord, your God,
has blessed you in all your crops and in all your undertakings,
you shall do naught but make merry.
16 "Three times a year, then, every male among you shall ap-

pear before the Lord, your God, in the place which he chooses:
at the feast of Unleavened Bread, at the feast of Weeks, and at
the feast of Booths. No one shall appear before the Lord
17 empty-handed, but each of you with as much as he can give, in
proportion to the blessings which the Lord, your God, has be-
stowed on you.

18 ***Judges*** "You shall appoint judges and officials throughout
your tribes to administer true justice for the people in all the
19 communities which the Lord, your God, is giving you. You shall
not distort justice; you must be impartial. You shall not take
a bribe; for a bribe blinds the eyes even of the wise and twists
20 the words even of the just. Justice and justice alone shall be
your aim, that you may have life and may possess the land
which the Lord, your God, is giving you.

21 ***Pagan Worship*** "You shall not plant a sacred pole of any
kind of wood beside the altar of the Lord, your God, which you
22 will build; nor shall you erect a sacred pillar, such as the Lord,
your God, detests.

17
1 "You shall not sacrifice to the Lord, your God, from the herd
or from the flock an animal with any serious defect; that would
be an abomination to the Lord, your God.
2 "If there is found among you, in any one of the communities
which the Lord, your God, gives you, a man or a woman who
does evil in the sight of the Lord, your God, and transgresses
3 his covenant, | by serving other gods, or by worshiping the
sun or the moon or any of the host of the sky, against my
4 command; and if, on being informed of it, you find by careful
investigation that it is true and an established fact that this abom-
5 ination has been committed in Israel: you shall bring the man
(or woman) who has done the evil deed out to your city gates
6 and stone him to death. The testimony of two or three wit-
nesses is required for putting a person to death; no one shall
7 be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. At the
execution, the witnesses are to be the first to raise their hands
against him; afterward all the people are to join in. Thus shall
you purge the evil from your midst.

16, 21—17, 7: This section seems to be out of its proper place, since interrupts the natural sequence of the laws for the judges (16, 18-20 nd 17, 8-13). It probably belongs to the similar section, 12, 29—14, 2.

8 ***Judges*** "If in your own community there is a case at issue
which proves too complicated for you to decide, in a matter of
bloodshed or of civil rights or of personal injury, you shall then
9 go up to the place which the Lord, your God, chooses, | to the
Levitical priests or to the judge who is in office at that time.
They shall study the case and then hand down to you their de-
10 cision. According to this decision that they give you in the place
which the Lord chooses, you shall act, being careful to do ex-
11 actly as they direct. You shall carry out the directions they give
you and the verdict they pronounce for you, without turning
aside to the right or to the left from the decision they hand
12 down to you. Any man who has the insolence to refuse to listen
to the priest who officiates there in the ministry of the Lord,
your God, or to the judge, shall die. Thus shall you purge the
13 evil from your midst. And all the people, on hearing of it,
shall fear, and never again be so insolent.

14 ***The King*** "When you have come into the land which the
Lord, your God, is giving you, and have occupied it and settled
in it, should you then decide to have a king over you like all
15 the surrounding nations, you shall set that man over you as
your king whom the Lord, your God, chooses. He whom you
set over you as king must be your kinsman; a foreigner, who is
16 no kin of yours, you may not set over you. But he shall not have
a great number of horses; nor shall he make his people go back
again to Egypt to acquire them, against the Lord's warning that
17 you must never go back that way again. Neither shall he have
a great number of wives, lest his heart be estranged, nor shall
18 he accumulate a vast amount of silver and gold. When he is
enthroned in his kingdom, he shall have a copy of this law
made from the scroll that is in the custody of the Levitical
19 priests. He shall keep it with him and read it all the days of
his life that he may learn to fear the Lord, his God, and to heed
20 and fulfill all the words of this law and these statutes. Let him
not become estranged from his countrymen through pride, nor
turn aside to the right or to the left from these commandments.
Then he and his descendants will enjoy a long reign in Israel

18

1 ***Priests*** "The whole priestly tribe of Levi shall have no
share in the heritage with Israel; they shall live on the obla-
2 tions of the Lord and the portions due to him. Levi shall have
no heritage among his brothers; the Lord himself is his heritage,
3 as he has told him. The priests shall have a right to the follow-

ing things from the people: from those who are offering a sacrifice, whether the victim is from the herd or from the flock, the priest shall receive the shoulder, the jowls and the stomach.
4 You shall also give him the first fruits of your grain and wine and oil, as well as the first fruits of the shearing of your flock;
5 for the Lord, your God, has chosen him and his sons out of all your tribes to be always in attendance to minister in the name of the Lord.
6 "When a Levite goes from one of your communities anywhere in Israel in which he ordinarily resides, to visit, as his
7 heart may desire, the place which the Lord chooses, | he may minister there in the name of the Lord, his God, like all his
8 fellow Levites who are in attendance there before the Lord. He shall then receive the same portions to eat as the rest, along with his monetary offerings and heirlooms.

9 ***Prophets*** "When you come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the
10 abominations of the peoples there. Let there not be found among you anyone who immolates his son or daughter in the fire, nor a fortuneteller, soothsayer, charmer, diviner, | or caster of spells, nor one who consults ghosts and spirits or seeks oracles from the dead. Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord, and because of such abominations the Lord, your God, is driving these nations out of your way. You, however, must be altogether sincere toward the Lord, your God. Though these nations whom you are to dispossess listen to their soothsayers and fortunetellers, the Lord, your God, will not permit you to do so.

"A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kinsmen; to him you shall listen. This is exactly what you requested of the Lord, your God, at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let us not again hear the voice of the Lord, our God, nor see this great fire any more, lest we die.' And the Lord said to me, 'This was well said. | I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him. If any man will not listen to my words which he speaks in my name, I myself will make him answer for it. But if a prophet presumes to speak in

18, 15-20: The people must not have recourse to pagan means to rn God's will (v. 11), but to a series of prophets whom God will ovide for His people. The New Testament saw this text realized in rist. See Acts 3, 22-26; 7, 37; Jn 1, 21.

my name an oracle that I have not commanded him to speak, or
speaks in the name of other gods, he shall die.'
21 "If you say to yourselves, 'How can we recognize an oracle
22 which the Lord has spoken?', | know that, even though a
prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if his oracle is not ful-
filled or verified, it is an oracle which the Lord did not speak.
The prophet has spoken it presumptuously, and you shall have
no fear of him.

19

1 ***Cities of Refuge*** "When the Lord, your God, removes the
nations whose land he is giving you, and you have taken their
2 place and are settled in their cities and houses, you shall set
apart three cities in the land which the Lord, your God, is
3 giving you to occupy. You shall thereby divide into three
regions the land which the Lord, your God, will give you as a
heritage, and so arrange the routes that every homicide will
be able to find a refuge.
4 "It is in the following case that a homicide may take refuge
in such a place to save his life: when someone unwittingly kills
5 his neighbor to whom he had previously borne no malice. For
example, if he goes with his neighbor to a forest to cut wood,
and as he swings his ax to fell a tree, its head flies off the handle
and hits his neighbor a mortal blow, he may take refuge in
6 one of these cities to save his life. Should the distance be too
great, the avenger of blood may in the heat of his anger pursue
the homicide and overtake him and strike him dead, even
though he does not merit death since he had previously borne
7 the slain man no malice. That is why I order you to set apart
three cities.
8 "But if the Lord, your God, enlarges your territory, as he
swore to your fathers, and gives you all the land he promised
9 your fathers he would give | in the event that you carefully
observe all these commandments which I enjoin on you today,
loving the Lord, your God, and ever walking in his ways: then
10 add three cities to these three. Thus, in the land which the Lord,
your God, is giving you as a heritage, innocent blood will not
be shed and you will not become guilty of bloodshed.
11 "However, if someone lies in wait for his neighbor out of
hatred for him, and rising up against him, strikes him mortally,
12 and then takes refuge in one of these cities, | the elders of his
own city shall send for him and have him taken from there,
and shall hand him over to be slain by the avenger of blood.
13 Do not look on him with pity, but purge from Israel the stain
of shedding innocent blood, that you may prosper.

14 *Removal of Landmarks* "You shall not move your neighbor's landmarks erected by your forefathers in the heritage you receive in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you to occupy.

15 *False Witnesses* "One witness alone shall not take the stand against a man in regard to any crime or any offense of which he may be guilty; a judicial fact shall be established only on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
16 "If an unjust witness takes the stand against a man to ac-
17 cuse him of a defection from the law, the two parties in the dispute shall appear before the Lord in the presence of the
18 priests or judges in office at that time; and if after a thorough investigation the judges find that the witness is a false witness
19 and has accused his kinsman falsely, you shall do to him as he planned to do to his kinsman. Thus shall you purge the evil
20 from your midst. The rest, on hearing of it, shall fear, and never
21 again do a thing so evil among you. | Do not look on such a man with pity. Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, and foot for foot!

20

1 *Courage in War* "When you go out to war against your enemies and you see horses and chariots and an army greater than your own, do not be afraid of them, for the Lord, your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, will be with you.
2 "When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come
3 forward and say to the soldiers: 'Hear, O Israel! Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Be not weakhearted or
4 afraid; be neither alarmed nor frightened by them. For it is the Lord, your God, who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies and give you victory.
5 "Then the officials shall say to the soldiers, 'Is there anyone who has built a new house and not yet had the housewarming? Let him return home, lest he die in battle and another dedicate
6 it. Is there anyone who has planted a vineyard and never yet enjoyed its fruits? Let him return home, lest he die in battle
7 and another enjoy its fruits in his stead. Is there anyone who has betrothed a woman and not yet taken her as his wife? Let him return home, lest he die in battle and another take her to
8 wife.' In fine, the officials shall say to the soldiers, 'Is there anyone who is afraid and weakhearted? Let him return home, lest he make his fellows as fainthearted as himself.'

9 "When the officials have finished speaking to the soldier
military officers shall be appointed over the army.

10 ***Cities of the Enemy*** "When you march up to attack
11 city, first offer it terms of peace. If it agrees to your terms o
peace and opens its gates to you, all the people to be found i
12 it shall serve you in forced labor. But if it refuses to mak
peace with you and instead offers you battle, lay siege to it
13 | and when the Lord, your God, delivers it into your hand
14 put every male in it to the sword; but the women and childre
and livestock and all else in it that is worth plundering yo
may take as your booty, and you may use this plunder of you
enemies which the Lord, your God, has given you.
15 "That is how you shall deal with any city at a considerabl
distance from you, which does not belong to the peoples of thi
16 land. But in the cities of those nations which the Lord, you
God, is giving you as your heritage, you shall not leave a singl
17 soul alive. You must doom them all—the Hethites, Amorrites
Chanaanites, Pherezites, Hevites and Jebusites—as the Lord
18 your God, has commanded you, lest they teach you to make
any such abominable offerings as they make to their gods, and
you thus sin against the Lord, your God.

19 ***Trees of a Besieged City*** "When you are at war with a
city and have to lay siege to it for a long time before you cap-
ture it, you shall not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them.
You may eat their fruit, but you must not cut down the trees.
After all, are the trees of the field men, that they should be
20 included in your siege? However, those trees which you know
are not fruit trees you may destroy, cutting them down to build
siegeworks with which to reduce the city that is resisting you.

21

1 ***Expiation of Untraced Murder*** "If the corpse of a slain
man is found lying in the open on the land which the Lord, your
God, is giving you to occupy, and it is not known who killed him,
2 | your elders and judges shall go out and measure the distances
3 to the cities that are in the neighborhood of the corpse. When
it is established which city is nearest the corpse, the elders of

21, 1-9: These verses are best read immediately after 19, 21. *The slain man* may not necessarily have been murdered; he may have been killed by a wild beast. But the blood of the slain cries out to God from the soil where it was shed (see Gn 4, 10). In order to avert God's anger on the community, a religious ceremony of propitiation is therefore here prescribed.

that city shall take a heifer that has never been put to work
4 as a draft animal under a yoke, and bringing it down to a
wadi with an ever-flowing stream at a place that has not been
plowed or sown, they shall cut the heifer's throat there in the
5 wadi. The priests, the descendants of Levi, shall also be pres-
ent, for the Lord, your God, has chosen them to minister to him
and to give blessings in his name, and every case of dispute or
6 violence must be settled by their decision. Then all the elders
of that city nearest the corpse shall wash their hands over the
7 heifer whose throat was cut in the wadi, and shall declare,
'Our hands did not shed this blood, and our eyes did not see
8 the deed. Absolve, O Lord, your people Israel, whom you have
ransomed, and let not the guilt of shedding innocent blood re-
main in the midst of your people Israel.' Thus they shall be
9 absolved from the guilt of bloodshed, and you shall purge
from your midst the guilt of innocent blood, that you may
prosper for doing what is right in the sight of the Lord.

10 ***Marriage with a Female Captive*** "When you go out to
war against your enemies and the Lord, your God, delivers
11 them into your hand, so that you take captives, if you see a
comely woman among the captives and become so enamored
12 of her that you wish to have her as wife, you may take her
home to your house. But before she may live there, she must
13 shave her head and pare her nails | and lay aside her captive's
garb. After she has mourned her father and mother for a full
month, you may have relations with her, and you shall be her
14 husband and she shall be your wife. However, if later on you
lose your liking for her, you shall give her her freedom, if she
wishes it; but you shall not sell her or enslave her, since she
was married to you under compulsion.

15 ***Rights of the First-born*** "If a man with two wives loves
one and dislikes the other; and if both bear him sons, but the
16 first-born is of her whom he dislikes: when he comes to be-
queath his property to his sons he may not consider as his first-
born the son of the wife he loves, in preference to his true first-
17 born, the son of the wife whom he dislikes. On the contrary, he
shall recognize as his first-born the son of her whom he dis-
likes, giving him a double share of whatever he happens to

21, 6: *Wash their hands:* a symbolic gesture in protestation of one's own innocence when human blood is unjustly shed. (See Mt 27, 24.)
21, 7: *This blood:* the blood of the slain man as symbolized by the

own, since he is the first fruits of his manhood, and to him belong the rights of the first-born.

18 ***The Incorrigible Son*** "If a man has a stubborn and unruly son who will not listen to his father or mother, and will
19 not obey them even though they chastise him, his father and mother shall have him apprehended and brought out to the
20 elders at the gate of his home city, | where they shall say to those city elders, 'This son of ours is a stubborn and unruly fellow who will not listen to us; he is a glutton and a drunkard.
21 Then all his fellow citizens shall stone him to death. Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel, on hearing of it, shall fear.

22 ***Corpse of a Criminal*** "If a man guilty of a capital of-
23 fense is put to death and his corpse hung on a tree, it shall not remain on the tree overnight. You shall bury it the same day; otherwise, since God's curse rests on him who hangs on a tree, you will defile the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as an inheritance.

22

1 ***Care for Lost Animals*** "You shall not see your kinsman's ox or sheep driven astray without showing concern about
2 it; see to it that it is returned to your kinsman. If this kinsman does not live near you, or you do not know who he may be, take it to your own place and keep it with you until he claims it; then
3 give it back to him. You shall do the same with his ass, or his garment, or anything else which your kinsman loses and you
4 happen to find; you may not be unconcerned about them. You shall not see your kinsman's ass or ox foundering on the road without showing concern about it; see to it that you help him lift it up.

5 ***Various Precepts*** "A woman shall not wear an article proper to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's dress; for anyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord, your God.

6 "If, while walking along, you chance upon a bird's nest with

21, 22: *Hang on a tree:* some understand, "impaled on a stake." In any case the hanging or impaling was not the means used to execute the criminal; he was first put to death by the ordinary means, stoning, and his corpse was then exposed on high as a warning for others.

21, 23: *God's curse rests on him who hangs on a tree:* St. Paul cites these words in Gal 3, 13 where he applies them to the crucified Savior, who "redeemed us from the curse of the Law, becoming a curse for us."

young birds or eggs in it, in any tree or on the ground, and the mother bird is sitting on them, you shall not take away the
7 mother bird along with her brood; you shall let her go, although you may take her brood away. It is thus that you shall have prosperity and a long life.
8 "When you build a new house, put a parapet around the roof; otherwise, if someone falls off, you will bring bloodguilt upon your house.
9 "You shall not sow your vineyard with two different kinds of seed; if you do, its produce shall become forfeit, both the
10 crop you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. You shall
11 not plow with an ox and an ass harnessed together. You shall not wear cloth of two different kinds of thread, wool and linen, woven together.
12 "You shall put twisted cords on the four corners of the cloak that you wrap around you.

13 *Crimes against Marriage* "If a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, comes to dislike her, and
14 makes monstrous charges against her and defames her by saying, 'I married this woman, but when I first had relations with
15 her I did not find her a virgin,' the father and mother of the girl shall take the evidence of her virginity and bring it to the
16 elders at the city gate. There the father of the girl shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man in marriage, but he
17 has come to dislike her, | and now brings monstrous charges against her, saying: I did not find your daughter a virgin. But here is the evidence of my daughter's virginity!' And they shall
18 spread out the cloth before the elders of the city. Then these
19 city elders shall take the man and chastise him, besides fining him one hundred silver shekels, which they shall give to the girl's father, because the man defamed a virgin in Israel. Moreover, she shall remain his wife, and he may not divorce her as long as he lives.
20 "But if this charge is true, and evidence of the girl's virginity
21 is not found, they shall bring the girl to the entrance of her father's house and there her townsmen shall stone her to death, because she committed a crime against Israel by her unchasteness in her father's house. Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst.
22 "If a man is discovered having relations with a woman who is married to another, both the man and the woman with whom

22, 12: See Nm 15, 37-41 n.
22, 18: *Chastise him:* flog him, as prescribed in 25, 1-3.

he has had relations shall die. Thus shall you purge the e
from your midst.
23 "If within the city a man comes upon a maiden who is b
24 trothed, and has relations with her, | you shall bring them bo
out to the gate of the city and there stone them to death: t
girl because she did not cry out for help though she was in t
city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. Th
shall you purge the evil from your midst.
25 "If, however, it is in the open fields that a man comes upc
such a betrothed maiden, seizes her and has relations with he
26 the man alone shall die. You shall do nothing to the maide
since she is not guilty of a capital offense. This case is like th
of a man who rises up against his neighbor and murders hin
27 it was in the open fields that he came upon her, and though t
betrothed maiden may have cried out for help, there was r
one to come to her aid.
28 "If a man comes upon a maiden that is not betrothed, take
29 her and has relations with her, and their deed is discovered, t
man who had relations with her shall pay the girl's father fift
silver shekels and take her as his wife, because he has deflow
ered her. Moreover, he may not divorce her as long as he live

23

1 "A man shall not marry his father's wife, nor shall he di
honor his father's bed.

2 ***Membership in the Community*** "No one whose testicle
have been crushed or whose penis has been cut off, may be ad
3 mitted into the community of the Lord. No child of an incestu
ous union may be admitted into the community of the Lord, no
4 any descendant of his even to the tenth generation. No Ammo
nite or Moabite may ever be admitted into the community of th
Lord, nor any descendants of theirs even to the tenth generatior
5 because they would not succor you with food and water on you
journey after you left Egypt, and because Moab hired Balaam
son of Beor, from Phathur in Aram-Naharaim, to curse you
6 though the Lord, your God, would not listen to Balaam an
turned his curse into a blessing for you, because he loves you
7 Never promote their peace and prosperity as long as you live
8 But do not abhor the Edomite, since he is your brother, nor th
9 Egyptian, since you were an alien in his country. Children born
to them may in the third generation be admitted into the com
munity of the Lord.

10 ***Cleanliness in Camp*** "When you are in camp during a
expedition against your enemies, you shall keep yourselves from

everything offensive. If one of you becomes unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he shall go outside the camp, and not re-
turn until, | toward evening, he has bathed in water; then,
when the sun has set, he may come back into the camp. Outside the camp you shall have a place set aside to be used as a latrine.
You shall also keep a trowel in your equipment and with it, when you go outside to ease nature, you shall first dig a hole
and afterward cover up your excrement. Since the Lord, your God, journeys along within your camp to defend you and to put your enemies at your mercy, your camp must be holy; otherwise, if he sees anything indecent in your midst, he will leave your company.

Various Precepts "You shall not hand over to his master
a slave who has taken refuge from him with you. Let him live with you wherever he chooses, in any one of your communities that pleases him. Do not molest him.
"There shall be no temple harlot among the Israelite women,
nor a temple prostitute among the Israelite men. You shall not offer a harlot's fee or a dog's price as any kind of votive offering in the house of the Lord, your God; both these things are an abomination to the Lord, your God.
"You shall not demand interest from your countrymen on a loan of money or of food or of anything else on which interest
is usually demanded. You may demand interest from a foreigner, but not from your countryman, so that the Lord, your God, may bless you in all your undertakings on the land you are to enter and occupy.
"When you make a vow to the Lord, your God, you shall not delay in fulfilling it; otherwise you will be held guilty, for
the Lord, your God, is strict in requiring it of you. Should you
refrain from making a vow, you will not be held guilty. But you must keep your solemn word and fulfill the votive offering you have freely promised to the Lord.
"When you go through your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat as many of his grapes as you wish, but do not put them in
your basket. When you go through your neighbor's grainfield, you may pluck some of the ears with your hand, but do not put a sickle to your neighbor's grain.

24

Marriage Laws "When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her be-

24, 1-4: This law is directly concerned only with forbidding divorced

cause he finds in her something indecent, and therefore h
writes out a bill of divorce and hands it to her, thus dismissin
2 her from his house: if on leaving his house she goes and b
3 comes the wife of another man, and the second husband, to
comes to dislike her and dismisses her from his house by hand
ing her a written bill of divorce; or if this second man who ha
4 married her, dies; then her former husband, who dismisse
her, may not again take her as his wife after she has becom
defiled. That would be an abomination before the Lord, and yo
shall not bring such guilt upon the land which the Lord, you
God, is giving you as a heritage.
5 "When a man is newly wed, he need not go out on a militar
expedition, nor shall any public duty be imposed on him. H
shall be exempt for one year for the sake of his family, to brin
joy to the wife he has married.

6 ***Justice, Equity and Charity*** "No one shall take a hand
mill or even its upper stone as a pledge for debt, for he would
be taking the debtor's sustenance as a pledge.
7 "If any man is caught kidnaping a fellow Israelite in order
to enslave him and sell him, the kidnaper shall be put to death
Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst.
8 "In an attack of leprosy you shall be careful to observe ex-
actly and to carry out all the directions of the Levitical priests.
Take care to act in accordance with the instructions I have given
9 them. Remember what the Lord, your God, did to Mariam on
the journey after you left Egypt.
10 "When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, you
11 shall not enter his house to receive a pledge from him, but shall
wait outside until the man to whom you are making the loan
12 brings his pledge outside to you. If he is a poor man, you shall
13 not sleep in the mantle he gives as a pledge, but shall return it
to him at sunset that he himself may sleep in it. Then he will
bless you, and it will be a good deed of yours before the Lord,
your God.
14 "You shall not defraud a poor and needy hired servant,
whether he be one of your own countrymen or one of the aliens
15 who live in your communities. You shall pay him each day's

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couples to remarry each other, and indirectly with checking hasty divorces, by demanding sufficient cause and certain legal formalities. Divorce itself is taken for granted and tolerated as an existing custom whose evils this law seeks to lessen. (See 22, 19. 29; Mal 2, 14ff.) Christ gave the authentic interpretation of this law: "Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives; but it was not so from the beginning" (Mt 19, 8f).

wages before sundown on the day itself, since he is poor and looks forward to them. Otherwise he will cry to the Lord against you, and you will be held guilty.

16 "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children for their fathers; only for his own guilt shall a man be put to death.

17 "You shall not violate the rights of the alien or of the or-
18 phan, nor take the clothing of a widow as a pledge. For, remember, you were once slaves in Egypt, and the Lord, your God, ransomed you from there; that is why I command you to observe this rule.

19 "When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf there, you shall not go back to get it; let it be for the alien, the orphan or the widow, that the Lord, your God, may
20 bless you in all your undertakings. When you knock down the fruit of your olive trees, you shall not go over the branches a second time; let what remains be for the alien, the orphan and
21 the widow. When you pick your grapes, you shall not go over the vineyard a second time; let what remains be for the alien,
22 the orphan, and the widow. For remember that you were once slaves in Egypt; that is why I command you to observe this rule.

25

1 "When men have a dispute and bring it to court, and a decision is handed down to them acquitting the innocent party and
2 condemning the guilty party, if the latter deserves stripes, the judge shall have him lie down and in his presence receive the
3 number of stripes his guilt deserves. Forty stripes may be given him, but no more; lest, if he were beaten with more stripes than these, your kinsman should be looked upon as disgraced because of the severity of the beating.

4 "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out grain.

5 ***Levirate Marriage*** "When brothers live together and one of them dies without a son, the widow of the deceased shall not marry anyone outside the family; but her husband's brother shall go to her and perform the duty of a brother-in-law by
6 marrying her. The first-born son she bears shall continue the line of the deceased brother, that his name may not be blotted
7 out from Israel. If, however, a man does not care to marry his brother's wife, she shall go up to the elders at the gate and declare, 'My brother-in-law does not intend to perform his duty toward me and refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Is-
8 rael.' Thereupon the elders of his city shall summon him and admonish him. If he persists in saying, 'I am not willing to

9 marry her,' | his sister-in-law, in the presence of the elder
shall go up to him and strip his sandal from his foot and sp
in his face, saying publicly, 'This is how one should be treate
10 who will not build up his brother's family!' And his lineag
shall be spoken of in Israel as 'the family of the man stripp
of his sandal.'

11 ***Various Precepts*** "When two men are fighting and th
wife of one intervenes to save her husband from the blows o
his opponent, if she stretches out her hand and seizes the latte
12 by his private parts, you shall chop off her hand without pit
13 "You shall not keep two differing weights in your bag, or
14 large and the other small; nor shall you keep two differer
15 measures in your house, one large and the other small. But us
a true and just weight, and a true and just measure, that yo
may have a long life on the land which the Lord, your God, i
16 giving you. Everyone who is dishonest in any of these matter
is an abomination to the Lord, your God.
17 "Bear in mind what Amalec did to you on the journey afte
18 you left Egypt, how without fear of any god he harassed yo
along the way, weak and weary as you were, and cut off at th
19 rear all those who lagged behind. Therefore, when the Lord
your God, gives you rest from all your enemies round about i
the land which he is giving you to occupy as your heritage, yo
shall blot out the memory of Amalec from under the heavens
Do not forget!

26.

1 ***Thanksgiving for the Harvest*** "When you have com
into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a
2 heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take
some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you
harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and
putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the
Lord, your God, chooses for the dwelling place of his name
3 There you shall go to the priest in office at that time and say to
him, 'Today I acknowledge to the Lord, my God, that I have
indeed come into the land which he swore to our fathers he
4 would give us.' The priest shall then receive the basket from
you and shall set it in front of the altar of the Lord, your God

25, 17-49: This attack on Israel by Amalec is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, although it probably was connected with the battle mentioned in Ex 17, 8. The extermination of Amalec was carried out by Saul (see 1 Sm 15).

5 Then you shall declare before the Lord, your God, 'My father
was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a
small household and lived there as an alien. But there he be-
6 came a nation great, strong and numerous. When the Egyptians
maltreated and oppressed us, imposing hard labor upon us,
7 | we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and he heard our
8 cry and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression. He
brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand and outstretched
9 arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders; and bring-
ing us into this country, he gave us this land flowing with milk
10 and honey. Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of
the products of the soil which you, O Lord, have given me.' And
having set them before the Lord, your God, you shall bow down
11 in his presence. Then you and your family, together with the
Levite and the aliens who live among you, shall make merry
over all these good things which the Lord, your God, has given
you.

12 ***Prayer with the Tithes*** "When you have finished setting
aside all the tithes of your produce in the third year, the year
of the tithes, and you have given them to the Levite, the alien,
the orphan and the widow, that they may eat their fill in your
13 own community, you shall declare before the Lord, your God,
'I have purged my house of the sacred portion and I have given
it to the Levite, the alien, the orphan and the widow, just as you
have commanded me. In this I have not broken or forgotten any
14 of your commandments: I have not eaten any of the tithe as a
mourner; I have not brought any of it out as one unclean; I
have not offered any of it to the dead. I have thus hearkened
to the voice of the Lord, my God, doing just as you have com-
15 manded me. Look down, then, from heaven, your holy abode,
and bless your people Israel and the soil you have given us in
the land flowing with milk and honey which you promised on
oath to our fathers.'

16 ***The Covenant*** "This day the Lord, your God, commands
you to observe these statutes and decrees. Be careful, then, to
17 observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. Today
you are making this agreement with the Lord: he is to be your
God and you are to walk in his ways and observe his statutes,
18 commandments and decrees, and to hearken to his voice. And

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26, 5: *Aramean:* either in reference to the origin of the patriarchs from Aram Naharaim, or merely in the sense of "nomad," in the same way as "Arab" was later used (see Jer 3, 2).

today the Lord is making this agreement with you: you are t
be a people peculiarly his own, as he promised you; and pr
19 vided you keep all his commandments, he will then raise yo
high in praise and renown and glory above all other nations h
has made, and you will be a people sacred to the Lord, you
God, as he promised."

IV. FINAL WORDS OF MOSES

27

1 ***Ceremonies*** Then Moses, with the elders of Israel, gav
the people this order: "Keep all these commandments which
2 enjoin on you today. On the day you cross the Jordan into th
land which the Lord, your God, is giving you, set up som
3 large stones and coat them with plaster. Also write on them
at the time you cross, all the words of this law, that you ma
thus enter into the land flowing with milk and honey, which th
Lord, your God, and the God of your fathers, is giving you a
4 he promised you. When, moreover, you have crossed the Jor
dan, besides setting up on Mount Ebal these stones concernin
which I command you today, and coating them with plaster
5 | you shall also build to the Lord, your God, an altar made o
6 stones that no iron tool has touched. You shall make this alta
of the Lord, your God, with undressed stones, and shall offe
7 on it holocausts to the Lord, your God. You shall also sacrifice
peace offerings and eat them there, making merry before the
8 Lord, your God. On the stones you shall inscribe all the words
of this law very clearly."

9 Moses, with the Levitical priests, then said to all Israel: "Be
silent, O Israel, and listen! This day you have become the people
10 of the Lord, your God. You shall therefore hearken to the voice
of the Lord, your God, and keep his commandments and stat-
utes which I enjoin on you today."

11.12 That same day Moses gave the people this order: "When
you cross the Jordan, Simeon, Levi, Juda, Issachar, Joseph and
Benjamin shall stand on Mount Garizim to pronounce blessings
13 over the people, | while Ruben, Gad, Aser, Zabulon, Dan and
Nephthali shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses.

14 ***The Twelve Curses*** "The Levites shall proclaim aloud to
15 all the men of Israel: 'Cursed be the man who makes a carved
or molten idol—an abomination to the Lord, the product of a

27, 14-26: Perhaps these twelve random curses derive from an older but more complete collection of curses.

craftsman's hands—and sets it up in secret!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

16 'Cursed be he who dishonors his father or his mother!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

17 'Cursed be he who moves his neighbor's landmarks!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

18 'Cursed be he who misleads a blind man on his way!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

19 'Cursed be he who violates the rights of the alien, the orphan or the widow!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

20 'Cursed be he who has relations with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

21 'Cursed be he who has relations with any animal!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

22 'Cursed be he who has relations with his sister or his half-sister!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

23 'Cursed be he who has relations with his mother-in-law!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

24 'Cursed be he who slays his neighbor in secret!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

25 'Cursed be he who accepts payment for slaying an innocent man!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

26 'Cursed be he who fails to fulfill any of the provisions of this law!' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen!'

28

1 ***Blessings for Obedience*** "Thus, then, shall it be: if you continue to heed the voice of the Lord, your God, and are careful to observe all his commandments which I enjoin on you today, the Lord, your God, will raise you high above all the
2 nations of the earth. When you hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, all these blessings will come upon you and overwhelm you:

3 "May you be blessed in the city, and blessed in the country!
4 Blessed be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the offspring of your livestock, the issue of your herds and
5 the young of your flocks! Blessed be your grain bin and your

28: This chapter would read better immediately after ch. 26.

28, 3-68: The six blessings (3-6) are elaborated on (7-14). The corresponding six curses (16-19) are also elaborated on (20-68). The curses and blessings deal with material prosperity. They were an effective pedagogical method of inculcating obedience to God's law. They are a liturgical ceremony of taking possession of the Promised Land.

6 kneading bowl! May you be blessed in your coming in, and
blessed in your going out!

7 ***Victory and Prosperity*** "The Lord will beat down before
you the enemies that rise up against you; though they come
out against you from but one direction, they will flee before
8 you in seven. The Lord will affirm his blessing upon you, on
your barns and on all your undertakings, blessing you in the
9 land that the Lord, your God, gives you. Provided that you
keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, and walk in
his ways, he will establish you as a people sacred to himself
10 as he swore to you; so that, when all the nations of the earth
see you bearing the name of the Lord, they will stand in awe of
11 you. The Lord will increase in more than goodly measure the
fruit of your womb, the offspring of your livestock, and the
produce of your soil, in the land which he swore to your fathers
12 he would give you. The Lord will open up for you his rich
treasure house of the heavens, to give your land rain in due
season, blessing all your undertakings, so that you will lend to
13 many nations and borrow from none. The Lord will make you
the head, not the tail, and you will always mount higher and
not decline, as long as you obey the commandments of the
Lord, your God, which I order you today to observe carefully;
14 not turning aside to the right or to the left from any of the
commandments which I now give you, in order to follow other
gods and serve them.

15 ***Curses for Disobedience*** "But if you do not hearken to
the voice of the Lord, your God, and are not careful to observe
all his commandments which I enjoin on you today, all these
curses shall come upon you and overwhelm you:
16 "May you be cursed in the city, and cursed in the country!
17.18 Cursed be your grain bin and your kneading bowl! Cursed be
the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the off-
spring of your livestock, the issue of your herds and the young
19 of your flocks! May you be cursed in your coming in, and
cursed in your going out!

20 ***Sickness and Defeat*** "The Lord will put a curse on you,
defeat and frustration in every enterprise you undertake, until
you are speedily destroyed and perish for the evil you have done

28, 6: *Coming in . . . going out:* a frequent expression wishing a blessing either in everything or at the beginning and end of every action.
28, 13: *The head, not the tail:* in the honorable position as leader.

21 in forsaking me. The Lord will bring a pestilence upon you that
will persist until he has exterminated you from the land you
22 are entering to occupy. The Lord will strike you with wasting
and fever, with scorching, fiery drought, with blight and sear-
23 ing wind, that will plague you until you perish. The sky over
your heads will be like bronze and the earth under your feet
24 like iron. For rain the Lord will give your land powdery dust,
which will come down upon you from the sky until you are
25 destroyed. The Lord will let you be beaten down before your
enemies; though you advance against them from one direction,
you will flee before them in seven, so that you will become a
26 terrifying example to all the kingdoms of the earth. Your car-
casses will become food for all the birds of the air and for the
27 beasts of the field, with no one to frighten them off. The Lord
will strike you with Egyptian boils and with tumors, eczema
28 and the itch, until you cannot be cured. And the Lord will
29 strike you with madness, blindness and panic, so that even at
midday you will grope like a blind man in the dark, unable to
find your way.

Despoilment "You will be oppressed and robbed contin-
30 ually, with no one to come to your aid. | Though you betroth a
wife, another man will have her. Though you build a house,
you will not live in it. Though you plant a vineyard, you will
31 not enjoy its fruits. Your ox will be slaughtered before your
eyes, and you will not eat of its flesh. Your ass will be stolen
in your presence, but you will not recover it. Your flocks will
32 be given to your enemies, with no one to come to your aid. Your
sons and daughters will be given to a foreign nation while you
33 look on and grieve for them in constant helplessness. A people
whom you do not know will consume the fruit of your soil
and of all your labor, and you will be oppressed and crushed
34 at all times without surcease, until you are driven mad by what
35 your eyes must look upon. The Lord will strike you with ma-
lignant boils of which you cannot be cured, on your knees and
legs, and from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head.

36 ***Exile*** "The Lord will bring you, and your king whom you
have set over you, to a nation which you and your fathers
have not known, and there you will serve strange gods of wood
37 and stone, | and will call forth amazement, reproach and
barbed scorn from all the nations to which the Lord will lead
you.

28, 35: This verse is best read with v. 27.

38 ***Fruitless Labors*** "Though you spend much seed on yo
field, you will harvest but little, for the locusts will devour t
39 crop. Though you plant and cultivate vineyards, you will n
drink or store up the wine, for the grubs will eat the vin
40 clean. Though you have olive trees throughout your countr
you will have no oil for ointment, for your olives will drop o
41 unripe. Though you beget sons and daughters, they will n
42 remain with you, but will go into captivity. Buzzing insects wi
43 infest all your trees and the crops of your soil. The alien resi
ing among you will rise higher and higher above you, whil
44 you sink lower and lower. He will lend to you, not you to hi
He will become the head, you the tail.

45 "All these curses will come upon you, pursuing you an
overwhelming you, until you are destroyed, because you woul
not hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, nor keep th
46 commandments and statutes he gave you. They will light o
you and your descendants as a sign and a wonder for a
47 time. Since you would not serve the Lord, your God, with jo
48 and gratitude for abundance of every kind, | therefore in hun
ger and thirst, in nakedness and utter poverty, you will serv
the enemies whom the Lord will send against you. He will pu
an iron yoke on your neck, until he destroys you.

49 ***Invasion and Siege*** "The Lord will raise up against you
nation from afar, from the end of the earth, that swoops dow
50 like an eagle, a nation whose tongue you do not understand,
nation of stern visage, that shows neither respect for the age
51 nor pity for the young. They will consume the offspring o
your livestock and the produce of your soil, until you are de
stroyed; they will leave you no grain or wine or oil, no issue o
your herds or young of your flocks, until they have brough
52 about your ruin. They will besiege you in each of your com
munities, until the great, unscalable walls you trust in com
tumbling down all over your land. They will so besiege you i
every community throughout the land which the Lord, you
53 God, has given you, | that in the distress of the siege to whic
your enemy subjects you, you will eat the fruit of your womb
the flesh of your own sons and daughters whom the Lord, you
54 God, has given you. The most refined and fastidious man
among you will begrudge his brother and his beloved wife an
55 his surviving children | any share in the flesh of his childre
that he himself is using for food when nothing else is left hi
in the straits of the siege to which your enemy will subject yo
56 in all your communities. The most refined and delicate woma
among you, so delicate and refined that she would not ventur

to set the sole of her foot on the ground, will begrudge her be-
57 loved husband and her son and daughter | the afterbirth that issues from her womb and the infant she brings forth when she secretly uses them for food for want of anything else, in the straits of the siege to which your enemy will subject you in your communities.

58 ***Plagues*** "If you are not careful to observe every word of the Law which is written in this book, and to revere the glorious
59 and awesome name of the Lord, your God, | he will smite you and your descendants with severe and constant blows, malig-
60 nant and lasting maladies. He will again afflict you with all the diseases of Egypt which you dread, and they will persist among
61 you. Should there be any kind of sickness or calamity not mentioned in this Book of the Law, that too the Lord will bring
62 upon you until you are destroyed. Of you who were numerous as the stars in the sky, only a few will be left, because you would not hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God.

63 ***Exile*** "Just as the Lord once took delight in making you grow and prosper, so will he now take delight in ruining and destroying you, and you will be plucked out of the land you are
64 now entering to occupy. The Lord will scatter you among all the nations from one end of the earth to the other, and there you will serve strange gods of wood and stone, such as you and
65 your fathers have not known. Among these nations you will find no repose, not a foot of ground to stand upon, for there the Lord will give you an anguished heart and wasted eyes and
66 a dismayed spirit. You will live in constant suspense and stand
67 in dread both day and night, never sure of your existence. In the morning you will say, 'Would that it were evening!' and in the evening you will say, 'Would that it were morning!' for the dread that your heart must feel and the sight that your eyes
68 must see. The Lord will send you back in galleys to Egypt, to the region I told you that you were never to see again; and there you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer."

69 These are the words of the covenant which the Lord ordered Moses to make with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which he made with them at Horeb.

29

1 ***Past Favors Recalled*** Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "You have seen all that the Lord did in the land of Egypt before your very eyes to Pharao and all his servants

and to all his land; the great testings your own eyes have seen
and those great signs and wonders. But not even at the present
day has the Lord yet given you a mind to understand, or eyes
to see, or ears to hear. 'I led you for forty years in the desert.
Your clothes did not fall from you in tatters nor your sandals
from your feet; bread was not your food, nor wine or beer your
drink. Thus you should know that I, the Lord, am your God.
When we came to this place, Sehon, king of Hesebon, and Og,
king of Basan, came out to engage us in battle, but we defeated
them | and took over their land, which we then gave as
heritage to the Rubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of
Manasse. Keep the terms of this covenant, therefore, and fulfil
them, that you may succeed in whatever you do.

All Israel Bound to the Covenant "You are all now
standing before the Lord, your God—your chiefs and judges,
your elders and officials, and all of the men of Israel, together
with your wives and children and the aliens who live in your
camp, down to those who hew wood and draw water for you—
that you may enter into the covenant of the Lord, your God,
which he concluded with you today under this sanction of a
curse; so that he may now establish you as his people and he
may be your God, as he promised you and as he swore to your
fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But it is not with you alone
that I am making this covenant, under this sanction of a curse;
it is just as much with those who are not here among us today
as it is with those of us who are now here present before the
Lord, our God.

Warning against Idolatry "You know in what surroundings we lived in the land of Egypt and what we passed by in the nations we traversed, and you saw the loathsome idols of wood and stone, of gold and silver, that they possess. Let there be, then, no man or woman, no clan or tribe among you, who would now turn away their hearts from the Lord, our God, to go and serve these pagan gods! Let there be no root that would bear such poison and wormwood among you! If any such person, upon hearing the words of this curse, should beguile himself into thinking that he can safely persist in his stubbornness of heart, as though to sweep away both the watered soil and the parched ground, the Lord will never consent to pardon him. Instead, the Lord's wrath and jealousy will flare up against that

29, 13-14: This Covenant sanctioned with curses holds good even for future generations.

man, and every curse mentioned in this book will alight on him.
20 The Lord will blot out his name from under the heavens | and
will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for doom, in
keeping with all the curses of the covenant inscribed in this
Book of the Law.

21 ***Punishment for Infidelity*** "Future generations, your own
descendants who will rise up after you, as well as the foreigners
who will come here from far-off lands, when they see the ca-
lamities of this land and the ills with which the Lord has smit-
22 ten it—all its soil being nothing but sulphur and salt, a burnt-out
waste, unsown and unfruitful, without a blade of grass, de-
stroyed like Sodom and Gomorra, Adama and Seboim, which
23 the Lord overthrew in his furious wrath—they and all the na-
tions will ask, 'Why has the Lord dealt thus with this land?
24 Why this fierce outburst of wrath?' And the answer will be,
'Because they forsook the covenant which the Lord, the God
of their fathers, had made with them when he brought them out
25 of the land of Egypt, and they went and served other gods and
adored them, gods whom they did not know and whom he had
26 not let fall to their lot: that is why the Lord was angry with
this land and brought on it all the imprecations listed in this
27 book; in his furious wrath and tremendous anger the Lord up-
rooted them from their soil and cast them out into a strange
28 land, where they are today.' [Both what is still hidden and
what has already been revealed concern us and our descendants
forever, that we may carry out all the words of this Law.]

30

1 ***Mercy for the Repentant*** "When all these things which I
have set before you, the blessings and the curses, are fulfilled
in you, and from among whatever nations the Lord, your God
2 may have dispersed you, you ponder them in your heart: then,
provided that you and your children return to the Lord, your
God, and heed his voice with all your heart and all your soul,
3 just as I now command you, | the Lord, your God, will change
your lot; and taking pity on you, he will again gather you from
4 all the nations wherein he has scattered you. Though you may
have been driven to the farthest corner of the world, even from
there will the Lord, your God, gather you; even from there will
5 he bring you back. The Lord, your God, will then bring you
into the land which your fathers once occupied, that you too

30, 3-5: The Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. is supposed

may occupy it, and he will make you more prosperous and n
6 merous than your fathers. The Lord, your God, will circumci
your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, that you m
love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and all your sou
7 and so may live. But all those curses the Lord, your God, w
8 assign to your enemies and the foes who persecuted you. Yo
however, must again heed the Lord's voice and carry out all h
9 commandments which I now enjoin on you. Then the Lor
your God, will increase in more than goodly measure the r
turns from all your labors, the fruit of your womb, the offsprin
of your livestock, and the produce of your soil; for the Lor
your God, will again take delight in your prosperity, even as h
10 took delight in your fathers', if only you heed the voice of th
Lord, your God, and keep his commandments and statutes tha
are written in this Book of the Law, when you return to th
Lord, your God, with all your heart and all your soul.

11 ***God's Command Clear*** "For this command which I er
join on you today is not too mysterious and remote for you
12 | It is not up in the sky, that you should say, 'Who will go u
in the sky to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carr
13 it out?' Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, 'Who wi
cross the sea to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carr
14 it out?' No, it is something very near to you, already in you
mouths and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out.

15 ***The Choice before Israel*** "Here, then, I have today se
16 before you life and prosperity, death and doom. If you obey th
commandments of the Lord, your God, which I enjoin on yo
today, loving him, and walking in his ways, and keeping hi
commandments, statutes and decrees, you will live and grov
numerous, and the Lord, your God, will bless you in the lan
17 you are entering to occupy. If, however, you turn away you
hearts and will not listen, but are led astray and adore and serv
18 other gods, I tell you now that you will certainly perish; you
will not have a long life on the land which you are crossing th
19 Jordan to enter and occupy. I call heaven and earth today to
witness against you: I have set before you life and death, th
blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and you
20 descendants may live, | by loving the Lord, your God, heedin
his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life fo

30, 6: *Circumcise your hearts:* this means that the observance of th
commandment is more important than carnal circumcision. See 10, 16
This thought is taken up in Jer 4, 4; Rom 2, 29; 1 Cor 7, 19.

you, a long life for you to live on the land which the Lord swore he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

31

1 ***The Lord's Leadership*** When Moses had finished speak-
2 ing these words to all Israel, | he said to them, "I am now one hundred and twenty years old and am no longer able to move about freely; besides, the Lord has told me that I shall not cross
3 this Jordan. It is the Lord, your God, who will cross before you; he will destroy these nations before you, that you may supplant them. [It is Josue who will cross before you, as the Lord prom-
4 ised.] The Lord will deal with them just as he dealt with Sehon and Og, the kings of the Amorrites whom he destroyed, and
5 with their country. When, therefore, the Lord delivers them up to you, you must deal with them exactly as I have ordered you.
6 Be brave and steadfast; have no fear or dread of them, for it is the Lord, your God, who marches with you; he will never fail you or forsake you."

7 ***Encouragement of Josue*** Then Moses summoned Josue and in the presence of all Israel said to him, "Be brave and steadfast, for you must bring this people into the land which the Lord swore to their fathers he would give them; you must
8 put them in possession of their heritage. It is the Lord who marches before you; he will be with you and will never fail you or forsake you. So do not fear or be dismayed."

9 ***The Reading of the Law*** When Moses had written down this law, he entrusted it to the Levitical priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel,
10 | giving them this order: "On the feast of Booths, at the pre-
11 scribed time in the year of relaxation which comes at the end of every seven-year period, when all Israel goes to appear before the Lord, your God, in the place which he chooses, you shall
12 read this law aloud in the presence of all Israel. Assemble the people—men, women and children, as well as the aliens who live in your communities—that they may hear it and learn it, and so fear the Lord, your God, and carefully observe all the
13 words of this law. Their children also, who do not know it yet, must hear it and learn it, that they too may fear the Lord, your God, as long as you live on the land which you will cross the Jordan to occupy."

14 ***Commission of Josue*** The Lord said to Moses, "The time is now approaching for you to die. Summon Josue, and present

yourselves at the Meeting Tent that I may give him his commis
sion." So Moses and Josue went and presented themselves a
15 the Meeting Tent. And the Lord appeared at the Tent in a col
umn of cloud, which stood still at the entrance of the Tent

16 ***A Command to Moses*** The Lord said to Moses, "Soon
you will be at rest with your fathers, and then this people wil
take to rendering wanton worship to the strange gods among
whom they will live in the land they are about to enter. They
will forsake me and break the covenant which I have made with
17 them. At that time my anger will flare up against them; I will
forsake them and hide my face from them, so that they will
become a prey to be devoured, and many evils and troubles
will befall them. At that time they will indeed say, 'Is it not
because our God is not among us that these evils have befallen
18 us?' Yet I will be hiding my face from them at that time only
because of all the evil they have done in turning to other gods.
19 Write out this song, then, for yourselves. Teach it to the Is-
raelites and have them recite it, so that this song may be a wit-
20 ness for me against the Israelites. For when I have brought
them into the land flowing with milk and honey which I prom-
ised on oath to their fathers, and they have eaten their fill and
grown fat, if they turn to other gods and serve them, despising
21 me and breaking my covenant; then, when many evils and trou-
bles befall them, this song, which their descendants will not
have forgotten to recite, will bear witness against them. For I
know what they are inclined to do even at the present time, be-
fore I have brought them into the land which I promised on
22 oath to their fathers." So Moses wrote this song that same day,
and he taught it to the Israelites.

23 ***Commission of Josue*** Then the Lord commissioned Josue,
son of Nun, and said to him, "Be brave and steadfast, for
it is you who must bring the Israelites into the land which
I promised them on oath. I myself will be with you."

24 ***The Law Placed in the Ark*** When Moses had finished
25 writing out on a scroll the words of the law in their entirety, he
gave the Levites who carry the Ark of the Covenant of the
26 Lord this order: "Take this scroll of the law and put it beside
the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, your God, that there it
27 may be a witness against you. For I already know how rebel-

31, 23: This verse is best read immediately after v. 15; perhaps the original order was vv. 7-8, 14-15, 23.

lious and stiff-necked you will be. Why, even now, while I am alive among you, you have been rebels against the Lord! How
28 much more, then, after I am dead! Therefore, assemble all your tribal elders and your officials before me, that I may speak these words for them to hear, and so may call heaven and earth to
29 witness against them. For I know that after my death you are sure to become corrupt and to turn aside from the way along which I directed you, so that evil will befall you in some future age because you have done evil in the Lord's sight, and provoked him by your deeds."

30 ***The Song of Moses*** Then Moses recited the words of this song from beginning to end, for the whole assembly of Israel to hear:

32

A

1 Give ear, O heavens, while I speak; let the earth hearken to
2 the words of my mouth! May my instruction soak in like the rain, and my discourse permeate like the dew, like a downpour upon the grass, like a shower upon the crops:
3 For I will sing the Lord's renown. Oh, proclaim the great-
4 ness of our God! The Rock—how faultless are his deeds, how right all his ways! A faithful God, without deceit, how just and upright he is!
5 Yet basely has he been treated by his degenerate children, a
6 perverse and crooked race! | Is the Lord to be thus repaid by you, O stupid and foolish people? Is he not your father who created you? Has he not made you and established you?
7 Think back on the days of old, reflect on the years of age upon age. Ask your father and he will inform you, ask your elders and they will tell you:
8 When the Most High assigned the nations their heritage, when he parceled out the descendants of Adam, he set up the boundaries of the peoples after the number of the sons of God;
9 | while the Lord's own portion was Jacob, his hereditary share was Israel.
10 He found them in a wilderness, a wasteland of howling desert. He shielded them and cared for them, guarding them as the apple of his eye.

32, 1-43: This poetic sermon is one of the most beautiful passages of the Bible. It is ascribed to Moses to stress that the doctrine is according to his teaching. Many of its ideas and images are found in Is 40—55 and Ez.

32, 8: *The sons of God:* the angels.

11 As an eagle incites its nestlings forth by hovering over it
brood, so he spread his wings to receive them and bore them u
on his pinions.
12 The Lord alone was their leader, no strange god was with him
13 | He had them ride triumphant over the summits of the lan
and live off the products of its fields, giving them honey to suc
14 from its rocks and olive oil from its hard, stony ground; | but
ter from its cows and milk from its sheep, with the fat of it
lambs and rams; its Basan bulls and its goats, with the crean
of its finest wheat; and the foaming blood of its grapes yo
drank.

B

15 So Jacob ate his fill, the darling grew fat and frisky; you
became fat and gross and gorged. They spurned the God wh
16 made them and scorned their saving Rock. They provoked him
with strange gods and angered him with abominable idols.
17 They offered sacrifice to demons, to "no-gods," to gods whom
they had not known before, to newcomers just arrived, of
18 whom their fathers had never stood in awe. You were unmind-
ful of the Rock that begot you, you forgot the God who gave
you birth.
19 When the Lord saw this, he was filled with loathing and
20 anger toward his sons and daughters. "I will hide my face from
them," he said, "and see what will then become of them. What
a fickle race they are, sons with no loyalty in them!
21 "Since they have provoked me with their 'no-god' and an-
gered me with their vain idols, I will provoke them with a 'no-
people'; with a foolish nation I will anger them.
22 "For by my wrath a fire is enkindled that shall rage to the
depths of the nether world, consuming the earth with its yield,
23 and licking with flames the roots of the mountains. | I will
spend on them woe upon woe and exhaust all my arrows
against them:
24 "Emaciating hunger and consuming fever and bitter pesti-
lence, and the teeth of wild beasts I will send among them, with
the venom of reptiles gliding in the dust.
25 "Snatched away by the sword in the street and by sheer ter-
ror at home shall be the youth and the maiden alike, the nurs-
ing babe as well as the hoary old man.

32, 13: *The land:* Chanaan.
32, 14: *Basan:* a fertile grazing land east of the Jordan, famous for its strong cattle.
32, 15: *The darling:* a probable meaning of the Hebrew word is a term of endearment for "Israel."

"I would have said, 'I will make an end of them and blot
out their name from men's memories,' | had I not feared the
insolence of their enemies, feared that these foes would mis-
takenly boast, 'Our own hand won the victory; the Lord had
nothing to do with it.' "
For they are a people devoid of reason, having no under-
standing. | If they had insight they would realize what hap-
pened, they would understand their success and say,

c

"How could one man rout a thousand, or two men put ten
thousand to flight, unless it was because their Rock sold them
and the Lord delivered them up?"
Indeed, their "rock" is not like our Rock, and our foes are
under condemnation.
They are a branch of Sodom's vinestock, from the vineyards
of Gomorra. Poisonous are their grapes and bitter their clusters.
| Their wine is the venom of dragons and the cruel poison of
cobras.
"Is not this preserved in my treasury, sealed up in my store-
house, | against the day of vengeance and requital, against the
time they lose their footing?" Close at hand is the day of their
disaster, and their doom is rushing upon them!
Surely, the Lord shall do justice for his people; on his serv-
ants he shall have pity. When he sees their strength failing,
and their protected and unprotected alike disappearing,
He will say, "Where are their gods whom they relied on as
their 'rock'? | Let those who ate the fat of your sacrifices and
drank the wine of your libations rise up now and help you! Let
them be your protection!
"Learn then that I, I alone, am God, and there is no god
besides me. It is I who bring both death and life, I who inflict
wounds and heal them, and from my hand there is no rescue.
"To the heavens I raise my hand and swear: As surely as I
live forever, | I will sharpen my flashing sword, and my hand
shall lay hold of my quiver.
"With vengeance I will repay my foes and requite those who
hate me. | I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my
sword shall gorge itself with flesh—with the blood of the slain
and the captured, flesh from the heads of the enemy leaders."
Exult with him, you heavens, glorify him, all you angels of

32, 28-35: The reference is to the pagan nations, not to Israel.
32, 36: *Their protected and unprotected:* the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain; according to some, the idea is "slaves and freemen."

God; for he avenges the blood of his servants and purges hi
people's land.
44 So Moses, together with Josue, son of Nun, went and re
cited all the words of this song for the people to hear.

45 ***Final Appeal*** When Moses had finished speaking all thes
46 words to all Israel, | he said, "Take to heart all the warning
which I have now given you and which you must impress or
your children, that you may carry out carefully every word of
47 this law. For this is no trivial matter for you; rather, it means
your very life, since it is by this means that you are to enjoy a
long life on the land which you will cross the Jordan to occupy."

48 ***Moses to View Chanaan*** On that very day the Lord
49 said to Moses, "Go up on Mount Nebo, here in the Abarim
Mountains [it is in the land of Moab facing Jericho], and view
the land of Chanaan, which I am giving to the Israelites as their
50 possession. Then you shall die on the mountain you have
climbed, and shall be taken to your people, just as your brother
Aaron died on Mount Hor and there was taken to his people;
51 because both of you broke faith with me among the Israelites
at the waters of Meribath-Cades in the desert of Sin by failing
52 to manifest my sanctity among the Israelites. You may indeed
view the land at a distance, but you shall not enter that land
which I am giving to the Israelites."

33

1 ***Blessing upon the Tribes*** This is the blessing which
Moses, the man of God, pronounced upon the Israelites before
he died.
2 He said: "The Lord came from Sinai and dawned on his
people from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Pharan and ad-
vanced from Meribath-Cades, while at his right hand a fire
3 blazed forth and his wrath devastated the nations. | But all
his holy ones were in his hand; they followed at his feet and he
4 bore them up on his pinions. | A law he gave to us; he made
5 the community of Jacob his domain, | and he became king of
his darling, when the chiefs of the people assembled and the
tribes of Israel came together.
6 "May Ruben live and not die out, but let his men be few."

33, 1-29: Moses blesses each tribe just as Jacob did (Gn 49).
33, 2: God is pictured as a star leading His people.
33, 3: *His holy ones were in his hands:* the Israelites were protected by the Lord.
33, 6: In keeping with the other blessings, probably this verse was

7 The following is for Juda. He said: "The Lord hears the
cry of Juda; you will bring him to his people. His own hands
defend his cause and you will be his help against his foes."
8 Of Levi he said: "To Levi belong your Thummim, to the
man of your favor your Urim; for you put him to the test at
Massa and you contended with him at the waters of Meriba.
9 | He said of his father, 'I regard him not'; his brothers he
would not acknowledge, and his own children he refused to
recognize. Thus the Levites keep your words, and your cove-
10 nant they uphold. | They promulgate your decisions to Jacob
and your law to Israel. They bring the smoke of sacrifice to your
11 nostrils, and burnt offerings to your altar. | Bless, O Lord, his
possessions and accept the ministry of his hands. Break the
backs of his adversaries and of his foes, that they may not rise."
12 Of Benjamin he said: "Benjamin is the beloved of the Lord,
who shelters him all the day, while he abides securely at his
breast."
13 Of Joseph he said: "Blessed by the Lord is his land with the
best of the skies above and of the abyss crouching beneath;
14 | with the best of the produce of the year, and the choicest
15 sheaves of the months; | with the finest gifts of the age-old
16 mountains and the best from the timeless hills; | with the best
of the earth and its fullness, and the favor of him who dwells
in the bush. These shall come upon the head of Joseph and
17 upon the brow of the prince among his brothers, | the majestic
bull, his father's first-born, whose horns are those of the wild
ox with which to gore the nations, even those at the ends of the
earth." [These are the myriads of Ephraim, and these the
thousands of Manasse.]
18 Of Zabulon he said: "Rejoice, O Zabulon, in your pursuits,
19 and you, Issachar, in your tents! | You who invite the tribes to
the mountains where feasts are duly held, because you suck up
the abundance of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand."
20 Of Gad he said: "Blessed be he who has made Gad so vast!
He lies there like a lion that has seized the arm and head of the
21 prey. | He saw that the best should be his when the princely
portion was assigned, while the heads of the people were gath-

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nce introduced by the phrase, "Of Ruben he said." It is to be noted that
ere is no blessing here for Simeon.

33, 7: *Bring him to his people:* this probably refers to the separation
etween Juda and Israel during the conquest of the Promised Land or
uring the schism of the divided kingdom.

33, 8: *Thummim . . . Urim:* see Lv 8, 8 n.

33, 16: *Him who dwells in the bush:* a title given to the Lord because
f His appearance to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3).

ered. He carried out the justice of the Lord and his decrees respecting Israel."

22 Of Dan he said: "Dan is a lion's whelp, that springs forth from Basan!"

23 Of Nephthali he said: "Nephthali is enriched with favors and filled with the blessings of the Lord; the lake and south of it are his possession!"

24 Of Aser he said: "More blessed than the other sons be Aser! May he be the favorite among his brothers, as the oil of his
25 olive trees runs over his feet! | May your bolts be of iron and bronze; may your strength endure through all your days!"

26 "There is no god like the God of the darling, who rides the
27 heavens in his power, and rides the skies in his majesty; | he spread out the primeval tent; he extended the ancient canopy. He drove the enemy out of your way and the Amorrite he de-
28 stroyed. | Israel has dwelt securely, and the fountain of Jacob has been undisturbed in a land of grain and wine, where the
29 heavens drip with dew. | How fortunate you are, O Israel! Where else is a nation victorious in the Lord? The Lord is your saving shield, and his sword is your glory. Your enemies fawn upon you, as you stride upon their heights."

34

1 ***Death and Burial of Moses*** Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, the headland of Phasga which faces Jericho, and the Lord showed him all the land
2 —Galaad, and as far as Dan, | all Nephthali, the land of Ephraim and Manasse, all the land of Juda as far as the West-
3 ern Sea, | the Negeb, the circuit of the Jordan with the low-
4 lands at Jericho, city of palms, and as far as Segor. The Lord then said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that I would give to their descendants. I have let you feast your eyes upon it, but you shall not cross over."
5 So there, in the land of Moab, Moses, the servant of the Lord,
6 died as the Lord had said; and he was buried in the ravine opposite Beth-Phogor in the land of Moab, but to this day no
7 one knows the place of his burial. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were undimmed
8 and his vigor unabated. For thirty days the Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab, till they had completed the period of grief and mourning for Moses.

9 Now Josue, son of Nun, was filled with the spirit of wisdom,

33, 23: *The Lake:* the Lake of Chenereth (also: Sea of Cheneroth) on which the land of this tribe bordered.

since Moses had laid his hands upon him; and so the Israelites gave him their obedience, thus carrying out the Lord's command to Moses.

10 Since then no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom
11 the Lord knew face to face. He had no equal in all the signs and wonders the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharao and all his servants and against all his land,
12 and for the might and the terrifying power that Moses exhibited in the sight of all Israel.

THE BOOK OF JOSUE

INTRODUCTION

Josue begins a series of books that contain what scholars call Deuteronomic history. These books are: Josue, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 3 and 4 Kings. Their general theme is that Israel's triumphs are rewards for her fidelity to the Covenant with God, her failures are punishments for her infidelity. Since Deuteronomy teaches this theme best, the term "Deuteronomic history" is used. Jos 23, 12-16 patently expresses this Deuteronomic historical viewpoint. The specific purpose of the Book of Josue is to show that the promise of God, which the writers of the Pentateuch repeatedly emphasized, was fulfilled: the giving of the land to His people. This purpose colors the authors' manner of writing. Hence, an idealized or epic conquest is described as the best way to teach that Yahweh gave the Israelites the Promised Land. Accordingly, Josue is represented as the great leader who swept through the country in a complete, fast, and lasting conquest. However, not the glory of the nation is underscored, but the glory of Yahweh. Jgs, ch. 1, and clues within Josue, show that, historically, the conquest was less complete, and slower. On account of this religious manner of writing it is not surprising to note traits which reveal the writers to be preachers as well as historians. Many events are attributed to Josue, even though, historically, they belong to other periods. Little distinction is made between events of the remote past and those of later times. There is no chronology of events, and numbers are exaggerated. Moral and religious values are intermingled with historical events. Theological discourses are put on the lips of Josue and of Yahweh after the manner of ancient historical writers. Victories are attributed to Yahweh.

About half of the Book of Josue was first written in the tenth century B.C., three hundred years after the events described in it. Other parts of the book were added later, up to its final edition which appeared in the sixth century B.C. The unknown authors and editors account for the multiple styles. The book describes the conquest and the allotment of Chanaan to the twelve tribes.

Josue, the successor of Moses, leads the victorious invasion from Sattim, northeast of the Dead Sea, across the Jordan River, and pitches his temporary headquarters at Galgal. The southern campaign is succeeded by the northern campaign. Silo, twenty miles north of Jerusalem, becomes the capital town.

The militarily undisciplined Israelites were no match for the Chanaanite chariotry. The invaders engaged in guerrilla warfare along sparsely settled areas (Judea and Galilee). Some of the twelve tribes, who had never emigrated to Egypt, joined their invading Israelite kinsmen.

Main divisions of the Book of Josue are:

1. Conquest of Chanaan, 1, 1—12, 24
2. Division of the Land, 13, 1—21, 45
3. Return of the Transjordan Tribes and Josue's Farewell, 22, 1—24, 33

I. CONQUEST OF CHANAAN

1

1 ***Divine Promise of Assistance*** After Moses, the servant of the Lord, had died, the Lord said to Moses' aide Josue, son
2 of Nun: "My servant Moses is dead. So prepare to cross the Jordan here, with all the people, into the land I will give the
3 Israelites. As I promised Moses, I will deliver to you every place
4 where you set foot. Your domain is to be all the land of the Hethites, from the desert and from Lebanon east to the great
5 river Euphrates and west to the Great Sea. No one can withstand you while you live. I will be with you as I was with Moses:
6 I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be firm and steadfast, so that you may give this people possession of the land which I
7 swore to their fathers I would give them. Above all, be firm and steadfast, taking care to observe the entire Law which my servant Moses enjoined on you. Do not swerve from it either to the right or to the left, that you may succeed wherever you go.
8 Keep this Book of the Law on your lips. Recite it by day and by night, that you may observe carefully all that is written in it;
9 then you will successfully attain your goal. I command you: be firm and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go."

10.11 So Josue commanded the officers of the people: "Go through the camp and instruct the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for three days from now you shall cross the Jordan here, to march in and take possession of the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.' "

12 ***The Transjordan Tribes*** Josue reminded the Rubenites,
13 the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasse: "Remember what Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded you when he said, 'The Lord, your God, will permit you to settle in this land.'
14 Your wives, your children, and your livestock shall remain in the land Moses gave you here beyond the Jordan. But all the warriors among you must cross over armed ahead of your kins-
15 men and you must help them | until the Lord has settled your kinsmen, and they like you possess the land which the Lord, your God, is giving them. Afterward you may return and occupy your own land, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, has
16 given you east of the Jordan." "We will do all you have com-

manded us," they answered Josue, "and we will go wherever
17 you send us. | We will obey you as completely as we obeyed
Moses. But may the Lord, your God, be with you as he was
18 with Moses. If anyone rebels against your orders and does not
obey every command you give him, he shall be put to death.
But be firm and steadfast."

2

1 ***Spies Saved by Rahab*** Then Josue, son of Nun, secretly
sent out two spies from Sattim, saying, "Go, reconnoiter the
land and Jericho." When the two reached Jericho, they went
into the house of a harlot named Rahab, where they lodged.
2 But a report was brought to the king of Jericho that some
3 Israelites had come there that night to spy out the land. So the
king of Jericho sent Rahab the order, "Put out the visitors who
have entered your house, for they have come to spy out the
4 entire land." The woman had taken the two men and hidden
them, so she said, "True, the men you speak of came to me, but
5 I did not know where they came from. At dark, when it was
time for the gate to be shut, they left, and I do not know where
they went. You will have to pursue them immediately to over-
6 take them." Now, she had led them to the roof, and hidden
7 them among her stalks of flax spread out there. But the pur-
suers set out along the way to the fords of the Jordan, and
once they had left, the gate was shut.
8 Before the spies fell asleep, Rahab came to them on the roof
9 | and said: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that
a dread of you has come upon us, and that all the inhabitants
10 of the land are overcome with fear of you. For we have heard
how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you
when you came out of Egypt, and how you dealt with Sehon
and Og, the two kings of the Amorrites beyond the Jordan,
11 whom you doomed to destruction. At these reports, we are
disheartened; everyone is discouraged because of you, since the
Lord, your God, is God in heaven above and on earth below.
12 Now then, swear to me by the Lord that, since I am showing

2—10: The stories of these nine chapters most likely originated in the tribe of Benjamin and were kept orally alive at the shrine of Galgal, about five miles southwest of Jericho.

2, 4-5: The sacred writers do not seem to pass any judgment on Rahab's lie. (For similar "lies" see Gn 12, 10-20 n; Gn 27, 1-40 n.)

2, 9-11: The authors do not mean to quote the exact words of Rahab. It is their way of illustrating the great achievements of Yahweh by describing terror in the hearts of the Chanaanites. See 6, 22-25 for the happy ending of Rahab's conversion, which squares well with Mt 1, 5 where she is listed as an ancestress of Christ.

kindness to you, you in turn will show kindness to my family;
13 and give me an unmistakable token | that you are to spare my
father and mother, brothers and sisters, and all their kin, and
14 save us from death." "We pledge our lives for yours," the men
answered her. "If you do not betray this errand of ours, we will
be faithful in showing kindness to you when the Lord gives us
the land."
15 Then she let them down through the window with a rope;
16 for she lived in a house built into the city wall. "Go up into the
hill country," she suggested to them, "that your pursuers may
not find you. Hide there for three days, until they return; then
17 you may proceed on your way." The men answered her, "This
18 is how we will fulfill the oath you made us take: When we
come into the land, tie this scarlet cord in the window through
which you are letting us down; and gather your father and
mother, your brothers and all your family into your house.
19 Should any of them pass outside the doors of your house, he
will be responsible for his own death, and we shall be guiltless.
But we shall be responsible if anyone in the house with you is
20 harmed. If, however, you betray this errand of ours, we shall be
21 quit of the oath you have made us take." "Let it be as you say,"
she replied, and bade them farewell. When they were gone, she
tied the scarlet cord in the window.
22 They went up into the hills, where they stayed three days
until their pursuers, who had sought them all along the road
23 without finding them, returned. Then the two came back down
from the hills, crossed the Jordan to Josue, son of Nun, and
24 reported all that had befallen them. They assured Josue, "The
Lord has delivered all this land into our power; indeed, all the
inhabitants of the land are overcome with fear of us."

3

1 ***Preparations for Crossing the Jordan*** Early the next
morning, Josue moved with all the Israelites from Sattim to the
2 Jordan, where they lodged before crossing over. Three days later
3 the officers went through the camp | and issued these instruc-
tions to the people: "When you see the Ark of the Covenant of
the Lord, your God, which the Levitical priests will carry, you
4 must also break camp and follow it, | that you may know the

3—4: There is no satisfactory explanation for the apparent disorder n these two chapters. Arabic chroniclers report that in 1267 A.D. a land-lide stopped the Jordan River from flowing. A similar phenomenon ıccurred in 1927 which lasted twenty-one hours. Scholars believe that ;od's providence could have used such a natural phenomenon at a time nost opportune for the Israelites.

way to take, for you have not gone over this road before. But le
there be a space of two thousand cubits between you and th
5 Ark. Do not come nearer to it." Josue also said to the peopl
"Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will perform wor
6 ders among you." And he directed the priests to take up the Ar
of the Covenant and go on ahead of the people; and they did so
7 Then the Lord said to Josue, "Today I will begin to exal
you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know I am with you
8 as I was with Moses. Now command the priests carrying th
Ark of the Covenant to come to a halt in the Jordan when the
reach the edge of the waters."
9 So Josue said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to th
10 words of the Lord, your God." He continued: "This is how you
will know that there is a living God in your midst, who at you
approach will dispossess the Chanaanites, Hethites, Hevites
11 Pherezites, Gergesites, Amorrites and Jebusites. The Ark of th
12 Covenant of the Lord of the whole earth will precede you into
the Jordan. [Now choose twelve men, one from each of th
13 tribes of Israel.] When the soles of the feet of the priests carry-
ing the Ark of the Lord, the Lord of the whole earth, touch the
water of the Jordan, it will cease to flow; for the water flowing
down from upstream will halt in a solid bank."

14 ***The Crossing Begun*** The people struck their tents to cross
the Jordan, with the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant
15 ahead of them. No sooner had these priestly bearers of the Ark
waded into the waters at the edge of the Jordan, which over-
16 flows all its banks during the entire season of the harvest, than
the waters flowing from upstream halted, backing up in a solid
mass for a very great distance indeed, from Adama, a city in
the direction of Sarthan; while those flowing downstream
toward the Salt Sea of the Araba disappeared entirely. Thus
17 the people crossed over opposite Jericho. While all Israel
crossed over on dry ground, the priests carrying the Ark of the
Covenant of the Lord remained motionless on dry ground in the
bed of the Jordan until the whole nation had completed the
passage.

4

1 ***Memorial Stones*** After the entire nation had crossed the
2 Jordan, the Lord said to Josue, "Choose twelve men from the
3 people, one from each tribe, and instruct them to take up twelve
stones from this spot in the bed of the Jordan where the priests
have been standing motionless. Carry them over with you, and
place them where you are to stay tonight."
4 Summoning the twelve men whom he had selected from

5 among the Israelites, one from each tribe, | Josue said to them:
"Go to the bed of the Jordan in front of the Ark of the Lord, your
God; lift to your shoulders one stone apiece, so that they will
6 equal in number the tribes of the Israelites. | In the future, these
are to be a sign among you. When your children ask you what
7 these stones mean to you, you shall answer them, 'The waters of
the Jordan ceased to flow before the Ark of the Covenant of the
Lord when it crossed the Jordan.' Thus these stones are to serve
8 as a perpetual memorial to the Israelites." The twelve Israelites
did as Josue had commanded: they took up as many stones
from the bed of the Jordan as there were tribes of the Israelites,
and carried them along to the camp site, where they placed
9 them. According to the Lord's direction, Josue also had twelve
stones set up in the bed of the Jordan on the spot where the
priests stood who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant. They
are there to this day.
10 The priests carrying the Ark remained in the bed of the
Jordan until everything had been done that the Lord had com-
manded Josue to tell the people. The people crossed over
11 quickly, | and when all had reached the other side, the Ark of
the Lord, borne by the priests, also crossed to its place in front
12 of them. The Rubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasse,
armed, marched in the vanguard of the Israelites, as Moses had
13 ordered. About forty thousand troops equipped for battle
passed over before the Lord to the plains of Jericho.
14 That day the Lord exalted Josue in the sight of all Israel,
and thenceforth during his whole life they respected him as they
had respected Moses.
15.16 Then the Lord said to Josue, "Command the priests carry-
ing the Ark of the Commandments to come up from the Jor-
17.18 dan." Josue did so, and when the priests carrying the Ark of
the Covenant of the Lord had come up from the bed of
the Jordan, as the soles of their feet regained the dry ground,
the waters of the Jordan resumed their course and as before
overflowed all its banks.
19 The people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the
first month, and camped in Galgal on the eastern limits of
20 Jericho. At Galgal Josue set up the twelve stones which had
21 been taken from the Jordan, saying to the Israelites, "In the
future, when the children among you ask their fahers what
22 these stones mean, you shall inform them, 'Israel crossed the
23 Jordan here on dry ground.' For the Lord, your God, dried up
the waters of the Jordan in front of you until you crossed over,
just as the Lord, your God, had done at the Red Sea, which he
24 dried up in front of us until we crossed over: in order that all

the peoples of the earth may learn that the hand of the Lord
mighty, and that you may fear the Lord, your God, forever

5

1 ***Rites at Galgal*** When all the kings of the Amorrites to t
west of the Jordan and all the kings of the Chanaanites by t
sea heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jord
before the Israelites until they crossed over, they were di
heartened and lost courage at their approach.
2 On this occasion the Lord said to Josue, "Make flint kniv
3 and circumcise the Israelite nation for the second time." So Jos
made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gabaat
4 haaraloth, under these circumstances: Of all the people wh
came out of Egypt, every man of military age had died in t
5 desert during the journey after they left Egypt. Though all t
men who came out were circumcised, none of those born in t
desert during the journey after the departure from Egypt wer
6 circumcised. Now the Israelites had wandered forty years in t
desert, until all the warriors among the people that came fort
from Egypt died off because they had not obeyed the comman
of the Lord. For the Lord swore that he would not let them se
the land flowing with milk and honey which he had promise
7 their fathers he would give us. It was the children whom h
raised up in their stead whom Josue circumcised, for these wer
yet with foreskins, not having been circumcised on the journey
8 When the rite had been performed, the whole nation remaine
9 in camp where they were, until they recovered. Then the Lor
said to Josue, "Today I have removed the reproach of Egyp
from you." Therefore the place is called Galgal to the presen
day.
10 While the Israelites were encamped at Galgal on the plain
of Jericho, they celebrated the Passover on the evening of th
11 fourteenth of the month. On the day after the Passover they at
of the produce of the land in the form of unleavened cakes and
12 parched grain. On that same day | after the Passover on whic
they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased. No
longer was there manna for the Israelites, who that year ate o
the yield of the land of Chanaan.

13 ***Siege at Jericho*** While Josue was near Jericho, he raise

5, 3: *Gabaath-haaraloth:* "hill of the foreskins."
5, 10: *The month:* the first month of the year, later called Nisan. The crossing of the Jordan occurred therefore about the same time of the year as did the crossing of the Red Sea (see Ex 12—14).
5, 13-15: The meaning of this passage is the call of a hero, Josue, at

his eyes and saw one who stood facing him, drawn sword in
hand. Josue went up to him and asked, "Are you one of us or of
14 our enemies?" | He replied, "Neither. I am the captain of the
host of the Lord and I have just arrived." Then Josue fell
prostrate to the ground in worship, and said to him, "What has
15 my lord to say to his servant?" The captain of the host of the
Lord replied to Josue, "Remove your sandals from your feet,
for the place on which you are standing is holy." And Josue
obeyed.

6

1 Now Jericho was in a state of siege because of the presence
2 of the Israelites, so that no one left or entered. And to Josue
the Lord said, "I have delivered Jericho and its king into your
3 power. Have all the soldiers circle the city, marching once
4 around it. Do this for six days, | with seven priests carrying
rams' horns ahead of the Ark. On the seventh day march
around the city seven times, and have the priests blow the

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the solemn beginning of the siege of Jericho. "The captain" (v. 14) becomes Yahweh in 6, 2ff. (This is similar to the angel of the Lord, used as a synonym for the Lord.) Analogous passages are found in the Pentateuch (e.g., Gn 16, 1-15 n) and are commonly explained thus: either God appeared in the form of an angel, or these appearances and their concomitant conversations are true internal experiences, which are externalized dramatically in most perfect conformity with inspired writing of biblical history.

6, 1-25: The account is not precise on the time for the blowing of the horns and on the signal for the people to shout. The ceremony of the ban or *herem* consisted of circling the city and shouting, among other procedures. To place a city under the ban meant to destroy it totally (Dt 13, 16-19) or partially (Dt 20, 14).

Since Josue was their leader, his command was considered to come directly from God (just as for many commands of Moses). At the time of Josue and the writers of this book, the ban was a normal and recognized institution of a holy war. The purpose of the ban was to destroy persons, places, or things lest they contaminate the monotheism of the people. It was also practiced by other peoples, e.g., the Moabites. God never commanded this barbaric practice, but the writers and the people interpreted it to be in accordance with the spirit of Moses' law (Dt 20, 16-18) and, therefore, also in accordance with God's command. See Dt 2, 34-36; 3, 3-7. God did not yet reveal that this *herem* was an immoral practice.

From 1952 on, Miss Kathleen Kenyon has progressively proven that the excavated city walls at Jericho (the size of St. Peter's Square), which were thought to date from the time of Josue in the thirteenth century B.C., actually date from prior to 2,000 B.C. Archeologists ask: can the Jericho of Josue be some other place in the vicinity? Nevertheless, Josue did capture a city of Jericho, perhaps with the aid of an earthquake.

5 horns. When they give a long blast on the ram's horn and you
hear that signal, all the people shall shout aloud. The wall of the
city will collapse, and they will be able to make a frontal
attack."
6 Summoning the priests, Josue, son of Nun, then ordered
them to take up the Ark of the Covenant with seven of the
priests carrying rams' horns in front of the Ark of the Lord.
7 And he ordered the people to proceed in a circle around the
city, with the picked troops marching ahead of the Ark of the
8 Lord. At this order they proceeded, with the seven priests who
carried the rams' horns before the Lord blowing their horns
9 and the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord following them. In
front of the priests with the horns marched the picked troops;
the rear guard followed the Ark, and the blowing of horns was
10 kept up continually as they marched. But the people had been
commanded by Josue not to shout or make any noise or outcry
11 until he gave the word: only then were they to shout. So he had
the Ark of the Lord circle the city, going once around it, after
which they returned to camp for the night.
12 Early the next morning, Josue had the priests take up the
13 Ark of the Lord. The seven priests bearing the rams' horns
marched in front of the Ark of the Lord, blowing their horns.
Ahead of these marched the picked troops, while the rear guard
followed the Ark of the Lord, and the blowing of horns was
14 kept up continually. On this second day they again marched
around the city once before returning to camp; and for six days
in all they did the same.
15 On the seventh day, beginning at daybreak, they marched
around the city seven times in the same manner; on that day
16 only did they march around the city seven times. The seventh
time around, the priests blew the horns and Josue said to the
17 people, "Now shout, for the Lord has given you the city | and
everything in it. It is under the Lord's ban. Only the harlot
Rahab and all who are in the house with her are to be spared,
18 because she hid the messengers we sent. But be careful not to
take, in your greed, anything that is under the ban; else you
will bring upon the camp of Israel this ban and the misery of it.
19 All silver and gold, and the articles of bronze or iron, are sacred
to the Lord. They shall be put in the treasury of the Lord."

20 ***The Fall of Jericho*** As the horns blew, the people began
to shout. When they heard the signal horn, they raised a tre-
mendous shout. The wall collapsed, and the people stormed the
21 city in a frontal attack and took it. They observed the ban by

putting to the sword all living creatures in the city: men and
women, young and old, as well as oxen, sheep and asses.
22 Josue directed the two men who had spied out the land, "Go
into the harlot's house and bring out the woman with all her
23 kin, as you swore to her you would do." The spies entered and
brought out Rahab, with her father, mother, brothers, and all
her kin. Her entire family they led forth and placed them out-
24 side the camp of Israel. The city itself they burned with all that
was in it, except the silver, gold, and articles of bronze and
iron, which were placed in the treasury of the house of the Lord.
25 Because Rahab the harlot had hidden the messengers whom
Josue had sent to reconnoiter Jericho, Josue spared her with her
family and all her kin, who continue in the midst of Israel to
this day.
26 On that occasion Josue imposed the oath: Cursed before the
Lord be the man who attempts to rebuild this city, Jericho. He
shall lose his first-born when he lays its foundation, and he shall
27 lose his youngest son when he sets up its gates. Now, though
the Lord was with Josue so that his fame spread throughout
the land, the Israelites violated the ban.

7

1 Achan, son of Charmi, Son of Zabdi, son of Zara of the
tribe of Juda, took goods that were under the ban, and the anger
of the Lord flared up against the Israelites.

2 ***Defeat at Hai*** Josue next sent men from Jericho to Hai,
which is near Bethel on its eastern side, with instructions to go
up and reconnoiter the land. When they had explored Hai,
3 they returned to Josue and advised, "Do not send all the people
up; if only about two or three thousand go up, they can over-
come Hai. The enemy there are few; you need not call for an
4 effort from all the people." About three thousand of the people
5 made the attack, but they were defeated by those at Hai, who
killed some thirty-six of them. They pressed them back across
the clearing in front of the city gate till they broke ranks, and
defeated them finally on the descent, so that the confidence of
the people melted away like water.
6 Josue, together with the elders of Israel, rent his garments

6, 26: Josue's curse is that the rebuilder of Jericho be punished by the loss of all his sons from the youngest to the oldest. In the interpretation given by the author of 3 Kgs 16, 34, this curse was fulfilled in Hiel who followed the Chanaanite custom of sacrificing his oldest son when he laid the foundation of Jericho, and his youngest son when he built the gates of the city.

and lay prostrate before the Ark of the Lord until evening; and
7 they threw dust on their heads. "Alas, O Lord God," Josue
prayed, "why did you ever allow this people to pass over the
Jordan, delivering us into the power of the Amorrites, that they
might destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell on
8 the other side of the Jordan. Pray, Lord, what can I say, now
9 that Israel has turned its back to its enemies? When the
Chanaanites and the other inhabitants of the land hear of it,
they will close in around us and efface our name from the earth.
What will you do for your great name?"
10 The Lord replied to Josue: "Stand up. Why are you lying
11 prostrate? Israel has sinned: they have violated the covenant
which I enjoined on them. They have stealthily taken goods
subject to the ban, and have deceitfully put them in their bag-
12 gage. If the Israelites cannot stand up to their enemies, but must
turn their back to them, it is because they are under the ban. I
will not remain with you unless you remove from among you
13 whoever has incurred the ban. | Rise, sanctify the people. Tell
them to sanctify themselves before tomorrow, for the Lord, the
God of Israel, says: You are under the ban, O Israel. You can-
not stand up to your enemies until you remove from among
14 you whoever has incurred the ban. In the morning you must
present yourselves by tribes. The tribe which the Lord desig-
nates shall come forward by clans; the clan which the Lord desig-
nates shall come forward by families; the family which the
15 Lord designates shall come forward one by one. He who is
designated as having incurred the ban shall be destroyed by fire,
with all that is his, because he has violated the covenant of the
Lord and has committed a shameful crime in Israel."

16 ***Achan's Guilt and Punishment*** Early the next morning
Josue had Israel come forward by tribes, and the tribe of Juda
17 was designated. Then he had the clans of Juda come forward,
and the clan of Zara was designated. He had the clan of Zara
18 come forward by families, and Zabdi was designated. Finally
he had that family come forward one by one, and Achan, son
of Charmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zara of the tribe of Juda, was
19 designated. Josue said to Achan, "My son, give to the Lord, the
God of Israel, glory and honor by telling me what you have done;
20 do not hide it from me." Achan answered Josue, "I have indeed
sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have
21 done: | Among the spoils, I saw a beautiful Babylonian mantle,

7, 14: Note the structure of nomadic society still with us today, namely: tribes, clans, families, individuals.

two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in
weight; in my greed I took them. They are now hidden in the
22 ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath." The mes-
sengers whom Josue sent hastened to the tent and found them
23 hidden there, with the silver underneath. They took them from
the tent, brought them to Josue and all the Israelites, and spread
them out before the Lord.
24 Then Josue and all Israel took Achan, son of Zara, with the
silver, the mantle, and the bar of gold, and with his sons and
daughters, his ox, his ass and his sheep, his tent, and all his
25 possessions, and led them off to the Valley of Achor. Josue said,
"The Lord bring upon you today the misery with which you
26 have afflicted us!" And all Israel stoned him to death | and
piled a great heap of stones over him, which remains to the
present day. Then the anger of the Lord relented. That is why
the place is called the Valley of Achor to this day.

8

1 *Capture of Hai* The Lord then said to Josue, "Do not be
afraid or dismayed. Take all the army with you and prepare to
attack Hai. I have delivered the king of Hai into your power,
2 with his people, city, and land. | Do to Hai and its king what
you did to Jericho and its king; except that you may take its
3 spoil and livestock as booty. Set an ambush behind the city." So
Josue and all the soldiers prepared to attack Hai. Picking out
4 thirty thousand warriors, Josue sent them off by night | with
these orders: "See that you ambush the city from the rear, at
5 no great distance; then all of you be on the watch. The rest of
the people and I will come up to the city, and when they make a
sortie against us as they did the last time, we will flee from

7, 24-25: According to the nomadic law of solidarity, an individual is so intimately connected with his family that all the family shares in his honor or guilt. See Nm 16, 31-35.

7, 26: The burial of a criminal as in 8, 29; 10, 27.

8, 1-29: These verses continue from 7, 2-5. Ordinarily, archeology facilitates the understanding of a text. Jericho and Hai are two rare examples of archeology raising a host of new problems about the text. Archeologists show with certainty that Hai was not inhabited during Josue's conquest in the thirteenth century B.C. There is no satisfactory explanation to date on how to reconcile this archeological truth with the biblical account of Josue's capture of Hai. One possibility is that the conquest of Hai took place at another era but was attributed to Josue (see Introduction to the Book of Josue). Another possibility is that the story originally referred to Bethel, one and one-half miles from Hai. Bethel was destroyed in the thirteenth century B.C. People later transferred the story to Hai to explain the word's meaning, namely, "The

them. They will keep coming out after us until we have draw
them away from the city, for they will think we are fleeing fror
them as we did the last time. When this occurs, | rise fror
ambush and take possession of the city, which the Lord, you
God, will deliver into your power. When you have taken th
city, set it afire in obedience to the Lord's command. These ar
my orders to you." Then Josue sent them away. They went t
the place of ambush, taking up their position to the west of Hai
toward Bethel. Josue, however, spent that night in the plain
Early the next morning Josue mustered the army and wen
up to Hai at its head, with the elders of Israel. When all th
troops he led were drawn up in position before the city, they
pitched camp north of Hai, on the other side of the ravine
[He took about five thousand men and set them in ambush
between Bethel and Hai, west of the city.] Thus the people
took up their stations, with the main body north of the city and
the ambush west of it, and Josue waited overnight among his
troops. The king of Hai saw this, and he and all his army came
out very early in the morning to engage Israel in battle at the
descent toward the Araba, not knowing that there was an am-
bush behind the city. Josue and the main body of the Israelites
fled in seeming defeat toward the desert, till the last of the
soldiers in the city had been called out to pursue them. Since
they were drawn away from the city, with every man engaged
in this pursuit of Josue and the Israelites, not a soldier remained
in Hai [or Bethel], and the city was open and unprotected.
Then the Lord directed Josue, "Stretch out the javelin in your
hand toward Hai, for I will deliver it into your power." Josue
stretched out the javelin in his hand toward the city, | and as
soon as he did so, the men in ambush rose from their post,
rushed in, captured the city, and immediately set it on fire. By
the time the men of Hai looked back, the smoke from the city
was already sky-high. Escape in any direction was impossible,
because the Israelites retreating toward the desert now turned
on their pursuers; for when Josue and the main body of Israel-
ites saw that the city had been taken from ambush and was
going up in smoke, they struck back at the men of Hai. Since
those in the city came out to intercept them, the men of Hai
were hemmed in by Israelites on either side, who cut them down
without any fugitives or survivors | except the king, whom
they took alive and brought to Josue.
All the inhabitants of Hai who had pursued the Israelites

8, 18: *Javelin:* a difficult Hebrew word to translate, which, according to the Dead Sea Scrolls, is some kind of a sword or scimitar.

into the desert were slain by the sword there in the open, down
25 to the last man. Then all Israel returned and put to the sword
those inside the city. There fell that day a total of twelve thou-
26 sand men and women, the entire population of Hai. Josue kept
the javelin in his hand stretched out until he had fulfilled the
27 doom on all the inhabitants of Hai. However, the Israelites took
for themselves as booty the livestock and the spoil of that city,
28 according to the command of the Lord issued to Josue. Then
Josue destroyed the place by fire, reducing it to an everlasting
29 mound of ruins, as it remains today. He had the king of Hai
hanged on a tree until evening; then at sunset Josue ordered the
body removed from the tree and cast at the entrance of the city
gate, where a great heap of stones was piled up over it, which
remains to the present day.

30 ***Altar on Mount Ebal*** Later Josue built an altar to the
31 Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, | of unhewn stones on
which no iron tool had been used, in keeping with the command
to the Israelites of Moses, the servant of the Lord, as recorded
in the Book of the Law. On this altar they offered holocausts
32 and peace offerings to the Lord. There, in the presence of the
Israelites, Josue inscribed upon the stones a copy of the law
33 written by Moses. And all Israel, stranger and native alike, with
their elders, officers and judges, stood on either side of the Ark
facing the Levitical priests who were carrying the Ark of the
Covenant of the Lord. Half of them were facing Mount
Garizim and half Mount Ebal, thus carrying out the instruc-
tions of Moses, the servant of the Lord, for the blessing of the
34 people of Israel on this first occasion. Then were read aloud all
the words of the law, the blessings and the curses, exactly as
35 written in the Book of the Law. Every single word that Moses
had commanded, Josue read aloud to the entire community,
including the women and children, and the strangers who had
accompanied Israel.

9

1 ***Confederacy against Israel*** When the news reached the
kings west of the Jordan, in the mountain regions and in the
foothills, and all along the coast of the Great Sea as far as
Lebanon: Hethites, Amorrites, Chanaanites, Pherezites, Hevites
2 and Jebusites, they all formed an alliance to launch a common
attack against Josue and Israel.

8, 30-35: See a more elaborate description of these ceremonies in Dt 11, 29; 27, 1-26.

3 ***The Gabaonite Deception*** On learning what Josue had
4 done to Jericho and Hai, the inhabitants of Gabaon | put into
effect a device of their own. They chose provisions for a jour-
ney, making use of old sacks for their asses, and old wineskins,
5 torn and mended. They wore old, patched sandals and shabby
garments; and all the bread they took was dry and crumbly.
6 Thus they journeyed to Josue in the camp at Galgal, where
they said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from
a distant land to propose that you make an alliance with us."
7 But the men of Israel replied to the Hevites, "You may be living
in land that is ours. How, then, can we make an alliance with
8 you?" | But they answered Josue, "We are your servants." Then
Josue asked them, "Who are you? Where do you come from?"
9 | They answered him, "Your servants have come from a far-
off land, because of the fame of the Lord, your God. For we have
10 heard reports of all that he did in Egypt | and all that he did to
the two kings of the Amorrites beyond the Jordan, Sehon, king
of Hesebon, and Og, king of Basan, who lived in Astharoth.
11 So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us,
'Take along provisions for the journey and go to meet them.
Say to them: We are your servants; we propose that you make
12 an alliance with us.' This bread of ours was still warm when we
brought it from home as provisions the day we left to come to
13 you, but now it is dry and crumbled. Here are our wineskins,
which were new when we filled them, but now they are torn.
Look at our garments and sandals, which are worn out from the
14 very long journey." Then the Israelite princes partook of their
15 provisions, without seeking the advice of the Lord. So Josue
made an alliance with them and entered into an agreement to
spare them, which the princes of the community sealed with an
oath.

16 ***Gabaonites Made Vassals*** Three days after the agreement
was entered into, the Israelites learned that these people were
17 from nearby, and would be living in Israel. The third day on
the road, the Israelites came to their cities of Gabaon, Caphira,
18 Beroth and Cariath-jarim, | but did not attack them, because
the princes of the community had sworn to them by the Lord,
the God of Israel. When the entire community grumbled against
19 the princes, these all remonstrated with the people, "We have
sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and so we cannot
20 harm them. Let us therefore spare their lives and so deal with
them that we shall not be punished for the oath we have sworn
21 to them." Thus the princes recommended that they be let live, as

hewers of wood and drawers of water for the entire community;
and the community did as the princes advised them.
22 Josue summoned the Gabaonites and said to them, "Why did
you lie to us and say that you lived at a great distance from us,
23 when you will be living in our very midst? For this are you
accursed: every one of you shall always be a slave [hewers of
24 wood and drawers of water] for the house of my God." They
answered Josue, "Your servants were fully informed of how
the Lord, your God, commanded his servant Moses that you
be given the entire land and that all its inhabitants be destroyed
before you. Since, therefore, at your advance, we were in great
25 fear for our lives, we acted as we did. And now that we are in
26 your power, do with us what you think fit and right." Josue did
what he had decided: while he saved them from being killed by
27 the Israelites, | at the same time he made them, as they still are,
hewers of wood and drawers of water for the community and
for the altar of the Lord, in the place of the Lord's choice.

10

1 ***The Siege of Gabaon*** Now Adonisedec, king of Jerusa-
lem, heard that, in the capture and destruction of Hai, Josue
had done to that city and its king as he had done to Jericho and
its king. He heard also that the inhabitants of Gabaon had made
2 their peace with Israel, remaining among them, | and that there
was great fear abroad, because Gabaon was large enough for a
royal city, larger even than the city of Hai, and all its men were
3 brave. So Adonisedec, king of Jerusalem, sent for Oham, king of
Hebron, Pharam, king of Jerimoth, Japhia, king of Lachis, and
4 Dabir, king of Eglon, | to come to his aid for an attack on
Gabaon, since it had concluded peace with Josue and the Israel-
5 ites. The five Amorrite kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jerimoth,
Lachis and Eglon, united all their forces and marched against
6 Gabaon, where they took up siege positions. Thereupon, the
men of Gabaon sent an appeal to Josue in his camp at Galgal:
"Do not abandon your servants. Come up here quickly and save
us. Help us, because all the Amorrite kings of the mountain
country have joined forces against us."

7 ***Josue's Victory*** So Josue marched up from Galgal with
8 his picked troops and the rest of his soldiers. Meanwhile the
Lord said to Josue, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered
them into your power. Not one of them will be able to with-
9 stand you." And when Josue made his surprise attack upon

10, 1: This is the first biblical mention of Jerusalem.

10 them after an all-night march from Galgal, the Lord threw
them into disorder before him. The Israelites inflicted a great
slaughter on them at Gabaon and pursued them down the Beth
Horon slope, harassing them as far as Azeca and Maceda.
11 While they fled down before Israel along the descent from
Beth-Horon, the Lord hurled great stones from the sky above
them all the way to Azeca, killing many. More died from these
12 hailstones than the Israelites slew with the sword. On this day
when the Lord delivered up the Amorrites to the Israelites
Josue prayed to the Lord, and said in the presence of Israel:
Stand still, O sun, at Gabaon, O moon, in the valley of Aialon
13 | And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, while the nation
took vengeance on its foes. Is this not recorded in the Book of
Jashar? The sun halted in the middle of the sky; not for a whole
14 day did it resume its swift course. Never before or since was
there a day like this, when the Lord obeyed the voice of a man;
15 for the Lord fought for Israel. [Then Josue and all Israel re-
turned to the camp at Galgal.]

16 ***Execution of Amorrite Kings*** Meanwhile the five kings
17 who had fled, hid in a cave at Maceda. When Josue was told
that the five kings had been discovered hiding in a cave at
18 Maceda, he said, "Roll large stones to the mouth of the cave
19 and post men over it to guard them. But do not remain there
yourselves. Pursue your enemies, and harry them in the rear.
Do not allow them to escape to their cities, for the Lord, your
God, has delivered them into your power."
20 Once Josue and the Israelites had finally inflicted the last
blows in this very great slaughter, and the survivors had es-
21 caped from them into the fortified cities, all the army returned
safely to Josue and the camp at Maceda, no man uttering a
22 sound against the Israelites. Then Josue said, "Open the mouth
23 of the cave and bring out those five kings to me." Obediently,

10, 11: A victory through Yahweh's help in the form of a hailstorm is sketched in epic grandeur.

10, 12-14: Scholars today do not interpret this text literally; e.g., the sun stood still (an astronomical interpretation). Some attempt to explain continued daylight by attributing it to a refraction of light (an atmospherical interpretation). The metaphorical interpretation is commonly accepted today. Josue hoped for an extension of daylight to crush his enemies. He crushed them. The event is described in prose (vv. 7-11) and in poetry (vv. 13-14). The latter account is taken from the *Book of Jashar*, a collection of patriotic songs.

The Roman theologians were wrong in their disciplinary (not doctrinal) decree of 1564 against Galileo by saying that the Copernican theory of heliocentricity militated against the scriptural text.

they brought out to him from the cave the five kings, of Jeru-
24 salem, Hebron, Jerimoth, Lachis and Eglon. When they had
done so, Josue summoned all the men of Israel and said to the
commanders of the soldiers who had marched with him, "Come
forward and put your feet on the necks of these kings." They
25 came forward and put their feet upon their necks. Then Josue
said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed, be firm and stead-
fast. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies against
26 whom you fight." Thereupon Josue struck and killed them, and
hanged them on five trees, where they remained hanging until
27 evening. At sunset they were removed from the trees at the
command of Josue and cast into the cave where they had
hidden; over the mouth of the cave large stones were placed,
which remain until this very day.

28 ***Conquest of Southern Chanaan*** Maceda, too, Josue cap-
tured and put to the sword at that time. He fulfilled the doom
on the city, on its king, and on every person in it, leaving no
survivors. Thus he did to the king of Maceda what he had done
29 to the king of Jericho. Josue then passed on with all Israel from
30 Maceda to Lebna, which he attacked. Lebna also, with its king,
the Lord delivered into the power of Israel. He put it to the
sword with every person there, leaving no survivors. Thus he
31 did to its king what he had done to the king of Jericho. Josue
next passed on with all Israel from Lebna to Lachis, where they
32 set up a camp during the attack. The Lord delivered Lachis
into the power of Israel, so that on the second day Josue cap-
tured it and put it to the sword with every person in it, just as
33 he had done to Lebna. At that time Horam, king of Gazer, came
up to help Lachis, but Josue defeated him and his people, leav-
34 ing him no survivors. From Lachis, Josue passed on with all
35 Israel to Eglon; encamping near it, they attacked it | and cap-
tured it the same day, putting it to the sword. He fulfilled the
doom that day on every person in it, just as he had done at
36 Lachis. From Eglon, Josue went up with all Israel to Hebron,
37 which they attacked | and captured. They put it to the sword
with its king, all its towns, and every person there, leaving no
survivors, just as Josue had done to Eglon. He fulfilled the

10, 24: *Put their feet upon their necks:* this was a common gesture of victory in the ancient Near East at that era.

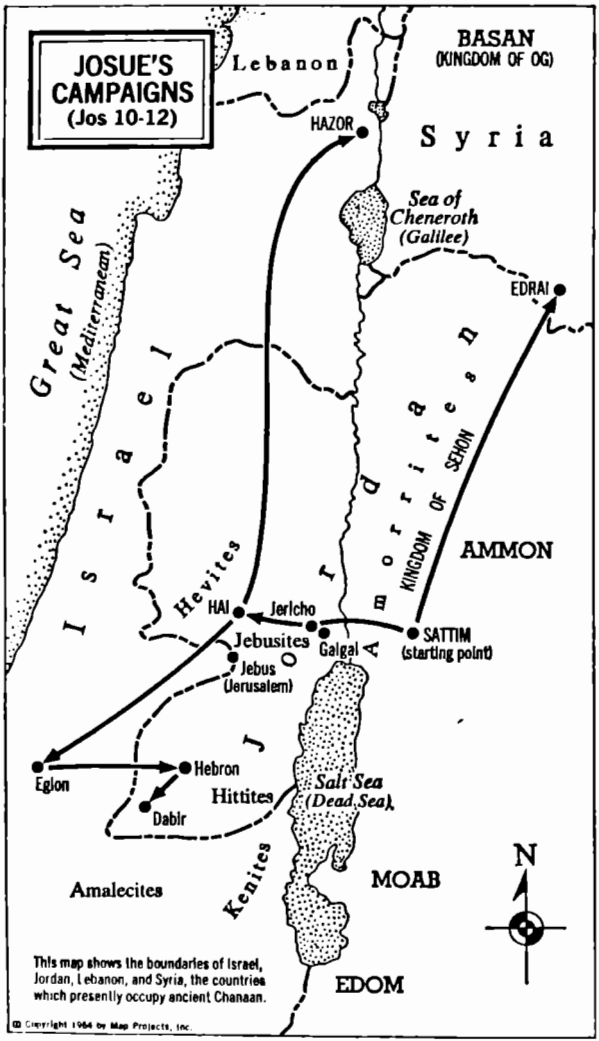
10, 28-39: Archeologists show evidence of the destruction of several of these southern towns in the thirteenth century B.C., which accords well with Josue's campaign. However, the description of the rapid and facile way of the fall of these cities to Josue is an example of the writers' manner of praising God's bestowal of the Promised Land.

38 doom on it and on every person there. Then Josue and all I
39 rael turned back to Dabir and attacked it, capturing it with i
king and all its towns. They put them to the sword and fulfille
the doom on every person there, leaving no survivors. Thus w
done to Dabir and its king what had been done to Hebron, a
well as to Lebna and its king.
40 Josue conquered the entire country; the mountain region
the Negeb, the foothills, and the mountain slopes, with all the
kings. He left no survivors, but fulfilled the doom on all wh
lived there, just as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commande
41 Josue conquered from Cadesbarne to Gaza, and all the land c
42 Gosen to Gabaon. All these kings and their lands Josue capture
in a single campaign, for the Lord, the God of Israel, fought fo
43 Israel. Thereupon Josue with all Israel returned to the camp a
Galgal.

11

1 ***Northern Confederacy*** When Jabin, king of Hasor, learne
of this, he sent a message to Jobab, king of Madon, to the kin
2 of Semron, to the king of Achsaph, and to the northern king
in the mountain regions and in the Araba near Cheneroth, in
3 the foothills, and in Naphath-Dor to the west. These were
Chanaanites to the east and west, Amorrites, Hethites, Pherez
ites and Jebusites in the mountain regions, and Hevites at the
4 foot of Hermon in the land of Maspha. They came out with al
their troops, an army numerous as the sands on the seashore, and
5 with a multitude of horses and chariots. All these kings joined
forces and marched to the waters of Merom, where they en
camped together to fight against Israel.
6 The Lord said to Josue, "Do not fear them, for by this time
tomorrow I will stretch them slain before Israel. You must ham-
7 string their horses and burn their chariots." Josue with his
whole army came upon them at the waters of Merom in a sur-
8 prise attack. The Lord delivered them into the power of the
Israelites, who defeated them and pursued them to Greater
Sidon, to Masrephoth-maim, and eastward to the valley of
9 Maspha. They struck them all down, leaving no survivors. Josue
did to them as the Lord had commanded: he hamstrung their
horses and burned their chariots.

10 ***Conquest of Northern Chanaan*** At that time Josue, turn-
ing back, captured Hasor and slew its king with the sword; for
11 Hasor formerly was the chief of all those kingdoms. He also
fulfilled the doom by putting every person there to the sword,
12 till none was left alive. Hasor itself he burned. Josue thus cap-


JOSUE'S CAMPAIGNS
(Jos 10-12)
Lebanon
BASAN
(KINGDOM OF OG)
HAZOR
Syria
Sea of Chenereth (Galilee)
EDRAI
Great Sea (Mediterranean)
Israel
Jordan
Amorites
KINGDOM OF SEHON
AMMON
Hevites
HAI
Jericho
Jebusites
Galgal
SATTIM
(starting point)
Jebus (Jerusalem)
Judea
Egion
Hebron
Hittites
Salt Sea (Dead Sea)
Dabir
Kenites
Amalecites
MOAB
N
EDOM
This map shows the boundaries of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, the countries which presently occupy ancient Chanaan.
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tured all those kings with their cities and put them to the sword
fulfilling the doom on them, as Moses, the servant of the Lord
13 had commanded. However, Israel did not destroy by fire any of
the cities built on raised sites, except Hasor, which Josue burned.
14 The Israelites took all the spoil and livestock of these cities as
their booty; but the people they put to the sword, until they
15 had exterminated the last of them, leaving none alive. As the
Lord had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded
Josue, and Josue acted accordingly. He left nothing undone
that the Lord had commanded Moses should be done.

16 ***Survey of the Conquest*** So Josue captured all this land:
the mountain regions, the entire Negeb, all the land of Gosen,
the foothills, the Araba, as well as the mountain regions and
17 foothills of Israel, from Mount Halac that rises toward Seir as
far as Baal-Gad in the Lebanon valley at the foot of Mount
18 Hermon. All their kings he captured and put to death. Josue
19 waged war against all these kings for a long time. With the
exception of the Hevites who lived in Gabaon, no city made
20 peace with the Israelites; all were taken in battle. For it was
the design of the Lord to encourage them to wage war against
Israel, that they might be doomed to destruction and thus re-
ceive no mercy, but be exterminated, as the Lord had com-
manded Moses.

21 At that time Josue penetrated the mountain regions and ex-
terminated the Enacim in Hebron, Dabir, Anab, the entire
mountain region of Juda, and the entire mountain region of
22 Israel. Josue fulfilled the doom on them and on their cities, so
that no Enacim were left in the land of the Israelites. However,
23 some survived in Gaza, in Geth, and in Azotus. Thus Josue
captured the whole country, just as the Lord had foretold to
Moses. Josue gave it to Israel as their heritage, apportioning it
among the tribes. And the land enjoyed peace.

12

1 ***Lists of Conquered Kings*** The kings of the land east of
the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, including
all the eastern section of the Araba, whom the Israelites con-
2 quered and whose lands they occupied, were: First, Sehon, king
of the Amorrites, who lived in Hesebon. His domain extended
from Aroer, which is on the bank of the Wadi Arnon, to include

11, 20: See 6, 1-25 n.

11, 21ff: Most of the land assigned to the tribe of Juda was not conquered by it till the early period of the Judges.

the wadi itself, and the land northward through half of Galaad
3 to the Wadi Jaboc, as well as the Araba from the eastern side of
Sea of Chenereth, as far south as the eastern side of the Salt Sea
of the Araba in the direction of Beth-jesimoth, to a point under
4 the slopes of Phasga. Secondly, Og, king of Basan, a survivor of
5 the Raphaim, who lived at Astharoth and Edrai. He ruled over
Mount Hermon, Salecha, and all Basan as far as the boundary
of the Gessurites and Maachathites, and over half of Galaad as
6 far as the territory of Sehon, king of Hesebon. After Moses, the
servant of the Lord, and the Israelites conquered them, he as-
signed their land to the Rubenites, the Gadites, and the half-
tribe of Manasse, as their property.
7 This is a list of the kings whom Josue and the Israelites con-
quered west of the Jordan and whose land, from Baal-Gad in
the Lebanon valley to Mount Halac which rises toward Seir,
8 Josue apportioned to the tribes of Israel. It included the moun-
tain regions and foothills, the Araba, the slopes, the desert, and
the Negeb, belonging to the Hethites, Amorrites, Chanaanites,
9 Pherezites, Hevites and Jebusites. They were the kings of Jeri-
10.11 cho, Hai (which is near Bethel), | Jerusalem, Hebron, | Jeri-
12 14 moth, Lachis, | Eglon, Gazer, | Dabir, Gader, | Horma,
15.17 Arad, | Lebna, Adullam, | Maceda, Bethel, | Thapphua,
16.20 Hepher, | Aphec, Saron, | Madon, Hasor, | Semron, Ach-
21.22 saph, | Thaanach, Mageddo, | Cades, Jecnaam (at Car-
23 mel), | and Dor (in Naphath-Dor), the foreign king at Gal-
24 gal, | and the king of Thersa: thirty-one kings in all.

II. DIVISION OF THE LAND

13

1 ***Division of Land Commanded*** When Josue was old and
advanced in years, the Lord said to him: "Though now you
are old and advanced in years, a very large part of the land still
2 remains to be conquered. This additional land includes all Ges-
3 sur and all the districts of the Philistines (from the stream ad-
joining Egypt to the boundary of Accaron in the north is reck-
oned Chanaanite territory, though held by the five lords of the
Philistines in Gaza, Azotus, Ascalon, Geth and Accaron); also
4 where the Avvites are in the south; all the land of the
Chanaanites from Ara of the Sidonians to Aphec, and the

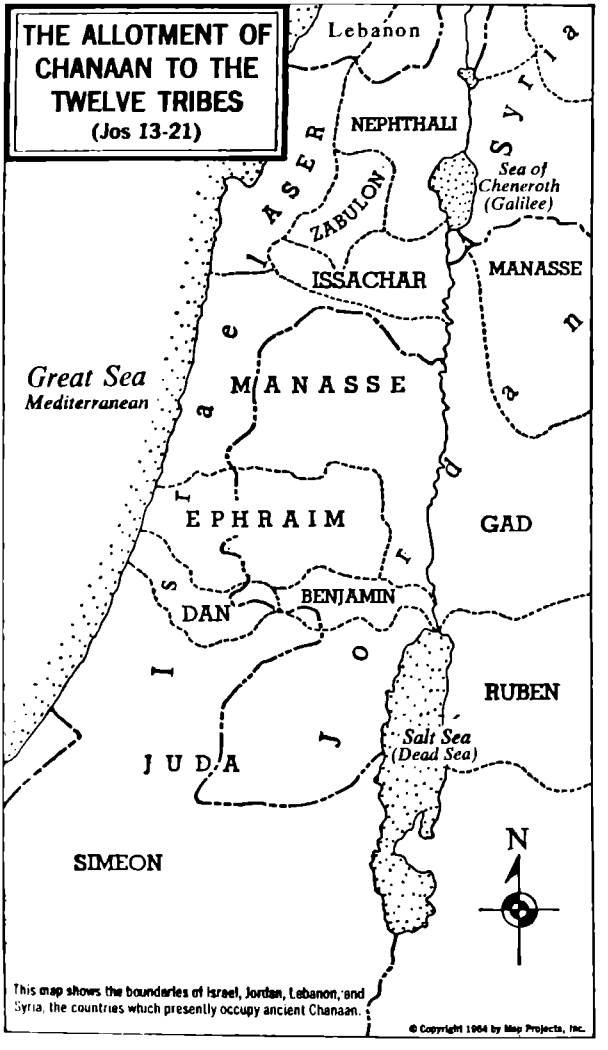
13—21: These nine chapters are monotonous to us, but we can be sympathetic if we recall that the Israelites had been semi-nomads and now they own their own land. Besides, it is the Promised Land, for God had kept His promise.

5 boundaries of the Amorrites; | and the Giblite territory; and
all the Lebanon on the east, from Baal-Gad at the foot of
6 Mount Hermon to the entrance to Hamath. At the advance of
the Israelites I will drive out all the Sidonian inhabitants of the
mountain regions between Lebanon and Masrephoth-maim;
at least include these areas in the division of the Israelite her-
7 itage, just as I have commanded you. Now, therefore, appor-
tion among the nine tribes and the half-tribes of Manasse the
land which is to be their heritage."

8 ***The Eastern Tribes*** Now the other half of the tribe of
Manasse, as well as the Rubenites and Gadites, had received
their heritage which Moses, the servant of the Lord, had given
9 them east of the Jordan: from Aroer on the bank of the Wadi
Arnon and the city in the wadi itself, through the tableland
10 of Medaba and Dibon, with the rest of the cities of Sehon, king
of the Amorrites, who reigned in Hesebon, to the boundary of
11 the Ammonites; also Galaad and the territory of the Gessurites
and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Basan as far as
12 Salecha, | the entire kingdom in Basan of Og, a survivor of the
Raphaim, who reigned at Astharoth and Edrai. Though Moses
13 conquered and occupied these territories, the Israelites did not
dislodge the Gessurites and Maachathites, so that Gessur and
14 Maacha survive in the midst of Israel to this day. However, to
the tribe of Levi Moses assigned no heritage since, as the Lord
had promised them, the Lord, the God of Israel, is their heritage.

15.16 ***Ruben*** What Moses gave to the Rubenite clans: Their ter-
ritory reached from Aroer, on the bank of the Wadi Arnon,
and the city in the wadi itself, through the tableland about
17 Medaba, to include Hesebon and all its towns which are on the
18 tableland, Dibon, Bamoth-Baal, Beth-Baal-maon, | Jahas, Ce-
19 demoth, Mephaath, | Cariathaim, Sabama, Sarath-sahar on the
20 knoll within the valley, | Beth-Phogor, the slopes of Phasga,
21 Beth-jesimoth, | and the other cities of the tableland and, gen-
erally, of the kingdom of Sehon. This Amorrite king, who
reigned in Hesebon, Moses had killed, with his vassals, the
princes of Madian, who were settled in the land: Evi, Recem,
22 Sur, Hur and Rebe; | and among their slain followers the Is-
raelites put to the sword also the soothsayer Balaam, son of
23 Beor. The boundary of the Rubenites was the bank of the Jor-
dan. These cities and their villages were the heritage of the
clans of the Rubenites.

24.25 ***Gad*** What Moses gave to the Gadite clans: Their territory


THE ALLOTMENT OF CHANAAN TO THE TWELVE TRIBES
(Jos 13-21)
Lebanon
Syria
NEPHTHALI
ASER
ZABULON
Sea of Cheneroth (Galilee)
ISSACHAR
MANASSE
Great Sea
Mediterranean
MANASSE
EPHRAIM
GAD
DAN
BENJAMIN
RUBEN
Salt Sea
(Dead Sea)
JUDA
SIMEON
N
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included Jazer, all the cities of Galaad, and half the land of the
26 Ammonites as far as Aroer, toward Rabba (that is, from Hese-
bon to Ramoth-Maspha and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to
27 the boundary of Lodebar); and in the Jordan valley: Beth-
haram, Beth-nemra, Socchoth, Saphon, the other part of the
kingdom of Sehon, king of Hesebon, with the bank of the Jor-
28 dan to the southeastern tip of the Sea of Cheneroth. These cities
and their villages were the heritage of the clans of the Gadites.

29 ***Manasse*** What Moses gave to the clans of the half-tribe of
30 Manasse: Their territory included Mahanaim, all of Basan, the
entire kingdom of Og, king of Basan, and all the villages of
31 Jair, which are sixty cities in Basan. Half of Galaad, with
Astharoth and Edrai, once the royal cities of Og in Basan, fell
to the descendants of Machir, son of Manasse, for half the clans
descended from Machir.
32 These are the portions which Moses gave when he was in the
33 plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. However,
Moses gave no heritage to the tribe of Levi, since the Lord him-
self, the God of Israel, is their heritage, as he promised.

14

1 ***The Western Tribes*** Here follow the portions which the
Israelites received in the land of Chanaan. Eleazar the priest,
Josue, son of Nun, and the heads of families in the tribes of
2 the Israelites determined | their heritage by lot, in accord-
ance with the instructions the Lord had given through Moses
3 concerning the remaining nine and a half tribes. For to two and
a half tribes Moses had already given a heritage beyond the
Jordan; and though the Levites were given no heritage among
4 the tribes, the descendants of Joseph formed two tribes, Ma-
nasse and Ephraim. The Levites themselves received no share
of the land except cities to live in, with their pasture lands for
the cattle and flocks.
5 Thus, in apportioning the land, did the Israelites carry out
the instructions of the Lord to Moses.

6 ***Caleb's Portion*** When the Judaites came up to Josue in
Galgal, the Cenezite Caleb, son of Jephonne, said to him: "You
know what the Lord said to the man of God, Moses, about you
7 and me in Cadesbarne. I was forty years old when the servant
of the Lord, Moses, sent me from Cadesbarne to reconnoiter the
8 land; and I brought back to him a conscientious report. My fel-
low scouts who went up with me discouraged the people, but
9 I was completely loyal to the Lord, my God. On that occasion

Moses swore this oath, 'The land where you have set foot shall become your heritage and that of your descendants forever, because you have been completely loyal to the Lord, my God.'
10 Now, as he promised, the Lord had preserved me while Israel was journeying through the desert, for the forty-five years since the Lord spoke thus to Moses; and although I am now eighty-
11 five years old, I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me forth, with no less vigor whether for war or for ordi-
12 nary tasks. Give me, therefore, this mountain region which the Lord promised me that day, as you yourself heard. True, the Enacim are there, with large fortified cities, but if the Lord is with me I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord promised."
13 Josue blessed Caleb, son of Jephonne, and gave him Hebron
14 as his heritage. Therefore Hebron remains the heritage of the Cenezite Caleb, son of Jephonne, to the present day, because he
15 was completely loyal to the Lord, the God of Israel. Hebron was formerly called Cariath-Arbe, for Arbe, the greatest among the Enacim. And the land enjoyed peace.

15

1 ***Boundaries of Juda*** The lot for the clans of the Judaite tribe fell in the extreme south toward the boundary of Edom,
2 the desert of Sin in the Negeb. | The boundary there ran from
3 the bay that forms the southern end of the Salt Sea, | southward below the pass of Acrabbim, across through Sin, up to a point south of Cadesbarne, across to Hesron, and up to Addar;
4 from there, looping around Carcaa, | it crossed to Asemon and then joined the Wadi of Egypt before coming out at the sea.
5 [This is your southern boundary.] The eastern boundary was the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan.
6 The northern boundary climbed from the bay where the Jordan meets the sea, up to Beth-Hagla, and ran north of Beth-
7 Arba, up to Eben-Boen-ben-Ruben. Thence it climbed to Dabir, north of the vale of Achor, in the direction of the Galgal that faces the pass of Adommim, on the south side of the wadi; from there it crossed to the waters of En-Sames and emerged at En-
8 Rogel. Climhing again to the valley of Ben-Hennom on the southern flank of the Jebusites [that is, Jerusalem], the boundary rose to the top of the mountain at the northern end of the valley of Raphaim, which bounds the valley of Hennom on the
9 west. From the top of the mountain it ran to the fountain of waters of Nephthoa, extended to the cities of Mount Ephron,
10 and continued to Baala, or Cariath-jarim. From Baala the boundary curved westward to Mount Seir and passed north of

the ridge of Mount Jarim (that is, Chesalon); thence it de
11 scended to Beth-Sames, and ran across to Thamna. It then ex
tended along the northern flank of Accaron, continued throug
Sechrona, and across to Mount Baala, thence to include Jebnee
12 before it came out at the sea. The western boundary was th
Great Sea and its coast. This was the complete boundary of th
clans of the Judaites.

13 *Conquest by Caleb* As the Lord had commanded, Josu
gave Caleb, son of Jephonne, a portion among the Judaites
namely, Cariath-Arbe (Arbe was the father of Enac), that is
14 Hebron. And Caleb drove out from there the three Enacim
15 the descendants of Enac: Sesai, Ahiman and Tholmai. From
there he marched up against the inhabitants of Dabir, whicl
16 was formerly called Cariath-sepher. Caleb said, "I will give my
daughter Achsa in marriage to the one who attacks Cariath-
17 sepher and captures it." Othoniel, son of Caleb's brother Cenez,
captured it, and so Caleb gave him his daughter Achsa in
18 marriage. On the day of her marriage to Othoniel, she induced
him to ask her father for some land. Then, as she alighted
19 from the ass, Caleb asked her, "What is troubling you?" She
answered, "Give me an additional gift! Since you have assigned
to me land in the Negeb, give me also pools of water." So he
gave her the upper and lower pools.

20 *Cities of Juda* This is the heritage of the clans of the tribe
21 of Judaites: The cities of the tribe of the Judaites in the ex-
treme southern district toward Edom were: Cabseel, Eder,
22.23 Jagur, | Cina, Dimona, Adada, | Cades, Hasor and Jethnan;
24.25 Ziph, Telem, Baaloth, | Hasor-haddattha, and Carioth-
26.27 Hesron (that is, Hasor); Amam, Sama, Molada, | Hasar-
28 gadda, Hassemon, Beth-Phelet, | Hasar-sual, Bersabee and
29.30 Baziothia; Baala, Iim, Esem, | Eltholad, Chesil, Horma, |
31.32 Siceleg, Medemena, Sensenna, | Lebaoth, Selhim and Ain
Remmon; a total of twenty-nine cities with their villages.
33.34 In the foothills: Esthaol, Saraa, Asna, | Zanoe, En-gan-
35 nim, Thapphua, Enaim, | Jerimoth, Adullam, Socho, Azeca,
36 | Saaraim, Adithaim, Gadera and Gaderothaim; fourteen cities
37.38 and their villages. Sanan, Hadassa, Magdal-Gad | Delean,
39.40 Maspha, Jecthel, | Lachis, Bascath, Eglon, | Chebbon, Le-
41 hemas, Chethlis, | Gaderoth, Beth-Dagon, Naama and Mace-
42 da; sixteen cities and their villages. Lebna, Ether, Asan, |
43.44 Jephtha, Asna, Nesib, | Ceila, Achzib and Maresa; nine
45 cities and their villages. Accaron and its towns and villages;
46 from Accaron to the sea, all the towns that lie alongside Azotus,

47 and their villages; Azotus and its towns and villages; Gaza and
its towns and villages, as far as the Wadi of Egypt and the
coast of the Great Sea.
48.49 In the mountain regions: Samir, Jether, Socchoth, | Dan-
50 na, Cariath-senna (that is, Dabir), | Anab, Esthemo, Anim,
51 | Gosen, Holon and Gilo; eleven cities and their villages.
52.53 Arab, Ruma, Esaan, | Janum, Beth-Thapphua, Aphec, |
54 Humta, Cariath-Arbe (that is, Hebron), and Sior; nine cities
55.56 and their villages. Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Jetta, | Jezrael,
57 Jecdaam, Zanoe, | Accain, Gabaa and Thamna; ten cities and
58 their villages. Halhul, Beth-Sur, Gedor, Mareth, Beth-Anoth
59 and Elthecon; six cities and their villages. Thecue, Ephratha
(that is, Bethlehem), Phogor, Etam, Culom, Tatam, Sores,
Karim, Gallim, Bether and Manocho; eleven cities and their
60 villages. Cariath-Baal (that is, Cariath-jarim) and Arabba;
two cities and their villages.
61.62 In the desert: Beth-araba, Meddin, Sachacha, | Nebsan,
63 Ir-hamelah and En-gaddi; six cities and their villages. [But the
Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem the Judaites could not drive
out; so the Jebusites dwell in Jerusalem beside the Judaites to
the present day.]

16

1 ***The Joseph Tribes*** The lot that fell to the Josephites ex-
tended from the Jordan at Jericho to the waters of Jericho east
of the desert; then the boundary went up from Jericho to the
2 heights at Bethel. Leaving Bethel for Luz, it crossed the ridge
3 to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, and descended west-
ward to the border of the Jephletites, to that of Lower Beth-
Horon, and to Gazer, ending thence at the sea.

4 ***Ephraim*** Within the heritage of Manasse and Ephraim,
5 sons of Joseph, | the dividing line for the heritage of the clans
of the Ephraimites ran from east of Ataroth-addar to Upper
6 Beth-Horon | and thence to the sea. From Machmethath on
the north, their boundary curved eastward around Thaanath-
7 Silo, and continued east of it to Janoe; from there it descended
to Ataroth and Naara, and skirting Jericho, it ended at the
8 Jordan. From Thapphua the boundary ran westward to the
Wadi Cana and ended at the sea. This was the heritage of the
9 clans of the Ephraimites, including the villages that belonged
to each city set aside for the Ephraimites within the territory of
10 the Manasseites. But they did not drive out the Chanaanites liv-
ing in Gazer, who live on within Ephraim to the present day,
though they have been impressed as laborers.

17

1 *Manasse* Now as for the lot that fell to the tribe of Manasse
as the first-born of Joseph: since his eldest son, Machir, the
father of Galaad, was a warrior, who had already obtained
2 Galaad and Basan, the allotment was now made to the other
descendants of Manasse, the clans of Abiezer, Helec, Esriel,
Sichem, Hepher and Semida, the other male children of Ma-
nasse, son of Joseph.
3 Furthermore, Salphahad, son of Hepher, son of Galaad, son
of Machir, son of Manasse, had had no sons, but only daugh-
ters, whose names were Mahala, Noa, Hegla, Melcha, and
4 Thersa. These presented themselves to Eleazar the priest, to
Josue, son of Nun, and to the princes, saying, "The Lord com-
manded Moses to give us a heritage among our kinsmen." So
in obedience to the command of the Lord a heritage was given
5 to each of them among their father's kinsmen. Thus ten shares
fell to Manasse apart from the land of Galaad and Basan be-
6 yond the Jordan, since these female descendants of Manasse
received each a portion among his sons. The land of Galaad fell
to the rest of the Manasseites.
7 Manasse bordered on Aser. From Machmethath near Sichem,
another boundary ran southward to include the natives of En-
8 Thapphua, because the district of Thapphua belonged to Ma-
nasse, although Thapphua itself was an Ephraimite city on the
9 border of Manasse. This same boundary continued down to the
Wadi Cana. The cities that belonged to Ephraim from among
the cities in Manasse were those to the south of that wadi; thus
the territory of Manasse ran north of the wadi and ended at the
10 sea. The land on the south belonged to Ephraim and that on
the north to Manasse; with the sea as their common boundary,
they reached Aser on the north and Issachar on the east.
11 Moreover, in Issachar and in Aser Manasse was awarded
Beth-San and its towns, Jeblaam and its towns, Dor and its
towns and the natives there, Endor and its towns and natives,
Thaanach and its towns and natives, and Mageddo and its
12 towns and natives [the third is Naphath-Dor]. Since the Ma-
nasseites could not conquer these cities, the Chanaanites per-
13 sisted in this region. When the Israelites grew stronger they
impressed the Chanaanites as laborers, but they did not drive
them out.

14 *Protest of Joseph Tribes* The descendants of Joseph said
to Josue, "Why have you given us only one lot and one share
as our heritage? Our people are too many, because of the extent
15 to which the Lord has blessed us." Josue answered them, "If

you are too many, go up to the forest and clear out a place for yourselves there in the land of the Pherezites and Raphaim,
16 since the mountain regions of Ephraim are so narrow." For the Josephites said, "Our mountain regions are not enough for us; on the other hand, the Chanaanites living in the valley region all have iron chariots, in particular those in Beth-San and its
17 towns, and those in the valley of Jezrael." Josue therefore said to Ephraim and Manasse, the house of Joseph, "You are a numerous people and very strong. You shall have not merely one
18 share, for the mountain region which is now forest shall be yours when you clear it. Its adjacent land shall also be yours if, despite their strength and iron chariots, you drive out the Chanaanites."

18

1 After they had subdued the land, the whole community of the Israelites assembled at Silo, where they set up the Meeting Tent.

2 ***The Seven Remaining Portions*** Seven tribes among the
3 Israelites had not yet received their heritage. Josue therefore said to the Israelites, "How much longer will you put off taking
4 steps to possess the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you? Choose three men from each of your tribes; I will commission them to begin a survey of the land,
5 which they shall describe for purposes of inheritance. When they return to me, you shall divide it into seven parts. Juda is to retain its territory in the south, and the house of Joseph its
6 territory in the north. You shall bring here to me the description of the land in seven sections. I will then cast lots for you here
7 before the Lord, our God. For the Levites have no share among you, because the priesthood of the Lord is their heritage; while Gad, Ruben, and the half-tribe of Manasse have already received the heritage east of the Jordan which Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave them."
8 When those who were to map out the land were ready for the journey, Josue instructed them to survey the land, prepare a description of it, and return to him; then he would cast lots
9 for them there before the Lord in Silo. So they went through the land, listed its cities in writing in seven sections, and re-
10 turned to Josue in the camp at Silo. Josue then divided up the land for the Israelites into their separate shares, casting lots for them before the Lord in Silo.

11 ***Benjamin*** One lot fell to the clans of the tribe of Ben-

jaminites. The territory allotted them lay between the descend-
12 ants of Juda and those of Joseph. Their northern boundary
began at the Jordan and went over the northern flank of Jeri-
cho, up westward into the mountains, till it reached the desert
13 of Beth-Aven. From there it crossed over to the southern flank
of Luza (that is, Bethel). Then it ran down to Ataroth-addar
14 on the mountaintop south of Lower Beth-Horon. For the west-
ern border, the boundary line swung south from the mountain-
top opposite Beth-Horon till it reached Cariath-Baal (that is
Cariath-jarim), which city belonged to the Judaites. This was
15 the western boundary. The southern boundary began at the
limits of Cariath-jarim and projected to the spring at Nephthoa
16 It went down to the edge of the mountain on the north of the
valley of Raphaim, where it faces the valley of Ben-Hennom
and continuing down the valley of Hennom along the southern
17 flank of the Jebusites, reached En-Rogel. Inclining to the north
it extended to En-Sames, and thence to Galiloth, opposite the
pass of Adommim. Then it dropped to Eben-Boen-ben-Ruben
18 across the northern flank of the Araba overlook, down into
19 the Araba. From there the boundary continued across the north-
ern flank of Beth-Hagla and extended to the northern tip of the
Salt Sea, at the southern end of the Jordan. This was the
20 southern boundary. | The Jordan bounded it on the east. This
was how the heritage of the clans of the Benjaminites was
bounded on all sides.

21 Now the cities belonging to the clans of the tribe of
the Benjaminites, were: Jericho, Beth-Hagla, Emec-Casis,
22.23 Beth-Araba, Samaraim, Bethel, | Avvim, Phara, Ophera,
24 Chephar-Ammoni, Ophni and Geba; twelve cities and their
25.26 villages. Also Gabaon, Rama, Beroth, | Maspha, Chephira,
27.28 Mosa, | Recem, Jerphael, Tharala, | Sela, Eleph, the Jebusite
city (that is, Jerusalem), Gabaath and Cariath; fourteen cities
and their villages. This was the heritage of the clans of
Benjaminites.

19

1 ***Simeon*** | The second lot fell to Simeon. The heritage of the
clans of the tribe of Simeonites lay within that of the Judaites.
2 For their heritage they received Bersabee, Sama, Molada, |
3-5 Hasar-sual, Balaa, Asem, | Eltholad, Bethul, Horma, | Sice-
6 leg, Bethmarchaboth, Hasar-Susa, | Beth-Lebaoth and Sarohen;
7 thirteen cities and their villages. Also Ain, Remmon, Ether and
8 Asan; four cities and their villages, besides all the villages
around these cities as far as Baalath-Beer (that is, Ramoth-
negeb). This was the heritage of the clans of the tribe of the

9 Simeonites. This heritage of the Simeonites was within the
confines of the Judaites; for since the portion of the latter was
too large for them, the Simeonites obtained their heritage
within it.

10 ***Zabulon*** The third lot fell to the clans of the Zabulonites.
11 The limit of their heritage was at Sarid. Their boundary went
up west . . . and through Marala, reaching Debbaseth and the
12 wadi that is near Jecnaam. From Sarid eastward it ran to the
district of Chaseleth-Thabor, on to Dabereth, and up to Japhia.
From there it continued eastward to Geth-hepher and to Eth-
14 Casin, extended to Remmon, and turned to Noa. Skirting north
of Hannathon, the boundary ended at the valley of Jephthael.
15 Thus, with Cateth, Naalol, Semeron, Jedala and Bethlehem,
16 there were twelve cities and their villages | to comprise the
heritage of the clans of the Zabulonites.

17 ***Issachar*** The fourth lot fell to Issachar. The territory of the
18 clans of the Issacharites | included Jesrael, Chasaloth, Sunem,
19 20 | Hapharaim, Seon, Anaharath, | Rabboth, Cesion, Abes, |
21 22 Ramoth, En-gannim and Beth-Phasses. The boundary reached
Thabor, Sehesima and Beth-Sames, ending at the Jordan. These
23 sixteen cities and their villages | were the heritage of the clans
of the Issacharites.

24 ***Aser*** The fifth lot fell to the clans of the tribe of the
25 Aserites. Their territory included Halcath, Chale, Beten,
26 Achsaph, | Elmelech, Amaad and Messal, and reached Carmel
27 on the west, and Sihor-Labanath. In the other direction, it
ran eastward of Beth-Dagon, reached Zabulon and the valley
of Jephthael; then north of Beth-Emec and Neiel, it extended
28 to Cabul, | Masal, Abdon, Rohob, Hammon and Cana, near
29 Greater Sidon. Then the boundary turned back to Rama and
to the fortress city of Tyre; thence it cut back to Hosa and
30 ended at the sea. Thus, with Mahaleb, Achzib, | Amma, Aphec
31 and Rohob, there were twenty-two cities and their villages | to
comprise the heritage of the clans of the tribe of the Aserites.

32 ***Nephthali*** The sixth lot fell to the Nephthalites. The bound-
33 ary of the clans of the Nephthalites | extended from Heleph,
from the oak at Saananim to Lecum, including Adami-Neceb
34 and Jebneel, and ended at the Jordan. In the opposite direction,
westerly, it ran through Aznoth-Thabor and from there extended
to Hucoc; it touched Zabulon on the south, Aser on the west,
35 and the Jordan on the east. The fortified cities were Seddim,
36 Ser, Hamath, Reccath, Chenereth, | Adama, Rama, Hasor, |

37.38 Cedes, Edrai, En-Hasor, | Jeron, Magdal-El, Horem, Beth
Anath and Beth-Sames; nineteen cities and their villages,
39 to comprise the heritage of the clans of the tribe of th
Nephthalites.

40 ***Dan*** The seventh lot fell to the clans of the tribe o
41 Danites. Their heritage was the territory of Saraa, Esthaol, Ir
42.43 Sames, | Saalebim, Aialon, Jethla, | Elon, Thamna, Acron
44.45 | Eltheco, Gebbethon, Baalath, | Jud, Bene-Barac, Geth
46 Remmon, | Me-Jarcon and Reccon, with the coast at Joppe
47 But the territory of the Danites was too small for them; so th
Danites marched up and attacked Lesem, which they capture
and put to the sword. Once they had taken possession of Lesem
48 they renamed the settlement after their ancestor Dan. Thes
cities and their villages were the heritage of the clans of th
tribe of the Danites.

49 ***Josue's City*** When the last of them had received the por
tions of the land they were to inherit, the Israelites assigned
50 heritage in their midst to Josue, son of Nun. In obedience to th
command of the Lord, they gave him the city which he re
quested, Thamnath-Sare in the mountain region of Ephraim
He rebuilt the city and made it his home.
51 These are the final portions into which Eleazar the priest
Josue, son of Nun, and the heads of families in the tribes of th
Israelites divided the land by lot in the presence of the Lord, a
the door of the Meeting Tent in Silo.

20

1.2 ***Cities of Asylum*** The Lord said to Josue: "Tell the Israel
ites to designate the cities of which I spoke to them through
3 Moses, to which one guilty of accidental and unintended homi
4 cide may flee for asylum from the avenger of blood. To one o
these cities the killer shall flee, and standing at the entrance o
the city gate, he shall plead his case before the elders, who
must receive him and assign him a place in which to live among
5 them. Though the avenger of blood pursues him, they are not
to deliver up the homicide who slew his fellow man unintent
6 tionally and not out of previous hatred. Once he has stood
judgment before the community, he shall live on in that city till
the death of the high priest who is in office at the time. Then the
killer may go home to his own city from which he fled."

20, 1-6: Cities of asylum were known in many ancient countries. See Dt 19, 1-13 for more information on this institution.

7 ***List of Cities*** So they set apart Cedes in Galilee in the
mountain region of Nephthali, Sichem in the mountain region
of Ephraim, and Cariath-Arbe (that is, Hebron) in the moun-
8 tain region of Juda. And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho they
designated Bosor on the open tableland in the tribe of Ruben,
Ramoth in Galaad in the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Basan in
9 the tribe of Manasse. These were the designated cities to which
any Israelite or stranger living among them who had killed a
person accidentally might flee to escape death at the hand of the
avenger of blood, until he could appear before the community.

21

1 ***Levitical Cities*** The heads of the Levite families came up
to Eleazar the priest, to Josue, son of Nun, and to the heads of
2 families of the other tribes of the Israelites | at Silo in the land
of Chanaan, and said to them, "The Lord commanded, through
Moses, that cities be given us to dwell in, with pasture lands
3 for our livestock." Out of their own heritage, in obedience to
this command of the Lord, the Israelites gave the Levites the
following cities with their pasture lands.
4 When the first lot among the Levites fell to the clans of the
Caathites, the descendants of Aaron the priest obtained thirteen
cities by lot from the tribes of Juda, Simeon and Benjamin.
5 The rest of the Caathites obtained ten cities by lot from the
clans of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from
6 the half-tribe of Manasse. The Gersonites obtained thirteen cities
by lot from the clans of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of
Aser, from the tribe of Nephthali, and from the half-tribe of
7 Manasse. The clans of the Merarites obtained twelve cities from
8 the tribes of Ruben, Gad and Zabulon. These cities with their
pasture lands the Israelites allotted to the Levites in obedience
to the Lord's command through Moses.

9 ***Cities of the Priests*** From the tribes of the Judaites and
10 Simeonites they designated the following cities, and assigned
them to the descendants of Aaron in the Caathite clan of the
11 Levites, since the first lot fell to them: first, Cariath-Arbe (Arbe
was the father of Enac), that is, Hebron, in the mountain
12 region of Juda, with the adjacent pasture lands, although the
open country and villages belonging to the city had been given
13 to Caleb, son of Jephonne, as his property. Thus to the de-
scendants of Aaron the priest were given the city of asylum for

21, 3ff: The Levites did not actually own the forty-eight cities, but they enjoyed certain rights in them. See Nm 35, 1-15.

homicides at Hebron, with its pasture lands; also, Lobna with
14 its pasture lands, | Jether with its pasture lands, Esthemo with
15 its pasture lands, | Holon with its pasture lands, Dabir with its
16 pasture lands, | Asan with its pasture lands, Jetta with its
pasture lands, and Beth-Sames with its pasture lands: nine
17 cities from the two tribes mentioned. From the tribe of Benjamin
they obtained the four cities of Gabaon with its pasture lands,
18 Gaba with its pasture lands, | Anathoth with its pasture lands,
19 and Almon with its pasture lands. These cities which with their
pasture lands belonged to the priestly descendants of Aaron,
were thirteen in all.

20 *Cities of the Other Caathites* The rest of the Caathite
clans among the Levites obtained by lot, from the tribe of
21 Ephraim, four cities. They were assigned, with its pasture lands,
the city of asylum for homicides at Sichem in the mountain
22 region of Ephraim; also Gazer with its pasture lands, | Cibsaim
with its pasture lands, and Beth-Horon with its pasture lands.
23 From the tribe of Dan they obtained the four cities of Eltheco
with its pasture lands, Gebbethon with its pasture lands, |
24 Aialon with its pasture lands, and Geth-Remmon with its
25 pasture lands; and from the half-tribe of Manasse the two
cities of Thaanach with its pasture lands and Jeblaam with its
26 pasture lands. These cities which with their pasture lands
belonged to the rest of the Caathite clans were ten in all.

27 *Cities of the Gersonites* The Gersonite clan of the Levites
received from the half-tribe of Manasse two cities: the city of
asylum for homicides at Golan, with its pasture lands; and also
28 Beth-Astharoth with its pasture lands. From the tribe of
Issachar they obtained the four cities of Cesion with its pasture
29 lands, Dabereth with its pasture lands, | Jerimoth with its
30 pasture lands, and En-gannim with its pasture lands; from the
tribe of Aser, the four cities of Messal with its pasture lands,
31 Abdon with its pasture lands, | Halcath with its pasture lands,
and Rohob with its pasture lands; and from the tribe of
32 Nephthali, three cities: the city of asylum for homicides at
Cedes in Galilee, with its pasture lands; also Emath with its
33 pasture lands, and Reccath with its pasture lands. These cities
which with their pasture lands belonged to the Gersonite clans
were thirteen in all.

34 *Cities of the Merarites* The Merarite clans, the last of
the Levites, received from the tribe of Zabulon the four cities
of Jecnaam with its pasture lands, Cartha with its pasture

lands, | Remmon with its pasture lands, and Naalol with its
pasture lands; also, across the Jordan, from the tribe of Ruben,
four cities: the city of asylum for homicides at Bosor with its
pasture lands, Jahas with its pasture lands, | Cedemoth with
its pasture lands, and Mephaath with its pasture lands; and
from the tribe of Gad a total of four cities: the city of asylum
for homicides at Ramoth in Galaad with its pasture lands, also
Mahanaim with its pasture lands, | Hesebon with its pasture
lands, and Jazer with its pasture lands. The cities which were
allotted to the Merarite clans, the last of the Levites, were
therefore twelve in all.

Thus the total number of cities within the territory of the
Israelites which, with their pasture lands, belonged to the Levites,
was forty-eight. With each and every one of these cities went
the pasture lands round about it.

And so the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to
their fathers he would give them. Once they had conquered and
occupied it, the Lord gave them peace on every side, just as he
had promised their fathers. Not one of their enemies could
withstand them; the Lord brought all their enemies under their
power. Not a single promise that the Lord made to the house
of Israel was broken; every one was fulfilled.

III. RETURN OF THE TRANSJORDAN TRIBES AND JOSUE'S FAREWELL

2

The Eastern Tribes Dismissed At that time Josue summoned the Rubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasse
| and said to them: "You have done all that Moses, the servant
of the Lord, commanded you, and have obeyed every com-
mand I gave you. For many years now you have not once
abandoned your kinsmen, but have faithfully carried out the
commands of the Lord, your God. Since, therefore, the Lord,
your God, has settled your kinsmen as he promised them, you
may now return to your tents beyond the Jordan; to your own
land, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you. But be
very careful to observe the precept and Law which Moses, the
servant of the Lord, enjoined upon you: love the Lord, your
God; follow him faithfully; keep his commandments; remain
loyal to him; and serve him with your whole heart and soul."
Josue then blessed them and sent them away to their own
tents.

(For, to half the tribe of Manasse Moses had assigned land
in Basan; and to the other half Josue had given a portion along

with their kinsmen west of the Jordan.) What Josue said
them when he sent them off to their tents with his blessing w
8 "Now that you are returning to your own tents with gre
wealth, with very numerous livestock, with silver, gold, bron
and iron, and with a very large supply of clothing, divide the
9 spoils of your enemies with your kinsmen there." So t
Rubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasse left t
other Israelites at Silo in the land of Chanaan and returned
the land of Galaad, their own property, which they had receiv
according to the Lord's command through Moses.

10 ***The Altar beside the Jordan*** When the Rubenites, t
Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasse came to the region
the Jordan in the land of Chanaan, they built there at t
11 Jordan a conspicuously large altar. The other Israelites hea
the report that the Rubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe
Manasse had built an altar in the region of the Jordan faci
12 the land of Chanaan, across from them, and therefore th
assembled their whole community at Silo to declare war
them.

13 ***Accusation of the Western Tribes*** First, however, th
sent to the Rubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Mana
in the land of Galaad an embassy consisting of Phinees, s
14 of Eleazar the priest, | and ten princes, one from every tribe
Israel, each one being both prince and military leader of
15 ancestral house. When these came to the Rubenites, the Gadit
and the half-tribe of Manasse in the land of Galaad, they s
16 to them: "The whole community of the Lord sends this m
sage: What act of treachery is this you have committed agai
the God of Israel? You have seceded from the Lord this d
17 and rebelled against him by building an altar of your own! I
the sin of Phogor, a plague came upon the community of t
18 Lord. We are still not free of that; must you now add to
You are rebelling against the Lord today and by tomorrow
19 will be angry with the whole community of Israel! If y
consider the land you now possess unclean, cross over to t
land the Lord possesses, where the Dwelling of the Lord stan
and share that with us. But do not rebel against the Lord, n
involve us in rebellion, by building an altar of your own
20 addition to the altar of the Lord, our God. When Achan, s
of Zara, violated the ban, did not wrath fall upon the ent

22, 20: See 7, 24-25 n.

community of Israel? Though he was but a single man, he did not perish alone for his guilt!"

11 *Reply of the Eastern Tribes* The Rubenites, the Gadites,
and the half-tribe of Manasse replied to the military leaders of
22 the Israelites: "The Lord is the God of gods. The Lord, the
God of gods, knows and Israel shall know. If now we have
acted out of rebellion or treachery against the Lord, our God, |
23 and if we have built an altar of our own to secede from the
Lord, or to offer holocausts, grain offerings or peace offerings
24 upon it, the Lord himself will exact the penalty. We did it
rather out of our anxious concern lest in the future your
children should say to our children: 'What have you to do with
25 the Lord, the God of Israel? For the Lord has placed the Jordan
as a boundary between you and us. You descendants of Ruben
and Gad have no share in the Lord.' Thus your children would
26 prevent ours from revering the Lord. So we decided to guard
our interests by building this altar of our own: not for holo-
27 causts or for sacrifices, but as evidence for you on behalf of
ourselves and our descendants, that we have the right to worship
the Lord in his presence with our holocausts, sacrifices, and
peace offerings. Now in the future your children cannot say to
28 our children, 'You have no share in the Lord.' Our thought
was, that if in the future they should speak thus to us or to our
descendants, we could answer: 'Look at the model of the altar
of the Lord which our fathers made, not for holocausts or for
29 sacrifices, but to witness between you and us.' Far be it from
us to rebel against the Lord or to secede now from the Lord by
building an altar for holocaust, grain offering, or sacrifice in
addition to the altar of the Lord, our God, which stands before
his Dwelling."

30 When Phinees the priest and the princes of the community,
the military leaders of the Israelites, heard what the Rubenites,
the Gadites and the Manasseites had to say, they were satisfied.
31 Phinees, son of Eleazar the priest, said to the Rubenites, the
Gadites and the Manasseites, "Now we know that the Lord is
with us. Since you have not committed this act of treachery
against the Lord, you have kept the Israelites free from punish-
ment by the Lord."

32 Phinees, son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes returned
from the Rubenites and the Gadites in the land of Galaad to
the Israelites in the land of Chanaan, and reported the matter
33 to them. The report satisfied the Israelites, who blessed God
and decided against declaring war on the Rubenites and Gadites
or ravaging the land they occupied.

34 The Rubenites and the Gadites gave the altar its name as
witness among them that the Lord is God.

23

1 ***Josue's Final Plea*** Many years later, after the Lord ha
given the Israelites rest from all their enemies round about ther
2 and when Josue was old and advanced in years, he summone
all Israel (including their elders, leaders, judges and officers
3 and said to them: "I am old and advanced in years. You ha
seen all that the Lord, your God, has done for you against a
these nations; for it has been the Lord, your God, himself wh
4 fought for you. Bear in mind that I have apportioned amor
your tribes as their heritage the nations that survive [as we
as those I destroyed] between the Jordan and the Great Sea
5 the west. The Lord, your God, will drive them out and dislod
them at your approach, so that you will take possession of the
6 land as the Lord, your God, promised you. Therefore stri
hard to observe and carry out all that is written in the Book
7 the Law of Moses, not straying from it in any way, | or mi
gling with these nations while they survive among you. Yo
must not invoke their gods, or swear by them, or serve thei
8 or worship them, | but you must remain loyal to the Lord, yo
9 God, as you have been to this day. At your approach the Lo
has driven out large and strong nations, and to this day no o
10 has withstood you. One of you puts to flight a thousand, becau
it is the Lord, your God, himself who fights for you, as
11 promised you. Take great care, however, to love the Lord, yo
12 God. For if you ever abandon him and ally yourselves with t
remnant of these nations while they survive among you, by inte
13 marrying and intermingling with them, know for certain th
the Lord, your God, will no longer drive these nations out
your way. Instead they will be a snare and a trap for you,
scourge for your sides and thorns for your eyes, until you peri
from this good land which the Lord, your God, has given yo
14 "Today, as you see, I am going the way of all men. So nc
acknowledge with your whole heart and soul that not one
all the promises the Lord, your God, made to you has remain
unfulfilled. Every promise has been fulfilled for you, with n
15 one single exception. But just as every promise the Lord, yo
God, made to you has been fulfilled for you, so will he full

23—24: These two chapters are two conclusions to the Book of Jos
ch. 24 being the older conclusion.

23, 12-16: See Introduction to the Book of Josue for the Deuteronom
theme.

every threat, even so far as to exterminate you from this good
6 land which the Lord, your God, has given you. If you transgress
the covenant of the Lord, your God, which he enjoined on you,
serve other gods and worship them, the anger of the Lord will
flare up against you and you will quickly perish from the good
land which he has given you."

24
1 ***Reminder of the Divine Goodness*** Josue gathered to-
gether all the tribes of Israel at Sichem, summoning their elders,
their leaders, their judges and their officers. When they stood
2 in ranks before God, | Josue addressed all the people: "Thus
says the Lord, the God of Israel: In times past your fathers,
down to Thare, father of Abraham and Nahor, dwelt beyond
3 the River and served other gods. But I brought your father
Abraham from the region beyond the River and led him through
the entire land of Chanaan. I made his descendants numerous,
4 and gave him Isaac. | To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau
I assigned the mountain region of Seir in which to settle, while
Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.
5 "Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and smote Egypt with the
6 prodigies which I wrought in her midst. Afterward I led you
out of Egypt, and when you reached the sea, the Egyptians
pursued your fathers to the Red Sea with chariots and horse-
7 men. Because they cried out to the Lord, he put darkness be-
tween your people and the Egyptians, upon whom he brought
the sea so that it engulfed them. After you witnessed what I
8 did to Egypt, and dwelt a long time in the desert, I brought you
into the land of the Amorrites who lived east of the Jordan.
They fought against you, but I delivered them into your power.
You took possession of their land, and I destroyed them [the
9 two kings of the Amorrites] before you. Then Balac, son of
Sepphor, king of Moab, prepared to war against Israel. He
10 summoned Balaam, son of Beor, to curse you; but I would not
listen to Balaam. On the contrary, he had to bless you and I
11 saved you from him. Once you crossed the Jordan and came to
Jericho, the men of Jericho fought against you, but I delivered
12 them also into your power. And I sent the hornets ahead of
you which drove them [the Amorrites, Pherezites, Chanaanites,

24, 2-15: This may be an oratorical development of an ancient profession of faith as found in Dt 6, 21-24 and Dt 26, 3-9. This oratorical development appears in about eight other places in the Bible. Its literary structure is a history of Israel adapted to the occasion, ending with a prayer, a lesson, or a call to faith.

24, 12: *Hornets:* affliction.

Hethites, Gergesites, Hevites and Jebusites] out of your way
it was not your sword or your bow.
13 "I gave you a land which you had not tilled and citi
which you had not built, to dwell in; you have eaten of vin
yards and olive groves which you did not plant.
14 "Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve him complete
and sincerely. Cast out the gods your fathers served beyond th
15 River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. If it does not please yo
to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve, the go
your fathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amo
rites in whose country you are dwelling. As for me and m
household, we will serve the Lord."

16 ***Renewal of the Covenant*** But the people answered, "F
be it from us to forsake the Lord for the service of other god
17 For it was the Lord, our God, who brought us and our fathe
up out of the land of Egypt, out of a state of slavery. He pe
formed those great miracles before our very eyes and protecte
us along our entire journey and among all the peoples throu
18 whom we passed. At our approach the Lord drove out [all th
peoples, including] the Amorrites who dwelt in the land. Ther
fore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God."
19 Josue in turn said to the people, "You may not be able
serve the Lord, for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God wh
20 will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If, after t
good he has done for you, you forsake the Lord and ser
strange gods, he will do evil to you and destroy you."
21 But the people answered Josue, "We will still serve the Lord
22 Josue therefore said to the people, "You are your own witness
that you have chosen to serve the Lord." They replied, "We ar
23 indeed!" | "Now, therefore, put away the strange gods that a
among you and turn your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel
24 Then the people promised Josue, "We will serve the Lord, o
God, and obey his voice."
25 So Josue made a covenant with the people that day and ma
26 statutes and ordinances for them at Sichem, which he record
in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone an
set it up there under the oak that was in the sanctuary of t

24, 14: *The River:* a frequent biblical reference to the Euphrat
River in present-day Iraq.

24, 15: *The gods your fathers served:* Abraham's ancestors we
polytheists. *Beyond the River:* east of the Euphrates.

24, 16-28: The renewal of the Covenant seems to follow the patte
of the Hittite suzerainty (sovereignty) treaty which was in vogue
the second millennium.

Lord. And Josue said to all the people, "This stone shall be our witness, for it has heard all the words which the Lord spoke to us. It shall be a witness against you, should you wish to deny your God." Then Josue dismissed the people, each to his own heritage.

Death of Josue After these events Josue, son of Nun, servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. He was buried within the limits of his heritage at Thamnath-Sare in the mountain region of Ephraim north of Mount Gaas. Israel served the Lord during the entire lifetime of Josue and that of the elders who outlived Josue and knew all that the Lord had done for Israel. The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried in Sichem in the plot of ground Jacob had bought from the sons of Hemor, father of Sichem, for a hundred pieces of money. This was a heritage of the descendants of Joseph. When Eleazar, son of Aaron, also died, he was buried on the hill which had been given to his son Phinees in the mountain region of Ephraim.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Judges unfolds the epic stories of twelve patriotic hero whom God inspired to save the people from danger. The judges wh are treated more in detail are called major judges; those mentioned i brief are called minor judges. There are six of each class. The deliverers were hardly magistrates, much less saints. They lived betwee 1200 and 1025 B.C., i.e., from the death of Josue to the birth of Samue A mathematical count of all the dates given in the book would sum u to 400 years. Since they are often round numbers, and for other reason scholars rely on other biblical and secular data for a chronology of t book.

The Deuteronomic theme of temporal reward and punishment in th book is expressed in a historical rhythmic cycle: disobedience to t Covenant, oppression by the enemy; repentance, and a victorious deli erance. With consummate pedagogy, God inspired writers to interpr history this way. Jgs 2, 11-19 expresses this cycle in words; Jgs 3— expresses it in action through the lives of the judges. Consequently, t method of writing this meditated or theologically interpreted history about the same as that of Josue. (See Introduction to the Book of Josue

Socially, the Israelites were in a stage of transition. They were aba doning the tents of the semi-nomadic life for the permanent dwellin of a semi-sedentary life and an agricultural life. These were the nec sary stages before becoming a monarchical nation.

Politically, the Promised Land of Chanaan was far from conquer The twelve tribes, living as a loose confederacy, were settled in Tra jordan, Galilee, central Palestine, and south of Jerusalem. The rest the land was mostly in the hands of the Chanaanites and Philistin Many big cities, e.g., Jerusalem, were occupied by the Chanaanites, t mountainous regions were held by the invaders, the Israelites. T allotment of the land to the twelve tribes in The Book of Josue w often theoretical because the Chanaanites remained entrenched the

The Israelite judges were not leaders of the united nation, but or of variant parts. They often fought among themselves, and only some them would group together to fight against an enemy. The nati Chanaanites and the newly arrived Philistines (the monopolizers iron) were the greatest enemies from among the Moabites, the Amm ites, and the Madianites. At this time Egypt, Assyria, and Babyl were not fighting among themselves to possess the land of Chana

Religiously, the Israelites were strongly attracted by the lecher idolatrous rites of the sophisticated Chanaanite fertility cult to the g Baal. Although Yahwism was "Chanaanized," i.e., fused with Chanaan religion to some extent, the nation, especially the elite of it, remain faithful to the Covenant. Levites, Nazirites, and Prophets did much preserve the true religion. Silo was Israel's national shrine, which u fied the people religiously by the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol the Sinai Covenant. For this reason, the federacy of the tribes is oft called an "amphictyony" (a Greek term used to describe a group

communities united by a common shrine). In spite of the many grievous immoral crimes that were committed, faith in Yahweh was at the rock bottom of the life of the judges as even Heb 11, 32-34 attest.

The composition of The Book of Judges by many authors and perhaps by five editors took about eight hundred years. It began in the twelfth century B.C., from oral traditions of scattered heroic deeds, and ended perhaps in the fifth century B.C. with a final edition. Therefore, as with many Old Testament books, Judges is the work of an inspired tradition, not of a single author.

Main divisions of the Book of Judges are:

1. Palestine after the Death of Josue, 1, 1—3, 6
2. Stories of the Judges, 3, 7—16, 31
3. The Tribes of Dan and Benjamin in the Days of the Judges, 17, 1—21, 25

I. PALESTINE AFTER THE DEATH OF JOSUE

1

1 ***Pagan Survivors in Palestine*** After the death of Josue the Israelites consulted the Lord, asking, "Who shall be first among us to attack the Chanaanites and to do battle with
2 them?" The Lord answered, "Juda shall attack: I have delivered
3 the land into his power." Juda then said to his brother Simeon, "Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, and let us engage the Chanaanites in battle. I will likewise accompany you into the territory allotted to you." So Simeon went with him.

4 When the forces of Juda attacked, the Lord delivered the Chanaanites and Pherezites into their power, and they slew ten
5 thousand of them in Bezec. It was in Bezec that they came upon Adonibezec and fought against him. When they defeated the
6 Chanaanites and Pherezites, | Adonibezec fled. They set out in pursuit, and when they caught him, cut off his thumbs and

---

1, 1—2, 5: This is an overall view of the slow occupation of Chanaan after Josue's death when each tribe tried to conquer its allotted land. Sometimes it was a hopeless endeavor. The favorite role of Juda (vv. 1-2, 18-19) forecasts Juda's future glory as the tribe from which David's dynasty will come.

1, 1: The consultation of the Lord was often carried out through the Thummim and Urim. See Lv 8, 8 n.

1, 3: *Juda: . . . Simeon:* frequently the tribes are personified by the names of their ancestors.

1, 4: *Pherezites:* a non-Semitic people who may be connected with the Hittites.

1, 6: This cruel mutilation, common in antiquity, prevents a warrior from using his bow and spear.

his big toes. At this Adonibezec said, "Seventy kings, with their
thumbs and big toes cut off, used to pick up scraps under my
table. As I have done, so has God repaid me." He was brought
to Jerusalem, and there he died. [The Judaites fought against
Jerusalem and captured it, putting it to the sword; then they
destroyed the city by fire.]
Afterward the Judaites went down to fight against the
Chanaanites who lived in the mountain region, in the Negeb
and in the foothills. Juda also marched against the Chanaanites
who dwelt in Hebron, which was formerly called Cariath
Arbe, and defeated Sesai, Ahiman and Tholmai. From there
they marched against the inhabitants of Dabir, which was
formerly called Cariath-sepher. And Caleb said, "I will give
my daughter Achsa in marriage to the one who attacks Cariath
sepher and captures it." Othoniel, son of Caleb's younger brother
Cenez, captured it; so Caleb gave him his daughter Achsa in
marriage. On the day of her marriage to Othoniel she induced
him to ask her father for some land. Then, as she alighted from
the ass, Caleb asked her, "What is troubling you?" | "Give
me an additional gift," she answered. "Since you have assigned
land in the Negeb to me, give me also pools of water." So Caleb
gave her the upper and the lower pool. The descendants of the
Cinite, Moses' father-in-law, came up with the Judaites from
the city of palms to the desert at Arad [which is in the Negeb]
But they later left and settled among the Amalecites.
Juda then went with his brother Simeon, and they defeated
the Chanaanites who dwelt in Sephath. After having doomed
the city to destruction, they renamed it Horma. Juda, however
did not occupy Gaza with its territory, Ascalon with its terri-
tory, or Accaron with its territory. Since the Lord was with
Juda, he gained possession of the mountain region. Yet he could
not dislodge those who lived on the plain, because they had
iron chariots. As Moses had commanded, Hebron was given to
Caleb, who then drove from it the three sons of Enac.
The Benjaminites did not dislodge the Jebusites who dwelt in
Jerusalem, with the result that the Jebusites live in Jerusalem
beside the Benjaminites to the present day.
The house of Joseph, too, marched up against Bethel, and
the Lord was with them. The house of Joseph had a reconnais-
sance made of Bethel, which formerly was called Luza. The
scouts saw a man coming out of the city and said to him, "Show

1, 19: *Iron chariots:* the first mention of them in the Bible (see 4, 13)
1, 21: Even after king David conquered Jerusalem the Jebusite continued to live there.

25 us a way into the city, and we will spare you." He showed
them a way into the city, which they then put to the sword;
26 but they let the man and his whole clan go free. He then went to
the land of the Hethites, where he built a city and called it
Luza, as it is still called.
27 Manasse did not take possession of Beth-San with its towns
or of Thaanach with its towns. Neither did he dislodge the in-
habitants of Dor and its towns, those of Jeblaam and its towns,
or those of Mageddo and its towns. The Chanaanites kept their
28 hold in this district. When the Israelites grew stronger, they
impressed the Chanaanites as laborers, but did not drive them
29 out. Similarly, the Ephraimites did not drive out the Chanaanites
living in Gezer, and so the Chanaanites live in Gezer in their
midst.
30 Zabulon did not dislodge the inhabitants of Cetron or those
of Naalol; the Chanaanites live among them, but have become
forced laborers.
31 Nor did Aser drive out the inhabitants of Accho or those
of Sidon, or take possession of Mahaleb, Achzib, Helba, Aphec
32 or Rohob. The Aserites live among the Chanaanite natives of
the land, whom they have not dislodged.
33 Nephthali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-Sames
or those of Beth-Anath, and so they live among the Chanaanite
natives of the land. However, the inhabitants of Beth-Sames
and Beth-Anath have become forced laborers for them.
34 The Amorrites hemmed in the Danites in the mountain re-
35 gion, not permitting them to go down into the plain. The
35 Amorrites had a firm hold in Har-Hares, Aialon and Saalebim,
but as the house of Joseph gained the upper hand, they were
impressed as laborers.
36 The territory of the Amorrites extended from the Acrabbim
pass to Sela and beyond.

2

1 ***Infidelities of the Israelites*** An angel of the Lord went
up from Galgal to Bochim and said, "It was I who brought

2, 1-4: *The angel of the Lord:* the angel sent by God to lead the people to the Promised Land (Ex 23, 20-23; 33, 2) is presented as Yahweh's double.

Many scholars believe that often the texts which couple the angel of the Lord with God were first written with only "the Lord." Later, lest God appear too human, the "angel" was added to carry out human activity for God. However, after the exile, the Bible makes a clearer distinction than in the text here between God and the angel whom He

you up from Egypt and led you into the land which I promised on oath to your fathers. I said that I would never break
2 my convenant with you, | but that you were not to make a pact with the inhabitants of this land, and you were to pull down their altars. Yet you have not obeyed me. What did you
3 mean by this? | For now I tell you, I will not clear them out of your way; they shall oppose you and their gods shall become a snare for you."
4 When the angel of the Lord had made these threats to all
5 the Israelites, the people wept aloud; and so that place came to be called Bochim. They offered sacrifice there to the Lord.
6 When Josue dismissed the people, each Israelite went to take
7 possession of his own hereditary land. The people served the Lord during the entire lifetime of Josue, and of those elders who outlived Josue and who had seen all the great work which the
8 Lord had done for Israel. Josue, son of Nun, the servant of the
9 Lord, was a hundred and ten years old when he died; and they buried him within the borders of his heritage at Thamnath-Sare in the mountain region of Ephraim north of Mount Gaas.
10 But once the rest of that generation were gathered to their fathers, and a later generation arose that did not know the
11 Lord, or what he had done for Israel, | the Israelites offended
12 the Lord by serving the Baals. Abandoning the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had led them out of the land of Egypt, they followed the other gods of the various nations around them, and by their worship of these gods provoked the Lord.
13 Because they had thus abandoned him and served Baal and
14 the Astharthes, the anger of the Lord flared up against Israel, and he delivered them over to plunderers who despoiled them. He allowed them to fall into the power of their enemies round
15 about whom they were no longer able to withstand. Whatever they undertook, the Lord turned into disaster for them, as in his warning he had sworn he would do, till they were in great
16 distress. Even when the Lord raised up judges to deliver them
17 from the power of their despoilers, | they did not listen to their judges, but abandoned themselves to the worship of other gods. They were quick to stray from the way their fathers had taken, and did not follow their example of obedience to the command-
18 ments of the Lord. Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, he would be with the judge and save them from the power of their enemies as long as the judge lived; it was thus the Lord took pity on their distressful cries of affliction under

2, 11-19: These verses express the Deuteronomic theme. See Introduction to the Book of Judges.

19 their oppressors. But when the judge died, they would relapse
and do worse than their fathers, following other gods in service
and worship, relinquishing none of their evil practices or stub-
born conduct.
20 In his anger toward Israel the Lord said, "Inasmuch as this
nation has violated my covenant which I enjoined on their fa-
21 thers, and has disobeyed me, | I for my part will not clear away
for them any more of the nations which Josue left when he
22 died." Through these nations the Israelites were to be made to
prove whether or not they would keep to the way of the Lord
23 and continue in it as their fathers had done; therefore the Lord
allowed them to remain instead of expelling them immediately,
or delivering them into the power of Israel.

3

1 The following are the nations which the Lord allowed to re-
main, so that through them he might try all those Israelites who
2 had no experience of the battles with Chanaan [just to instruct,
by training them in battle, those generations only of the Israel-
3 ites who would not have had that previous experience]: the
five lords of the Philistines; and all the Chanaanites, the Si-
donians, and the Hevites who dwell in the mountain region of
Lebanon between Baal-Hermon and the entrance to Hamath.
4 These served to put Israel to the test, to determine whether they
would obey the commandments the Lord had enjoined on their
5 fathers through Moses. Besides, the Israelites were living among
the Chanaanites, Hethites, Amorrites, Pherezites, Hevites and
6 Jebusites. In fact, they took their daughters in marriage, and
gave their own daughters to their sons in marriage, and served
their gods.

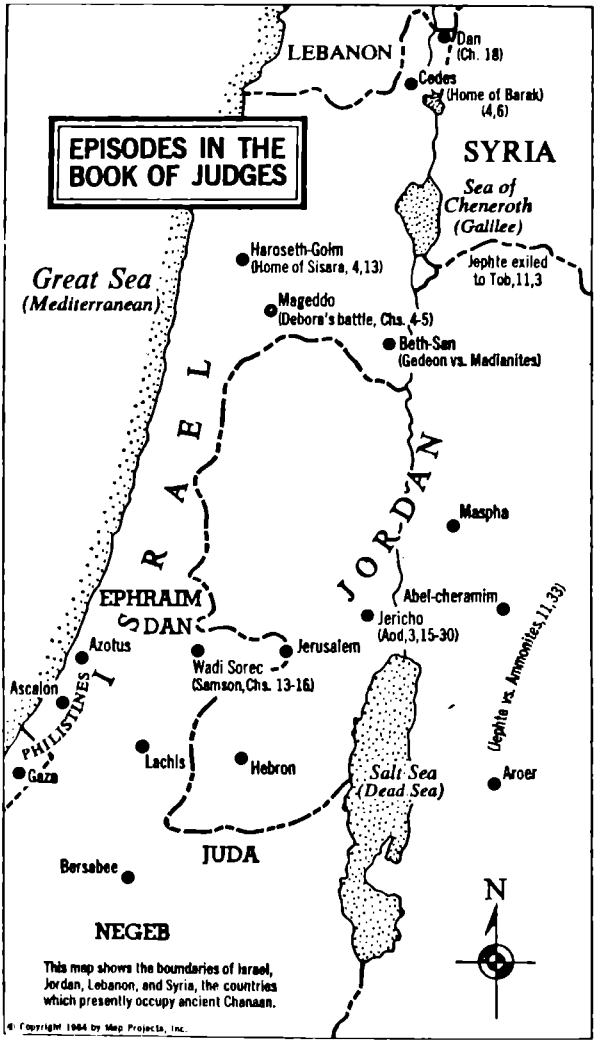
II. STORIES OF THE JUDGES

7 ***Othoniel*** Because the Israelites had offended the Lord by for-
getting the Lord, their God, and serving the Baals and the
8 Asheras, the anger of the Lord flared up against them, and he

3, 7-11: About all that can be salvaged from this obscure passage is probably that a king (from what is now southern Turkey and northern Syria) was defeated in the twelfth century B.C. The Baals and the Asheras (v. 7) are the male and female Chanaanite divinities of fertility. *The spirit of the Lord came upon him:* this "charism" constituted a judge or a "charismatic" leader. The charism (v. 10) was a gift from God which suddenly gave energy above one's natural ability together with prudence and ingenuity. *Forty years:* this figure (v. 10) is a stereotyped round number which will reappear three more times in Judges.

allowed them to fall into the power of Chusan-Rasathaim,
king of Aram Naharaim, whom they served for eight years.
9 But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, he raised up for
them a savior, Othoniel, son of Caleb's younger brother Cenez,
10 who rescued them. The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and
he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord delivered
Chusan-Rasathaim, king of Aram, into his power, so that he
11 made him subject. The land then was at rest for forty years,
until Othoniel, son of Cenez, died.

12 *Aod* Again the Israelites offended the Lord, who because of
13 this offense strengthened Eglon, king of Moab, against Israel.
In alliance with the Ammonites and Amalecites, he attacked
14 and defeated Israel, taking possession of the city of palms. The
Israelites then served Eglon, king of Moab, for eighteen years.
15 But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, he raised up
for them a savior, the Benjaminite Aod, son of Gera, who was
left-handed. It was by him that the Israelites sent their tribute
16 to Eglon, king of Moab. Aod made himself a two-edged dagger
a foot long, and wore it under his clothes over his right thigh.
17 He presented the tribute to Eglon, king of Moab, who was very
18 fat, | and after the presentation went off with the tribute
19 bearers. He returned, however, from where the idols are, near
Galgal, and said, "I have a private message for you, O king."
And the king said, "Silence!" Then when all his attendants had
20 left his presence, and Aod went in to him where he sat alone
in his cool upper room, Aod said, "I have a message from God
21 for you." So the king rose from his chair, | and then Aod with
his left hand drew the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust
22 it into Eglon's belly. The hilt also went in after the blade, and
the fat closed over the blade because he did not withdraw the
dagger from his body.
23 Then Aod went out into the hall, shutting the doors of the
24 upper room on him and locking them. When Aod had left and
the servants came, they saw that the doors of the upper room
were locked, and thought, "He must be easing himself in the
25 cool chamber." They waited until they finally grew suspicious.
Since he did not open the doors of the upper room, they took
the key and opened them. There on the floor, dead, lay their
lord!
26 During their delay Aod made good his escape and, passing
27 the idols, took refuge in Seira. On his arrival he sounded the
horn in the mountain region of Ephraim, and the Israelites
28 went down from the mountains with him as their leader. "Fol-
low me," he said to them, "for the Lord has delivered your



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enemies the Moabites into your power." So they followed hi
down and seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, pe
29 mitting no one to cross. On that occasion they slew about te
thousand Moabites, all of them strong and valiant men. Not
30 man escaped. | Thus was Moab brought under the power
Israel at that time; and the land had rest for eighty years.

31 ***Samgar*** After him there was Samgar, son of Anath, wh
slew six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He, too, rescue
Israel.

4

1 ***Debora and Barac*** After Aod's death, however, the Israe
2 ites again offended the Lord. So the Lord allowed them to fa
into the power of the Chanaanite king, Jabin, who reigned i
Hasor. The general of his army was Sisara, who dwelt i
3 Haroseth-Goim. But the Israelites cried out to the Lord; fo
with his nine hundred iron chariots he sorely oppressed th
Israelites for twenty years.
4 At this time the prophetess Debora, wife of Laphidoth, wa
5 judging Israel. She used to sit under Debora's palm tree
situated between Rama and Bethel in the mountain region o
Ephraim, and there the Israelites came up to her for judgment
6 She sent and summoned Barac, son of Abinoem, from Cedes o
Nephthali. "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, com
mands," she said to him; "go, march on Mount Thabor, and
7 take with you ten thousand Nephthalites and Zabulonites.
will lead Sisara, the general of Jabin's army, out to you at the
Wadi Cison, together with his chariots and troops, and will de-
8 liver them into your power." But Barac answered her, "If you
come with me, I will go; if you do not come with me, I will not
9 go." "I will certainly go with you," she replied, "but you shall
not gain the glory in the expedition on which you are setting
out, for the Lord will have Sisara fall into the power of a
woman." So Debora joined Barac and journeyed with him to
Cedes.
10 Barac summoned Zabulon and Nephthali to Cedes, and ten

3, 31: *Oxgoad:* an instrument with a metal tip.

4, 2: *King:* Chanaan was never politically united under one king. Jabin was a local ruler of Hasor, one of Galilee's most important cities. Excavations, begun in 1955, confirm that Hasor was destroyed in Josue's time. It is not clear for scholars how this squares with the account of Josue defeating Jabin of Hasor (Jos 11, 1-15).

4, 6: *Mount Thabor:* the traditional site of Our Lord's transfiguration in Galilee.

thousand men followed him. Debora also went up with him.
11 Now the Cinite Heber had detached himself from his own
people, the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law, and
had pitched his tent by the terebinth of Saananim, which was
near Cedes.
12 It was reported to Sisara that Barac, son of Abinoem, had
13 gone up to Mount Thabor. So Sisara assembled from Haroseth-
Goim at the Wadi Cison all nine hundred of his iron chariots
14 and all his forces. Debora then said to Barac. "Be off, for this
is the day on which the Lord has delivered Sisara into your
power. The Lord marches before you." So Barac went down
15 Mount Thabor, followed by his ten thousand men. And the
Lord put Sisara and all his chariots and all his forces to rout
before Barac. Sisara himself dismounted from his chariot and
16 fled on foot. Barac, however, pursued the chariots and the army
as far as Haroseth-Goim. The entire army of Sisara fell be-
neath the sword, not even one man surviving.
17 Sisara, in the meantime, had fled on foot to the tent of Jahel,
wife of the Cinite Heber, since Jabin, king of Hasor, and the
18 family of the Cinite Heber were at peace with one another. Jahel
went out to meet Sisara and said to him, "Come in, my lord,
come in with me; do not be afraid." So he went into her tent,
19 and she covered him with a rug. He said to her, "Please give
me a little water to drink. I am thirsty." But she opened a jug
20 of milk for him to drink, and then covered him over. "Stand at
the entrance of the tent," he said to her. "If anyone comes and
21 asks, 'Is there someone here?' say, 'No!' " Instead Jahel, wife of
Heber, got a tent peg and took a mallet in her hand. While
Sisara was sound asleep, she stealthily approached him and
drove the peg through his temple down into the ground, so that
22 he perished in death. Then when Barac came in pursuit of
Sisara, Jahel went out to meet him and said to him, "Come, I
will show you the man you seek." So he went in with her, and
there lay Sisara dead, with the tent peg through his temple.
23 Thus on that day God humbled the Chanaanite king, Jabin,
24 before the Israelites; their power weighed ever heavier upon
him, till at length they destroyed the Chanaanite king, Jabin.

5

1 ***Canticle of Debora*** On that day Debora [and Barac, son
2 of Abinoem,] sang this song: | Of chiefs who took the lead in
Israel, of noble deeds by the people who bless the Lord,

5, 1-31: The song of Debora, the Old Testament's Joan of Arc, says in poetry what ch. 4 says in prose. Ch. 5 is not only older than ch. 4,

3 Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I to the Lord will sin
my song, my hymn to the Lord, the God of Israel.
4 O Lord, when you went out from Seir, when you marche
from the land of Edom, the earth quaked and the heavens wei
5 shaken, while the clouds sent down showers. | Mountains trem
bled in the presence of the Lord: [This is Sinai.] in the pre
ence of the Lord, the God of Israel.
6 In the days of Samgar, son of Anath, in the days of slaver
caravans ceased; those who traveled the roads went by round
7 about paths. | Gone was freedom beyond the walls, gone indee
from Israel.
8 When I, Debora, rose, when I rose, a mother in Israel, | nev
gods were their choice; then the war was at their gates. Not
shield could be seen, nor a lance, among forty thousand i
Israel!
9 My heart is with the leaders of Israel, nobles of the peopl
10 who bless the Lord; | they who ride on white asses, seated or
11 saddlecloths as they go their way; | sing of them to the strain
of the harpers at the wells, where men recount the just deed
of the Lord, his just deeds that brought freedom to Israel.
12 Awake, awake, Debora! awake, awake, strike up a song
Strength! arise, Barac, make despoilers your spoil, son of Abin
13 oem. | Then down came the fugitives with the mighty, the
people of the Lord came down for me as warriors.
14 From Ephraim, princes were in the valley; behind you wa
Benjamin, among your troops. From Machir came down com
manders, and from Zabulon wielders of the marshal's staff
15 | With Debora were the princes of Issachar; Barac, too, was in
the valley, his course unchecked.
Among the clans of Ruben great were the searchings of
16 heart. | Why do you stay beside your hearths listening to the
lowing of the herds? Among the clans of Ruben great were the
searchings of heart!

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but it is generally considered to be contemporaneous with the events it describes, and the oldest extensive piece of Hebrew literature. (See Ex 15, 1-21 n.) In this triumphal ode, victory is attributed to Yahweh, the national God, not to Debora. The ode illustrates how keenly Yahweh united the tribes. The astonishing facet of this poem is that Israel, so young and bellicose, and so given to the fear of God, was also able to experience and express such a deep sentiment of the love of God. Many believe that Debora did not compose this poem, for v. 12 invokes her. The pages of the Old Testament re-echo this victory song of northern Israel.

5, 4: *From Seir:* in poetry it means Sinai. The ancient Israelites thought of Yahweh living especially at Sinai because He made the Covenant there.

17 Galaad, beyond the Jordan, rests; why does Dan spend his
time in ships? Aser, who dwells along the shore, is resting in his
18 coves. | Zabulon is the people defying death; Nephthali, too,
on the open heights!
19 The kings came and fought; then they fought, those kings of
Chanaan, at Thaanach by the waters of Mageddo; no silver
20 booty did they take. | From the heavens the stars, too, fought;
from their courses they fought against Sisara.
21 The Wadi Cison swept them away; a wadi . . . , the Cison.
22 | Then the hoofs of the horses pounded, with the dashing,
dashing of his steeds.
23 "Curse Meroz," says the Lord, "hurl a curse at its inhabit-
ants! For they came not to my help, as warriors to the help of
the Lord."
24 Blessed among women be Jahel, blessed among tent-dwelling
25 women. | He asked for water, she gave him milk; in a princely
26 bowl she offered curds. | With her left hand she reached for
the peg, with her right, for the workman's mallet.
She hammered Sisara, crushed his head; she smashed, stove
27 in his temple. | At her feet he sank down, fell, lay still; down
at her feet he sank and fell; where he sank down, there he fell,
slain.
28 From the window peered down and wailed the mother of
Sisara, from the lattice: "Why is his chariot so long in coming?
29 why are the hoofbeats of his chariots delayed?" | The wisest of
her princesses answers her, and she, too, keeps answering
herself:
30 "They must be dividing the spoil they took: there must be a
damsel or two for each man, spoils of dyed cloth as Sisara's
spoil, an ornate shawl or two for me in the spoil."
31 May all your enemies perish thus, O Lord! but your friends
be as the sun rising in its might!
And the land was at rest for forty years.

6

1 ***The Call of Gedeon*** The Israelites offended the Lord,
who therefore delivered them into the power of Madian for

5, 20: The poetic harmony of nature with the affairs of men is a characteristic theme found in the Bible and in Homer.

5, 21: The overflowing waters of the Cison bogged down the Chanaanite chariots in swampy terrain.

5, 28: Compare Darius' wife in *The Persians*, by Aeschylus.

5, 31: The Israelites considered their enemies to be, by the same token, God's enemies since they were His chosen people. This thinking underlies the numerous statements similar to this verse.

seven years, | so that Madian held Israel subject. For fear o
Madian the Israelites established the fire signals on the mour
tains, the caves for refuge, and the strongholds. And it used t
be that when the Israelites had completed their sowing, Madiar
Amalec and the Cedemites would come up, | encamp opposit
them, and destroy the produce of the land as far as the outskirt
of Gaza, leaving no sustenance in Israel, nor sheep, oxen o
asses. For they would come up with their livestock, and thei
tents would become as numerous as locusts; and neither the
nor their camels could be numbered, when they came into th
land to lay it waste. Thus was Israel reduced to misery b
Madian, and so the Israelites cried out to the Lord.
When Israel cried out to the Lord because of Madian,
he sent a prophet to the Israelites who said to them, "The Lord
the God of Israel, says: I led you up from Egypt; I brought you
out of the place of slavery. I rescued you from the power o
Egypt and of all your other oppressors. I drove them out before
you and gave you their land. And I said to you: I, the Lord,
am your God; you shall not venerate the gods of the Amor-
rites in whose land you are dwelling. But you did not obey me."
Then the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth
in Ephra that belonged to Joas the Abiezerite. While his son
Gedeon was beating out wheat in the wine press to save it from
the Madianites, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said,
"The Lord is with you, O champion!" "My lord," Gedeon said
to him, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?
Where are his wondrous deeds of which our fathers told us
when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?'
For now the Lord has abandoned us and has delivered us into
the power of Madian." The Lord turned to him and said, "Go
with the strength you have and save Israel from the power of
Madian. It is I who send you." | But he answered him, "Please,
my lord, how can I save Israel? My family is the meanest in
Manasse, and I am the most insignificant in my father's house."

6—8: These three chapters on the story of Gedeon come from two or three documents originating most probably from northern Israel.

6, 1-6: The Israelites were now settled farmers. Their harvest was therefore an easy prey to camel-riding, nomadic raiders from the desert, the first mentioned in an historical writing (v. 5).

The account of the extermination of the Madianites by Moses in Nm 31, 1-12, refers only to some of the Madianite clans. An editor after Gedeon's time may have exaggerated the slaughter during the victorious campaign against the Madianites (Nm 31).

6, 11-24: The "angel of the Lord" is the Lord Himself. See 2, 1-4 n; Jos 5, 13-15 n.

6, 12: The same greeting is found in Ru 2, 4; Lk 1, 28.

16 "I shall be with you," the Lord said to him, "and you will cut
17 down Madian to the last man." | He answered him, "If I find
favor with you, give me a sign that you are speaking with me.
18 Do not depart from here, I pray you, until I come back to you
and bring out my offering and set it before you." He answered,
"I will await your return."
19 So Gedeon went off and prepared a kid and an epha of flour
in the form of unleavened cakes. Putting the meat in a basket
and the broth in a pot, he brought them out to him under the
20 terebinth and presented them. The angel of God said to him,
"Take the meat and unleavened cakes and lay them on this rock;
21 then pour out the broth." When he had done so, the angel of the
Lord stretched out the tip of the staff he held, and touched the
meat and unleavened cakes. Thereupon a fire came up from the
rock which consumed the meat and unleavened cakes, and the
22 angel of the Lord disappeared from sight. Gedeon, now aware
that it had been the angel of the Lord, said, "Alas, Lord God,
23 that I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!" The Lord
24 answered him, "Be calm, do not fear. You shall not die." So
Gedeon built there an altar to the Lord and called it Yahweh-
Salom. To this day it is still in Ephra of the Abiezerites.
25 That same night the Lord said to him, "Take the seven-year-
old spare bullock and destroy your father's altar to Baal and
26 cut down the sacred pole that is by it. You shall build, instead,
the proper kind of altar to the Lord, your God, on top of this
stronghold. Then take the spare bullock and offer it as a holo-
caust on the wood from the sacred pole you have cut down."
27 So Gedeon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord had
commanded him. But through fear of his family and of the
townspeople, he would not do it by day, but did it at night.
28 Early the next morning the townspeople found that the altar of
Baal had been destroyed, the sacred pole near it cut down, and
29 the spare bullock offered on the altar that was built. They asked
one another, "Who did this?" Their inquiry led them to the con-
30 clusion that Gedeon, son of Joas, had done it. So the towns-
people said to Joas, "Bring out your son that he may die, for he
has destroyed the altar of Baal and has cut down the sacred
31 pole that was near it." But Joas replied to all who were standing

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6, 19: *Epha:* about forty-five pounds.
6, 23: See 13, 22, and Gn 32, 31b n.
6, 24: The law of only one sanctuary is not observed as commanded n Dt 12, 4-7 n.
6, 27: *Fear of his family:* part of the family believed in Baal not Yahweh.
6, 31: Joas apparently is losing belief in Baal, because if Baal is truly

around him, "Do you intend to act in Baal's stead, or be h
champion? If anyone acts for him, he shall be put to death h
morning. If he whose altar has been destroyed is a god, let hir
32 act for himself!" So on that day Gedeon was called Jerobbaa
because of the words, "Let Baal take action against him, sinc
he destroyed his altar."
33 Then all Madian and Amalec and the Cedemites mustere
and crossed over into the valley of Jezrael, where they en
34 camped. The spirit of the Lord enveloped Gedeon; he blew th
35 horn that summoned Abiezer to follow him. He sent messengers
too, throughout Manasse, which also obeyed his summons
through Aser, Zabulon and Nephthali, likewise, he sent mes
36 sengers and these tribes advanced to meet the others. Gedeon
said to God, "If indeed you are going to save Israel through
37 me, as you promised, | I am putting this woolen fleece on th
threshing floor. If dew comes on the fleece alone, while all th
ground is dry, I shall know that you will save Israel through
38 me, as you promised." | That is what took place. Early th
next morning he wrung the dew from the fleece, squeezing ou
39 of it a bowlful of water. Gedeon then said to God, "Do not b
angry with me if I speak once more. Let me make just one more
test with the fleece. Let the fleece alone be dry, but let there be
40 dew on all the ground." That night God did so; the fleece alone
was dry, but there was dew on all the ground.

7

1 ***Defeat of Madian*** Early the next morning Jerobbaal (that
is, Gedeon) encamped by En-Harad with all his soldiers. The
camp of Madian was in the valley north of Gabaath-Ham-
2 more. The Lord said to Gedeon, "You have too many soldiers
with you for me to deliver Madian into their power, lest Israel
vaunt itself against me and say, 'My own power brought me the
3 victory.' Now proclaim to all the soldiers, 'If anyone is afraid
or fearful, let him leave.' " When Gedeon put them to this test
on the mountain, twenty-two thousand of the soldiers left, but
4 ten thousand remained. The Lord said to Gedeon, "There are

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a god, then Baal not the people should punish his son Gedeon. *If anyone . . . by morning:* some believe that this must be deleted here because it does not belong in the original text.

6, 34: *The spirit of the Lord enveloped:* see 3, 7-11 n for "the spirit of the Lord came upon him."

6, 36-40: Many commentators believe that the sacred author is here speaking of a true miracle.

7, 4-7: This was not a test to separate the brave soldiers from the cowards.

still too many soldiers. Lead them down to the water and I will test them for you there. If I tell you that a certain man is to go with you, he must go with you. But no one is to go if I tell you
5 he must not." When Gedeon led the soldiers down to the water, the Lord said to him, "You shall set to one side everyone who laps up the water as a dog does with its tongue; to the other,
6 everyone who kneels down to drink." Those who lapped up the water raised to their mouths by hand numbered three hundred, but all the rest of the soldiers knelt down to drink the water.
7 The Lord said to Gedeon, "By means of the three hundred who lapped up the water I will save you and will deliver Madian
8 into your power. So let all the other soldiers go home." Their horns, and such supplies as the soldiers had with them, were taken up, and Gedeon ordered the rest of the Israelites to their tents, but kept the three hundred men. Now the camp of Madian was beneath him in the valley.

9 That night the Lord said to Gedeon, "Go, descend on the
10 camp, for I have delivered it up to you. If you are afraid to at-
11 tack, go down to the camp with your aide Phara. When you hear what they are saying, you will have the courage to descend on the camp." So he went down with his aide Phara to the out-
12 posts of the camp. The Madianites, Amalecites, and all the Cedemites lay in the valley, as numerous as locusts. Nor could their camels be counted, for these were as many as the sands on
13 the seashore. When Gedeon arrived, one man was telling another about a dream. "I had a dream," he said, "that a round loaf of barley bread was rolling into the camp of Madian. It came to our tent and struck it, and as it fell it turned the tent
14 upside down." "This can only be the sword of the Israelite Gedeon, son of Joas," the other replied. "God has delivered
15 Madian and all the camp into his power." When Gedeon heard the description and explanation of the dream, he prostrated himself. Then returning to the camp of Israel, he said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Madian into your power."

16 He divided the three hundred men into three companies, and provided them all with horns and with empty jars and
17 torches inside the jars. "Watch me and follow my lead," he told them. "I shall go to the edge of the camp, and as I do,
18 you must do also. When I and those with me blow horns, you too must blow horns all around the camp and cry out, 'For the
19 Lord and for Gedeon!' " So Gedeon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of

7, 16-25: Two different accounts of Gedeon's stratagem seem to be fused in this narrative.

the middle watch, just after the posting of the guards. They
20 blew the horns and broke the jars they were holding. All three
companies blew horns and broke their jars. They held the
torches in their left hands, and in their right the horns they were
blowing, and cried out, "A sword for the Lord and Gedeon!"
21 | They all remained standing in place around the camp, while
22 the whole camp fell to running and shouting and fleeing. But
the three hundred men kept blowing the horns, and throughout
the camp the Lord set the sword of one against another. The
army fled as far as Beth-Setta in the direction of Sarera, as far
as the border of Abel-Mehula near Tebbath.
23 The Israelites were called to arms from Nephthali, from
24 Aser, and from all Manasse, and they pursued Madian. Gedeon
also sent messengers throughout the mountain region of Ephra-
im to say, "Go down to confront Madian, and seize the water
courses against them as far as Beth-Bera, as well as the Jordan."
So all the Ephraimites were called to arms, and they seized
the water courses as far as Beth-Bera, and the Jordan as well.
25 They captured the two princes of Madian, Oreb and Zeb, kill-
ing Oreb at the rock of Oreb and Zeb at the wine press of Zeb.
Then they pursued Madian and carried the heads of Oreb and
Zeb to Gedeon beyond the Jordan.

8

1 But the Ephraimites said to him, "What have you done to us,
not calling us when you went to fight against Madian?" And
2 they quarrelled bitterly with him. | "What have I accomplished
now in comparison with you?" he answered them. "Is not the
3 gleaning of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? Into
your power God delivered the princes of Madian, Oreb and
Zeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you?"
When he said this, their anger against him subsided.
4 When Gedeon reached the Jordan and crossed it with his three
5 hundred men, they were exhausted and famished. So he said
to the men of Socchoth, "Will you give my followers some
loaves of bread? They are exhausted, and I am pursing Zebee
6 and Salmana, kings of Madian." But the princes of Socchoth
replied, "Are the hands of Zebee and Salmana already in your
7 possession, that we should give food to your army?" Gedeon
said, "Very well; when the Lord has delivered Zebee and Sal-
mana into my power, I will grind your flesh in with the thorns
8 and briers of the desert." He went up from there to Phanuel

8, 7: This punishment was still practiced up to the turn of the present century by some of the Bedouin tribes of Transjordan.

and made the same request of them, but the men of Phanuel
9 answered him as had the men of Socchoth. So to the men of
Phanuel, too, he said, "When I return in triumph, I will de-
molish this tower."
10 Now Zebee and Salmana were in Carcor with their force of
about fifteen thousand men; these were all who were left of
the whole Cedemite army, a hundred and twenty thousand
11 swordsmen having fallen. Gedeon went up by the route of the
nomads east of Nobe and Jegbaa, and attacked the camp when
12 it felt secure. Zebee and Salmana fled. He pursued them and
took the two kings of Madian, Zebee and Salmana, captive,
throwing the entire army into panic.
13 Then Gedeon, son of Joas, returned from battle by the pass
14 of Hares. He captured a young man of Socchoth, who upon
being questioned listed for him the seventy-seven princes and
15 elders of Socchoth. So he went to the men of Socchoth and said,
"Here are Zebee and Salmana, with whom you taunted me, 'Are
the hands of Zebee and Salmana already in your possession, that
16 we should give food to your weary followers?'" He took the
elders of the city, and thorns and briers of the desert, and
17 ground these men of Socchoth into them. He also demolished
the tower of Phanuel and slew the men of the city.
18 Then he said to Zebee and Salmana, "Where now are the
men you killed at Thabor?" "They all resembled you," they
19 replied. "They appeared to be princes." | "They were my
brothers, my mother's sons," he said. "As the Lord lives, if you
20 had spared their lives, I should not kill you." Then he said to
his firstborn, Jether, "Go, kill them." Since Jether was still a
21 boy, he was afraid and did not draw his sword. Zebee and
Salmana said, "Come, kill us yourself, for a man's strength
is like the man." So Gedeon stepped forward and killed Zebee
and Salmana. He also took the crescents that were on the necks
of their camels.
22 The Israelites then said to Gedeon, "Rule over us—you, your
son, and your son's son—for you rescued us from the power of
23 Madian." But Gedeon answered them, "I will not rule over you,
nor shall my son rule over you. The Lord must rule over you."
24 Gedeon went on to say, "I should like to make a request of
you. Will each of you give me a ring from his booty?" (For
25 being Ismaelites, the enemy had gold rings.) "We will gladly

8, 10: The numbers seem exaggerated.
8, 14: *Listed:* this means, given in writing. Writing in ancient Israel is rarely mentioned in the Bible.
8, 23: Perhaps the most important element of the Gedeon story is that it narrates the first attempt to establish the monarchy in Israel.

give them," they replied, and spread out a cloak into whi
26 everyone threw a ring from his booty. The gold rings that
requested weighed seventeen hundred gold shekels, in additi
to the crescents and pendants, the purple garments worn
the kings of Madian, and the trappings that were on the nec
27 of their camels. Gedeon made an ephod out of the gold ar
placed it in his city Ephra. However, all Israel paid idolatro
homage to it there, and it caused the ruin of Gedeon and h
family.
28 Thus was Madian brought into subjection by the Israelite
no longer did they hold their heads high. And the land had re
for forty years, during the lifetime of Gedeon.

29 ***Gedeon's Son Abimelech*** Then Jerobbaal, son of Joa
30 went back home to stay. Now Gedeon had seventy sons, h
31 direct descendants, for he had many wives. His concubine wh
lived in Sichem also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelec
32 At a good old age Gedeon, son of Joas, died and was burie
33 in the tomb of his father Joas in Ephra of the Abiezerites. Bu
after Gedeon was dead, the Israelites again abandoned them
34 selves to the Baals, making Baal-Berith their god | and forgel
ting the Lord, their God, who had delivered them from th
35 power of their enemies all around them. Nor were they grate
ful to the family of Jerobbaal [Gedeon] for all the good he ha
done for Israel.

9

1 Abimelech, son of Jerobbaal, went to his mother's kinsmen i
Sichem, and said to them and to the whole clan to which hi
2 mother's family belonged, "Put this question to all the citizen
of Sichem: 'Which is better for you: that seventy men, or al
Jerobbaal's sons, rule over you, or that one man rule over you?
3 You must remember that I am your own flesh and bone." Wher
his mother's kin repeated these words to them on his behalf, al

8, 27: *Ephod:* this word can mean several things, but in this contex
it seems to mean a golden plaque.

8, 31: This kind of marriage is still found in the Orient. The concu
bine, a wife of secondary rank, remains with her own family but her
children belong to her husband's clan.

8, 33: *Baal-Berith:* means "Lord of the Covenant." Berith alone
refers to the Covenant with Yahweh. See Ex 19, 3-6 n. Berith used with
Baal is indicative of the pagan religious elements contaminating the true
Covenant with God.

9, 1-57: It is generally agreed that this is one of the oldest episodes in
the history of Israel. The narrative may have originated from a center
of prophets in northern Israel who did not favor a monarchy for Israel

the citizens of Sichem sympathized with Abimelech, thinking,
4 "He is our kinsman." They also gave him seventy silver shekels
from the temple of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired
5 shiftless men and ruffians as his followers. He then went to his
ancestral house in Ephra, and slew his brothers, the seventy
sons of Jerobbaal, on one stone. Only the youngest son of Jerob-
6 baal, Joatham, escaped, for he was hidden. Then all the citi-
zens of Sichem and all Beth-Mello came together and proceeded
to make Abimelech king by the terebinth of the military post in
Sichem.

7 When this was reported to him, Joatham went to the top of
Mount Garizim, and standing there, cried out to them in a loud
voice: "Hear me, citizens of Sichem, that God may then hear
8 you! Once the trees went to anoint a king over themselves. So
9 they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' But the olive tree
answered them, 'Must I give up my rich oil, whereby men and
10 gods are honored, and go to wave over the trees?' Then the
11 trees said to the fig tree, 'Come; you reign over us!' | But the
fig tree answered them, 'Must I give up my sweetness and my
12 good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?' Then the trees said
13 to the vine, 'Come you, and reign over us.' | But the vine an-
swered them, 'Must I give up my wine that cheers gods and
14 men, and go to wave over the trees?' Then all the trees said to
15 the buckthorn, 'Come; you reign over us!' But the buckthorn
replied to the trees, 'If you wish to anoint me king over you in
good faith, come and take refuge in my shadow. Otherwise,
let fire come from the buckthorn and devour the cedars of
Lebanon.'

16 "Now then, if you have acted in good faith and honorably
in appointing Abimelech your king, if you have dealt well with
Jerobbaal and with his family, and if you have treated him as
17 he deserved—for my father fought for you at the risk of his

9, 4: Temples were often used as public treasury buildings. See 2 Mc 3.

9, 5: *Seventy:* a round number often used for all the descendants. See Gn 46, 27; Jgs 1, 7; 12, 14. In the Orient and in the Bible it was common to have a public, almost official, massacre of the rival line at the change of a regime.

9, 7-21: The apologue of Joatham is one of Israel's first examples of gnomic poetry, i.e., poetry after the style of proverbs or sayings. This fable expresses contempt for the monarchy. Gedeon, personified by the productive olive and fig trees, and by the vine, refuses the useless function of king. But Abimelech, personified by the unproductive buckthorn, accepts the kingship. When the buckthorn, which affords no shade, says to the trees, which afford abundant shade, "come and take refuge in my shadow" (v. 15), the buckthorn is ironically made to personify the absurdity and uselessness of Abimelech's monarchy.

18 life when he saved you from the power of Madian; but you
have risen against his family this day and have killed his
seventy sons upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the
son of his handmaid, king over the citizens of Sichem, because
19 he is your kinsman— | if, then, you have acted in good faith
and with honor toward Jerobbaal and his family this day, re-
20 joice in Abimelech and may he in turn rejoice in you. But if not,
let fire come forth from Abimelech to devour the citizens of
Sichem and Beth-Mello, and let fire come forth from the citi-
21 zens and from Beth-Mello to devour Abimelech." Then Joa-
tham went in flight to Beer, where he remained for fear of his
brother Abimelech.
22.23 When Abimelech had ruled Israel for three years, God
put bad feelings between Abimelech and the citizens of Sichem,
24 who rebelled against Abimelech, This was to repay the violence
done to the seventy sons of Jerobbaal and to avenge their blood
upon their brother Abimelech, who killed them, and upon the
citizens of Sichem, who encouraged him to kill his brothers.
25 The citizens of Sichem then set men in ambush for him on the
mountaintops, and these robbed all who passed them on the
road. But it was reported to Abimelech.
26 Now Gaal, son of Obed, came over to Sichem with his
27 kinsmen. The citizens of Sichem put their trust in him, | and
went out into the fields, harvested their grapes and trod them
out. Then they held a festival and went to the temple of their
28 god, where they ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. Gaal,
son of Obed, said, "Who is Abimelech? And why should we of
Sichem serve him? Were not the son of Jerobbaal and his lieu-
tenant Zebul once subject to the men of Hemor, father of
29 Sichem? Why should we serve him? Would that this people
were entrusted to my command! I would depose Abimelech. I
would say to Abimelech, 'Get a larger army and come out!' "
30 At the news of what Gaal, son of Obed, had said, Zebul, the
31 ruler of the city, was angry | and sent messengers to Abimelech
in Aruma with the information: "Gaal, son of Obed, and his
kinsmen have come to Sichem and are stirring up the city
32 against you. Now rouse yourself; set an ambush tonight in the
33 fields, you and the men who are with you. Promptly at sunrise
tomorrow morning, make a raid on the city. When he and his
followers come out against you, deal with him as best you can."
34 During the night Abimelech advanced with all his soldiers
35 and set up an ambush for Sichem in four companies. Gaal, son
of Obed, went out and stood at the entrance of the city gate.
When Abimelech and his soldiers rose from their place of
36 ambush, Gaal saw them and said to Zebul "There are men

coming down from the hilltops!" But Zebul answered him,
37 "You see the shadow of the hills as men." But Gaal went on to
say, "Men are coming down from the region of Tabbur-Haares,
38 and one company is coming by way of Elon-Meonenim." Zebul
said to him, "Where now is the boast you uttered, 'Who is
Abimelech that we should serve him?' Are these not the men for
whom you expressed contempt? Go out now and fight with
39 them." So Gaal went out at the head of the citizens of Sichem
40 and fought against Abimelech. But Abimelech routed him, and
he fled before him; and many fell slain right up to the entrance
41 of the gate. Abimelech returned to Aruma, but Zebul drove
Gaal and his kinsmen from Sichem, which they had occupied.
42 The next day, when the people were taking the field, it was
43 reported to Abimelech, | who divided the men he had into
three companies, and set up an ambush in the fields. He watched
till he saw the people leave the city, and then rose against them
44 for the attack. Abimelech and the company with him dashed in
and stood by the entrance of the city gate, while the other two
companies rushed upon all who were in the field and attacked
45 them. That entire day Abimelech fought against the city, and
captured it. He then killed its inhabitants and demolished the
city, sowing the site with salt.
46 When they heard of this, all the citizens of Magdal-Sichem
47 went into the crypt of the temple of El-Berith. It was reported
to Abimelech that all the citizens of Magdal-Sichem were
48 gathered together. So he went up Mount Selmon with all his
soldiers, took his axe in his hand, and cut down some brush-
wood. This he lifted to his shoulder, then said to the men with
49 him, "Hurry! Do just as you have seen me do." So all the men
likewise cut down brushwood, and following Abimelech, placed
it against the crypt. Then they set the crypt on fire over their
heads, so that every one of the citizens of Magdal-Sichem,
about a thousand men and women, perished.
50 Abimelech proceeded to Thebes, which he invested and cap-
51 tured. Now there was a strong tower in the middle of the city,
and all the men and women, in a word all the citizens of the
city, fled there, shutting themselves in and going up to the roof
52 of the tower. Abimelech came up to the tower and fought
against it, advancing to the very entrance of the tower to set it

9, 45: *Sowing the site with salt:* this symbol, or magical ritual, of insuring sterility is found only here in all the Bible.

9, 46-49: Since the people sought the right of asylum, Abimelech could not spill their blood sacrilegiously in a sacred place. He avoided the law by burning them to death, "setting fire over their heads" from outside the temple.

53 on fire. But a certain woman cast the upper part of a millston
54 down on Abimelech's head, and it fractured his skull. H
immediately called his armor-bearer and said to him, "Dra
your sword and dispatch me, lest they say of me that a woma
killed me." So his attendant ran him through and he died.
55 When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they all le
for their homes.
56 Thus did God requite the evil Abimelech had done to hi
57 father in killing his seventy brothers. God also brought all thei
wickedness home to the Sichemites, for the curse of Joatham
son of Jerobbaal, overtook them.

10

1 ***Thola*** After Abimelech there rose to save Israel the Issachar
ite Thola, son of Dodo, a resident of Samir in the mountai
2 region of Ephraim. | When he had judged Israel twenty-thre
years, he died and was buried in Samir.

3 ***Jair*** Jair the Galaadite came after him and judged Israe
4 twenty-two years. He had thirty sons who rode on thirty
saddle-asses and possessed thirty cities in the land of Galaad;
5 these are called Havoth-Jair to the present day. Jair died and
was buried in Camon.

6 ***Oppression by the Ammonites*** The Israelites again of-
fended the Lord, serving the Baals and Astharthes, the gods
of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the
Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. Since they had
7 abandoned the Lord and would not serve him, the Lord became
angry with Israel and allowed them to fall into the power of
8 [the Philistines and] the Ammonites. For eighteen years they
afflicted and oppressed the Israelites in Basan, and all the
Israelites in the Amorrite land beyond the Jordan in Galaad.
9 The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Juda,
Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was in great
distress.
10 Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord, "We have sinned
against you; we have forsaken our God and have served the
11 Baals." The Lord answered the Israelites: "Did not the Egyp-

9, 53: The classical counterpart is Pyrrhus, king of Epirus who died similarly at the siege of Argos.

9, 56-57: Abimelech, called the "Macbeth of the Old Testament," begins his ambitious life with an evil act (9, 5) and a curse from Joatham (especially 9, 20). He proceeds from one misfortune to another until retribution ignominiously snuffs out his life (vv. 53-54).

12 tians, the Amorrites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, | the
Sidonians, the Amalecites, and the Madianites oppress you?
Yet when you cried out to me, and I saved you from their
13 grasp, you still forsook me and worshiped other gods. Therefore
14 I will save you no more. Go and cry out to the gods you have
15 chosen; let them save you now that you are in distress." But
the Israelites said to the Lord, "We have sinned. Do to us what-
16 ever you please. Only save us this day." | And they cast out the
foreign gods from their midst and served the Lord, so that he
grieved over the misery of Israel.
17 The Ammonites had gathered for war and encamped in
Galaad, while the Israelites assembled and encamped in Maspha.
18 And among the people the princes of Galaad said to one
another, "The one who begins the war against the Ammonites
shall be leader of all the inhabitants of Galaad."

11

1 ***Jephte*** There was a chieftain, the Galaadite Jephte, born to
2 Galaad of a harlot. Galaad's wife had also borne him sons, and
on growing up the sons of the wife had driven Jephte away,
saying to him, "You shall inherit nothing in our family, for you
3 are the son of another woman." So Jephte had fled from his
brothers and had taken up residence in the land of Tob. A rabble
had joined company with him, and went out with him on raids.
4.5 Some time later, the Ammonites warred on Israel. When
this occurred the elders of Galaad went to bring Jephte from
6 the land of Tob. "Come," they said to Jephte, "be our com-
7 mander that we may be able to fight the Ammonites." "Are you
not the ones who hated me and drove me from my father's
house?" Jephte replied to the elders of Galaad. "Why do you
8 come to me now, when you are in distress?" The elders of
Galaad said to Jephte, "In any case, we have now come back to
you; if you go with us to fight against the Ammonites, you shall
9 be the leader of all of us who dwell in Galaad." Jephte answered
the elders of Galaad, "If you bring me back to fight against the
Ammonites and the Lord delivers them up to me, I shall be
10 your leader." The elders of Galaad said to Jephte, "The Lord
is witness between us that we will do as you say."
11 So Jephte went with the elders of Galaad, and the people
made him their leader and commander. In Maspha, Jephte
12 settled all his affairs before the Lord. Then he sent messengers
to the king of the Ammonites to say, "What have you against
13 me that you come to fight with me in my land?" He answered
the messengers of Jephte, "Israel took away my land from the

Arnon to the Jaboc and the Jordan when they came up fror
Egypt. Now restore the same peaceably."
14 Again Jephte sent messengers to the king of the Ammonite:
15 | saying to him, "This is what Jephte says: Israel did not tak
16 the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. For when the
came up from Egypt, Israel went through the desert to the Re
17 Sea and came to Cades. Israel then sent messengers to the kin
of Edom saying, 'Let me pass through your land.' But the kin
of Edom did not give consent. They also sent to the king o
Moab, but he too was unwilling. So Israel remained in Cades
18 | Then they went through the desert, and by-passing the lan
of Edom and the land of Moab, went east of the land of Moal
and encamped across the Arnon. Thus they did not go throug
the territory of Moab, for the Arnon is the boundary of Moab
19 Then Israel sent messengers to Sehon, king of the Amorrites
king of Hesebon. Israel said to him, 'Let me pass through you
20 land to my own place.' But Sehon refused to let Israel pas
through his territory. On the contrary, he gathered all his sol
21 diers, who encamped at Jasa and fought Israel. But the Lord
the God of Israel, delivered Sehon and all his men into the
power of Israel, who defeated them and occupied all the land
22 of the Amorrites dwelling in that region, the whole territory
23 from the Arnon to the Jaboc, from the desert to the Jordan. If
now the Lord, the God of Israel, has cleared the Amorrites out
24 of the way of his people, are you to dislodge Israel? Should you
not possess that which your god Chamos gave you to possess,
and should we not possess all that the Lord, our God, has
25 cleared out for us? Again, are you any better than Balac, son of
Sepphor, king of Moab? Did he ever quarrel with Israel, or did
26 he war against them | when Israel occupied Hesebon and its
villages, Aroer and its villages, and all the cities on the banks
of the Arnon? Three hundred years have passed; why did you
27 not recover them during that time? I have not sinned against
you, but you wrong me by warring against me. Let the Lord,
who is judge, decide this day between the Israelites and the
28 Ammonites!" But the king of the Ammonites paid no heed to
the message Jephte sent him.

29 *Jephte's Vow* The spirit of the Lord came upon Jephte. He
passed through Galaad and Manasse, and through Maspha-

11, 29-40: Jephte, an outlaw and not reared according to the Mosaic Law (11, 3), made an immoral vow (v. 31). Under Chanaanite influence, he acted in ignorance. He may have been laboring unconsciously under another concept of the times, i.e., a person will move the god if he offered what was dearest to him in life. The idea underlying Jephte's

Galaad as well, and from there he went on to the Ammonites.
) | Jephte made a vow to the Lord. "If you deliver the Ammon-
1 ites into my power," he said, | "whoever comes out of the
doors of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from
the Ammonites shall belong to the Lord. I shall offer him up as
a holocaust."
! Jephte then went on to the Ammonites to fight against them,
) and the Lord delivered them into his power, | so that he in-
flicted a severe defeat on them, from Aroer to the approach to
Mennith (twenty cities in all) and as far as Abel-cheramim.
Thus were the Ammonites brought into subjection by the
1 Israelites. When Jephte returned to his house in Maspha, it was
his daughter who came forth, playing the tambourines and
dancing. She was an only child: he had neither son nor
) daughter besides her. When he saw her, he rent his garments
and said, "Alas, daughter, you have struck me down and
brought calamity upon me. For I have made a vow to the Lord
) and I cannot retract." "Father," she replied, "you have made a
vow to the Lord. Do with me as you have vowed, because the
Lord has wrought vengeance for you on your enemies the Am-
' monites." Then she said to her father, "Let me have this favor.
Spare me for two months, that I may go off down the moun-
1 tains to mourn my virginity with my companions." "Go," he
replied, and sent her away for two months. So she departed
with her companions and mourned her virginity on the moun-
' tains. At the end of the two months she returned to her father,
who did to her as he had vowed. She had not been intimate
' with man. It then became a custom in Israel | for Israelite
women to go yearly to mourn the daughter of Jephte the
Galaadite for four days of the year.

2
The Shibboleth Incident The men of Ephraim gathered

solve to fulfill his vow (v. 39) was that a vow, like a blessing or
irse, was irrevocable, and independent of the one who made the vow.
was an extreme interpretation of Nm 30, 3; 32, 24. The inspired
ithor does not approve of Jephte's actions; and, in Heb 11, 32, Jephte
praised not because he made and executed his vow, but because he
:livered his nation.

For the ancient Israelites it was a disgrace to die without issue.
herefore, the tragedy of the immolation of Jephte's daughter was
tensified because she was a virgin. Not sex was the reason for the
ress on procreation and on this earthly life; it was, in part, because the
ys of the eternal life were as yet not revealed. Jephte's vow has
veral classical parallels. Agamemnon likewise sacrificed his daughter.

12, 1-7: The Galaadites did not necessarily ask the Ephraimites

together and crossed over to Saphon. They said to Jephte, "Wh
do you go on to fight with the Ammonites without calling us t
2 go with you? We will burn your house over you." Jepht
answered them, "My soldiers and I were engaged in a critic
contest with the Ammonites. I summoned you, but you did n
3 rescue me from their power. When I saw that you would n
effect a rescue, I took my life in my own hand and went on t
the Ammonites, and the Lord delivered them into my powe
Why, then, do you come up against me this day to fight wit
me?"
4 Then Jephte called together all the men of Galaad and fough
against Ephraim, whom they defeated; for the Ephraimites ha
said, "You of Galaad are Ephraimite fugitives in territor
5 belonging to Ephraim and Manasse." The Galaadites took th
fords of the Jordan toward Ephraim. When any of the fleein
Ephraimites said, "Let me pass," the men of Galaad would sa
to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he answered, "No!"
6 they would ask him to say "Shibboleth." If he said "Sibboleth,"
not being able to give the proper pronunciation, they woul
seize him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. Thus forty-
two thousand Ephraimites fell at that time.
7 After having judged Israel for six years, Jephte the Galaadite
died and was buried in his city in Galaad.

8 ***Abesan*** After him Abesan of Bethlehem judged Israel. |
9 He had thirty sons. He also had thirty daughters married
outside the family, and he brought in as wives for his sons thirty
young women from outside the family. After having judged
10 Israel for seven years, Abesan died and was buried in Bethlehem.

11 ***Elon*** After him the Zabulonite Elon judged Israel. When he
12 had judged Israel for ten years, the Zabulonite Elon died and
was buried in Elon in the land of Zabulon.

13 ***Abdon*** After him the Pharathonite Abdon, son of Hillel,
14 judged Israel. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons who
rode on seventy saddle-asses. After having judged Israel for
15 eight years, | the Pharathonite Abdon, son of Hillel, died and

pointblank to pronounce "shibboleth" (v. 6), but may have engaged them in conversation involving this word. In Hebrew, shibboleth means "ear of grain" or "current of water." Because of the context, the latter meaning seems preferable. In English, based on this biblical incident, shibboleth means criterion, watchword, party cry, pet phrase. In World War I, the Arabs detected the Turks at the crossing of the Jordan River by their incorrect pronunciation of the emphatic "s."

was buried in Pharathon in the land of Ephraim on the mountain of the Amalecites.

13

1 ***The Birth of Samson*** The Israelites again offended the Lord, who therefore delivered them into the power of the Philistines for forty years.

2 There was a certain man from Saraa, of the clan of the Danites, whose name was Manoe. His wife was barren and had
3 borne no children. An angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Though you are barren and have had no chil-
4 dren, yet you will conceive and bear a son. Now, then, be careful to take no wine or strong drink and to eat nothing unclean.
5 As for the son you will conceive and bear, no razor shall touch his head, for this boy is to be consecrated to God from the womb. It is he who will begin the deliverance of Israel from the power of the Philistines."

6 The woman went and told her husband, "A man of God came to me; he had the appearance of an angel of God, terrible indeed. I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell
7 me his name. But he said to me, 'You will be with child and will bear a son. So take neither wine nor strong drink, and eat nothing unclean. For the boy shall be consecrated to God from
8 the womb, until the day of his death.' " | Manoe then prayed to the Lord. "O Lord, I beseech you," he said, "may the man of God whom you sent, return to us to teach us what to do for the boy who will be born."

9 God heard the prayer of Manoe, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she was sitting in the field. Since her
10 husband Manoe was not with her, | the woman ran in haste and told her husband. "The man who came to me the other
11 day has appeared to me," she said to him; so Manoe got up and

13--16: The historical nucleus of these embellished Samson stories probably is this: when the era of the Judges was ending, a country boy from the tribe of Dan enjoyed extraordinary physical strength of which he made use in a one man war against the Philistines. The redactor of these stories learned from a transmitted ancient tradition that Samson's strength came from "the spirit of the Lord" (See 3, 7-11 n; 13, 25; 14, 6. 19; 15, 14; 16, 28), or from being consecrated to God through his Nazirite vow (13, 4-14; 16, 17). Spiritually this story meant, to the people, that Samson was a living example of the care God lavished upon His faithful followers, and the misery which He allowed them to suffer when they abandoned Him.

13, 3: *The angel of the Lord:* is identified with the Lord Himself in vv. 22-23.

13, 5: Samson was to take a perpetual Nazirite vow. See Nm 6, 1-21 n.

followed his wife. When he reached the man, he said to hi
"Are you the one who spoke to my wife?" "Yes," he answere
12 | Then Manoe asked, "Now, when that which you say com
13 true, what are we expected to do for the boy?" The angel of t
Lord answered Manoe, "Your wife is to abstain from all t
14 things of which I spoke to her. She must not eat anything th
comes from the vine, nor take wine or strong drink, nor e
anything unclean. Let her observe all that I have commande
15 her." Then Manoe said to the angel of the Lord, "Can we pe
16 suade you to stay, while we prepare a kid for you?" But t
angel of the Lord answered Manoe, "Although you press m
I will not partake of your food. But if you will, you may offe
a holocaust to the Lord." Not knowing that it was the angel o
17 the Lord, | Manoe said to him, "What is your name, that w
18 may honor you when your words come true?" The angel of t
Lord answered him, "Why do you ask my name, which
19 mysterious?" Then Manoe took the kid with a cereal offerin
and offered it on the rock to the Lord, whose works are my
20 teries. While Manoe and his wife were looking on, as the flam
rose to the sky from the altar, the angel of the Lord ascende
in the flame of the altar. When Manoe and his wife saw thi
21 they fell prostrate to the ground; but the angel of the Lord wa
seen no more by Manoe and his wife. Then Manoe, realizin
22 that it was the angel of the Lord, | said to his wife, "We wil
23 certainly die, for we have seen God." But his wife pointed ou
to him, "If the Lord had meant to kill us, he would not hav
accepted a holocaust and cereal offering from our hands! No
would he have let us see all this just now, or hear what we hav
heard."
24 The woman bore a son and named him Samson. The boy
25 grew up and the Lord blessed him; the spirit of the Lord firs
stirred him in Mahane-Dan, which is between Saraa and
Esthaol.

14

1 ***Marriage of Samson*** Samson went down to Thamna and
2 saw there one of the Philistine women. On his return he told
his father and mother, "There is a Philistine woman I saw in
3 Thamna whom I wish you to get as a wife for me." His father
and mother said to him, "Can you find no wife among your
kinsfolk or among all our people, that you must go and take a
wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson an-
4 swered his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me." Now
his father and mother did not know that this had been brought

about by the Lord, who was providing an opportunity against
the Philistines; for at that time they had dominion over Israel.
5 So Samson went down to Thamna with his father and
mother. When they had come to the vineyards of Thamna, a
6 young lion came roaring to meet him. But the spirit of the
Lord came upon Samson, and although he had no weapons, he
7 tore the lion in pieces as one tears a kid. However, on the jour-
ney to speak for the woman, he did not mention to his father
8 or mother what he had done. Later, when he returned to marry
the woman who pleased him, he stepped aside to look at the
remains of the lion and found a swarm of bees and honey in
9 the lion's carcass. So he scooped the honey out into his palms
and ate it as he went along. When he came to his father and
mother, he gave them some to eat, without telling them that he
had scooped the honey from the lion's carcass.
10 His father also went down to the woman, and Samson gave
a banquet there, since it was customary for the young men to
11 do this. When they met him, they brought thirty men to be
12 his companions. Samson said to them, "Let me propose a riddle
to you. If within the seven days of the feast you solve it for me
successfully, I will give you thirty linen tunics and thirty sets
13 of garments. But if you cannot answer it for me, you must
give me thirty tunics and thirty sets of garments." "Propose
14 your riddle," they responded; "we will listen to it." So he said
to them, "Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the
15 strong came forth sweetness." After three days' failure to an-
swer the riddle, they said on the fourth day to Samson's wife,
"Coax your husband to answer the riddle for us, or we will
burn you and your family. Did you invite us here to reduce us to
16 poverty?" At Samson's side, his wife wept and said, "You must
hate me; you do not love me, for you have proposed a riddle to
my countrymen, but have not told me the answer." He said to
her, "If I have not told it even to my father or my mother, must I
17 tell it to you?" But she wept beside him during the seven days
the feast lasted. On the seventh day, since she importuned him,
he told her the answer, and she explained the riddle to her
countrymen.
18 On the seventh day, before the sun set, the men of the city
said to him, "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger

14, 10: This type of marriage is still in vogue among Arabs today. The wife remains in her father's house and the husband does not pay for her, but brings a gift whenever he visits her as in 15, 1. (See Gedeon's marriage in 8, 31 n.)

14, 11: *Companions:* "companions of the bridegroom" are still found in Syrian marriages. They were charged with enlivening the feast.

than a lion?" He replied to them, "If you had not plowed w
my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle."
19 The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down
Ascalon, where he killed thirty of their men and despoi
them; he gave their garments to those who had answered
20 riddle. Then he went off to his own family in anger, and | Sa
son's wife was married to the one who had been best man at
wedding.

15

1 ***Samson Defeats the Philistines*** After some time, in
season of the wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife, bringi
a kid. But when he said, "Let me be with my wife in privat
2 her father would not let him enter, | saying, "I thought it c
tain you wished to repudiate her; so I gave her to your best m
Her younger sister is more beautiful than she; you may ha
3 her instead." Samson said to them, "This time the Philistir
4 cannot blame me if I harm them." So Samson left and caug
three hundred foxes. Turning them tail to tail, he tied betwe
5 each pair of tails one of the torches he had at hand. He th
kindled the torches and set the foxes loose in the standing gra
of the Philistines, thus burning both the shocks and the stan
ing grain, and the vineyards and olive orchards as well.
6 When the Philistines asked who had done this, they we
told, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Thamnaite, because h
wife was taken and given to his best man." So the Philistin
went up and destroyed her and her family by fire. Samson sa
7 to them, "If this is how you act, I will not stop until I ha
8 taken revenge on you." And with repeated blows, he inflicte
a great slaughter on them. Then he went down and remaine
in a cavern of the cliff of Etam.
9 The Philistines went up and, from a camp in Juda, deploye
10 against Lehi. When the men of Juda asked, "Why have yo
come up against us?" they answered, "To take Samson prisone
11 to do to him as he has done to us." Three thousand men of Jud
went down to the cavern in the cliff of Etam and said to Sam
son, "Do you not know that the Philistines are our rulers
Why, then, have you done this to us?" He answered them, "A
12 they have done to me, so have I done to them." They said t
him, "We have come to take you prisoner, to deliver you ove
to the Philistines." Samson said to them, "Swear to me that yo
13 will not kill me yourselves." "No," they replied, "we will cer

15, 5: During the Jewish-Arab war, the Arabs performed a simila
ruse on the Jews in 1936.

tainly not kill you but will only bind you and deliver you over
to them." So they bound him with two new ropes and brought
14 him up from the cliff. When he reached Lehi, and the Philistines
came shouting to meet him, the spirit of the Lord came upon
him: the ropes around his arms became as flax that is con-
15 sumed by fire and his bonds melted away from his hands. Near
him was the fresh jawbone of an ass; he reached out, grasped
16 it, and with it killed a thousand men. Then Samson said, "With
the jawbone of an ass I have piled them in a heap; with the
jawbone of an ass I have slain a thousand men."
17 As he finished speaking he threw the jawbone from him;
18 and so that place was named Ramath-Lehi. Being very thirsty,
he cried to the Lord and said, "You have granted this great
victory by the hand of your servant. Must I now die of thirst
19 or fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" Then God split
the cavity in Lehi, and water issued from it, which Samson
drank till his spirit returned and he revived. Hence that spring
in Lehi is called En-Haccore to this day.
20 Samson judged Israel for twenty years in the days of the
Philistines.

16

1 Once Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a harlot and visited
2 her. Informed that Samson had come there, the men of Gaza
surrounded him with an ambush at the city gate all night long.
And all the night they waited, saying, "Tomorrow morning we
3 will kill him." Samson rested there until midnight. Then he
rose, seized the doors of the city gate and the two gateposts,
and tore them loose, bar and all. He hoisted them on his shoul-
ders and carried them to the top of the ridge opposite Hebron.

4 ***Samson and Dalila*** After that he fell in love with a wom-
5 an in the Wadi Sorec whose name was Dalila. The lords of the

16, 1: The sacred writer, while not approving of Samson's immoral conduct, colorfully describes him as a typical Israelite hero—patriotic, rugged, and a Don Juan.

16, 2: According to the idea of the times, sleep was a mysterious state from which the sleeper, if possible, should not be brutally awakened until morning. See Ex 14, 20; 1 Sm 19, 11.

16, 4: *Dalila:* since her name means "the informer," she may have acquired it after Samson's capture.

16, 5: The underlying primitive notion here is that extraordinary physical strength can be destroyed by magical forces, and so Samson fabricates three plausible magical recipes to destroy his strength (vv. 7, 11, 13). When Samson gives the true reason (v. 17) the Philistines interpret it as the true magical recipe.

Philistines came to her and said, "Beguile him and find out
secret of his great strength, and how we may overcome
bind him so as to keep him helpless. We will each give
eleven hundred shekels of silver."
6 So Dalila said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your gr
strength and how you may be bound so as to be kept helple
7 "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings which have
dried," Samson answered her, "I shall be as weak as any ot
8 man." So the lords of the Philistines brought her seven fr
bowstrings which had not dried, and she bound him w
9 them. She had men lying in wait in the chamber and so
said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But
snapped the strings as a thread of tow is severed by a whiff
flame; and the secret of his strength remained unknown.
10 Dalila said to Samson, "You have mocked me and told
11 lies. Now tell me how you may be bound." "If they bind
tight with new ropes, with which no work has been done,"
12 answered her, "I shall be as weak as any other man." So Dal
took new ropes and bound him with them. Then she said
him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" For there w
men lying in wait in the chamber. But he snapped them off
arms like thread.
13 Dalila said to Samson again, "Up to now you have mock
me and told me lies. Tell me how you may be bound." He sa
to her, "If you weave my seven locks of hair into the web a
fasten them with the pin, I shall be as weak as any other mar
14 So while he slept, Dalila wove his seven locks of hair into t
web, and fastened them in with the pin. Then she said, "T
Philistines are upon you, Samson!" Awakening from his slee
he pulled out both the weaver's pin and the web.
15 Then she said to him, "How can you say that you love n
when you do not confide in me? Three times already you ha
mocked me, and not told me the secret of your great strength
16 She importuned him continually and vexed him with her con
17 plaints till he was deathly weary of them. So he took her con
pletely into his confidence and told her, "No razor has touche
my head, for I have been consecrated to God from my mother
womb. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I shall b
18 as weak as any other man." When Dalila saw that he had take
her completely into his confidence, she summoned the lords
the Philistines, saying, "Come up this time, for he has opene
his heart to me." So the lords of the Philistines came an

16, 13: *Seven locks of hair:* Bedouins still plait their hair today.

19 brought up the money with them. She had him sleep on her
lap, and called for a man who shaved off his seven locks of hair.
Then she began to mistreat him, for his strength had left him.
20 When she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!", and
he woke from his sleep, he thought he could make good his
escape as he had done time and again, for he did not realize
21 that the Lord had left him. But the Philistines seized him and
gouged out his eyes. Then they brought him down to Gaza
and bound him with bronze fetters, and he was put to grinding
22 in the prison. But the hair of his head began to grow as soon as
it was shaved off.

23 ***The Death of Samson*** The lords of the Philistines as-
sembled to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon and to
make merry. They said, "Our god has delivered into our power
25 Samson our enemy." | When their spirits were high, they said,
"Call Samson that he may amuse us." So they called Samson
24 from the prison, and he played the buffoon before them. When
the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, "Our
god has delivered into our power our enemy, the ravager of
our land, the one who has multiplied our slain."
26 Then they stationed him between the columns. | Samson
said to the attendant who was holding his hand, "Put me where
I may touch the columns that support the temple and may rest
27 against them." The temple was full of men and women: all
the lords of the Philistines were there, and from the roof about
three thousand men and women looked on as Samson provided
28 amusement. Samson cried out to the Lord and said, "O Lord
God, remember me! Strengthen me, O God, this last time that
for my two eyes I may avenge myself once and for all on the
29 Philistines." Samson grasped the two middle columns on which
the temple rested and braced himself against them, one at his
30 right hand, the other at his left. And Samson said, "Let me die
with the Philistines!" He pushed hard, and the temple fell upon
the lords and all the people who were in it. Those he killed at
his death were more than those he had killed during his lifetime.
31 All his family and kinsmen went down and bore him up for
burial in the grave of his father Manoe between Saraa and
Esthaol. He had judged Israel for twenty years.

16, 21: Samson toyed with danger once too often and perished.

16, 28: In a last humble and confident prayer, Samson ascribes his strength to God. This scene in Saint-Saëns' opera, *Samson and Dalilah*, is perhaps the most stirring commentary on this prayer.

III. THE TRIBES OF DAN AND BENJAMIN IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

17

1 ***Micha and the Levite*** There was a man in the mounta
2 region of Ephraim whose name was Micha. He said to h
mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver over which yo
pronounced a curse in my hearing when they were taken fro
you, are in my possession. It was I who took them; so now
3 will restore them to you." When he restored the eleven hundr
shekels of silver to his mother, she took two hundred of the
and gave them to the silversmith, who made of them a carve
idol overlaid with silver. Then his mother said, "May the Lo
4 bless my son! I have consecrated the silver to the Lord as m
gift in favor of my son, by making a carved idol overlaid wit
5 silver." It remained in the house of Micha. Thus the layma
Micha had a sanctuary. He also made an ephod and household
idols, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his pries
6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what h
thought best.

7 There was a young Levite who had resided within the trib
8 of Juda at Bethlehem of Juda. From that city he set out to fin
another place of residence. On his journey he came to the hous
9 of Micha in the mountain region of Ephraim. Micha said to him
"Where do you come from?" He answered him, "I am a Levit
from Bethlehem in Juda, and am on my way to find some othe
10 place of residence." | "Stay with me," Micha said to him, "B
father and priest to me, and I will give you ten silver shekels
11 year, a set of garments, and your food." So the young Levit
decided to stay with the man, to whom he became as one of hi
12 own sons. Micha consecrated the young Levite, who becam
13 his priest, remaining in his house. Therefore Micha said, "Now

17—21: These chapters are appendices. They do not speak of Judges
The ancient account in chs. 17—18 reveals the anarchic or disorderly condition of the times (17, 5-6). The purpose of the narrative may well be to explain the origin of the shrine at Dan (18, 30-31). According to Semitic peoples, a shrine or sanctuary must be established by a theophany (a manifestation of the divinity, as in the stories of the patriarchs in Genesis) or some fact which can be interpreted as a theophany. But here we see one man, Micha, and a tribe explicitly making their own shrine.

17, 3-4: This was the mother's way of attempting to neutralize her curse in v. 2.

17, 5: See 8, 27 n. Micha used the ancient custom, as father of the family, to consecrate his son a priest.

I know that the Lord will prosper me, since the Levite has become my priest."

18

1 ***Migration of the Danites*** At that time there was no king in Israel. Moreover the tribe of Danites were in search of a district to dwell in, for up to that time they had received no heritage among the tribes of Israel.

So the Danites sent from their clan a detail of five valiant men of Saraa and Esthaol, to reconnoiter the land and scout it. With their instructions to go and scout the land, they traveled as far as the house of Micha in the mountain region of Ephra-
3 im, where they passed the night. Near the house of Micha, they recognized the voice of the young Levite and turned in that direction. "Who brought you here and what are you doing here?"
4 they asked him. "What is your interest here?" | "This is how Micha treats me," he replied to them. "He pays me a salary and
5 I am his priest." They said to him, "Consult God, that we may know whether the undertaking we are engaged in will succeed."
6 The priest said to them, "Go and prosper: the Lord is favorable to the undertaking you are engaged in."

7 So the five men went on and came to Lais. They saw that the people dwelling there lived securely after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and trusting, with no lack of any natural resources. They were distant from the Sidonians and had no
8 contact with other people. When the five returned to their kins-
9 men in Saraa and Esthaol and were asked for a report, | they replied, "Come, let us attack them, for we have seen the land and it is very good. Are you going to hesitate? Do not be sloth-
10 ful about beginning your expedition to possess the land. Those against whom you go are a trusting people, and the land is ample. God has indeed given it into your power: a place where no natural resource is lacking."

11 So six hundred men of the clan of the Danites, fully armed with weapons of war, set out from where they were in Saraa
12 and Esthaol, | and encamped in Juda, up near Cariath-jarim; hence to this day the place, which lies west of Cariath-jarim, is called Mahane-Dan.

13 From there they went on to the mountain region of Ephraim
14 and came to the house of Micha. The five men who had gone to reconnoiter the land of Lais said to their kinsmen, "Do you

18, 1: The migration of the Danites seems to take place at the beginning of the era of the Judges. In 1, 34, the Amorrites confined the tribe of Dan to the mountains, which account squares with Jos 19, 47-48.

know that in these houses there are an ephod, household ido
and a carved idol overlaid with silver? Now decide what yc
15 must do!" | So turning in that direction, they went to the hou
of the young Levite at the home of Micha and greeted hir
16 The six hundred men girt with weapons of war, who we
Danites, stood by the entrance of the gate, and the priest stoc
17 there also. Meanwhile the five men who had gone to reco
18 noiter the land went up and entered the house of Micha. Whe
they had gone in and taken the ephod, the household idol
and the carved idol overlaid with silver, the priest said to them
19 "What are you doing?" They said to him, "Be still: put you
hand over your mouth. Come with us and be our father an
priest. Is it better for you to be priest for the family of on
20 man or to be priest for a tribe and a clan in Israel?" The pries
agreeing, took the ephod, household idols, and carved idol an
21 went off in the midst of the band. As they turned to depar
they placed their little ones, their livestock, and their goods a
the head of the column.

22 The Danites had already gone some distance, when those i
the houses near that of Micha took up arms and overtook them
23 They called to the Danites, who turned about and said t
Micha, "What do you want, that you have taken up arms?"
24 "You have taken my god, which I made, and have gone off witl
my priest as well," he answered. "What is left for me? How
25 then, can you ask me what I want?" The Danites said to him
"Let us hear no further sound from you, lest fierce men fal
26 upon you and you and your family lose your lives." The Danite
then went on their way, and Micha, seeing that they were
stronger than he, returned home.

27 Having taken what Micha had made, and the priest he had
had, they attacked Lais, a quiet and trusting people; they put
28 them to the sword and destroyed their city by fire. No one came
to their aid, since the city was far from Sidon and they had no
contact with other people. The Danites then rebuilt the city,
which was in the valley that belongs to Beth-Rohob, and lived
29 there. They named it Dan after their ancestor Dan, son of Is-
30 rael. However, the name of the city was formerly Lais. The
Danites set up the carved idol for themselves, and Jonathan,
son of Gersam, son of Moses, and his descendants were priests
for the tribe of the Danites until the time of the captivity of the
31 land. They maintained the carved idol Micha had made as
long as the house of God was in Silo.

19

1 ***The Levite from Ephraim*** At that time, when there was

no king in Israel, there was a Levite residing in remote parts of
the mountain region of Ephraim who had taken for him-
1 self a concubine from Bethlehem of Juda. His concubine was
unfaithful to him and left him for her father's house in Bethle-
2 hem of Juda, where she stayed for some four months. Her hus-
band then set out with his servant and a pair of asses, and went
after her to forgive her and take her back. She brought him into
her father's house, and on seeing him, the girl's father joyfully
3 made him welcome. He was detained by the girl's father, and
so he spent three days with this father-in-law of his, eating and
4 drinking and passing the night there. On the fourth day they
rose early in the morning and he prepared to go. But the girl's
father said to his son-in-law, "Fortify yourself with a little
5 food; you can go later on." So they stayed and the two men ate
and drank together. Then the girl's father said to the husband,
"Why not decide to spend the night here and enjoy yourself?"
6 The man still made a move to go, but when his father-in-law
7 pressed him he went back and spent the night there.
8 On the fifth morning he rose early to depart, but the girl's
father said, "Fortify yourself and tarry until the afternoon."
9 When he and his father-in-law had eaten, | and the husband
was ready to go with his concubine and servant, the girl's father
said to him, "It is already growing dusk. Stay for the night.
See, the day is coming to an end. Spend the night here and en-
joy yourself. Early tomorrow you can start your journey home."
10 The man, however, refused to stay another night; he and his
concubine set out with a pair of saddled asses, and traveled till
11 they came opposite Jebus which is Jerusalem. Since they were
near Jebus with the day far gone, the servant said to his mas-
ter, "Come, let us turn off to this city of the Jebûsites and spend
12 the night in it." But his master said to him, "We will not turn
off to a city of foreigners, who are not Israelites, but will go on to
13 Gabaa. Come," he said to his servant, "let us make for some
14 other place, either Gabaa or Rama, to spend the night." So they
continued on their way till the sun set on them when they were
abreast of Gabaa of Benjamin.
15 There they turned off to enter Gabaa for the night. The man

19—21: A minute scholarly study of these three chapters, composed from several sources, reveals that the outrage at Gabaa (19, 22-30) occurred when the Israelites first entered the Promised Land. However, the strong unity of Israel shown here dates from times after Josue and the Judges.

19, 3-9: The prolonged hospitality and politeness of the host almost takes on the aura of a ritual that exists even today among the Bedouins and the Syrians.

waited in the public square of the city he had entered, but
16 one offered them the shelter of his home for the night. In
evening, however, an old man came from his work in the fie
he was from the mountain region of Ephraim, though he liv
17 among the Benjaminite townspeople of Gabaa. When he
ticed the traveler in the public square of the city, the old m
18 asked where he was going, and whence he had come. He said
him, "We are traveling from Bethlehem of Juda far up into
mountain region of Ephraim, where I belong. I have been
Bethlehem of Juda and am now going back home; but no o
19 has offered us the shelter of his house. We have straw and fo
der for our asses, and bread and wine for the woman and m
20 self and for our servant; there is nothing else we need." "Y
are welcome," the old man said to him, "but let me provi
for all your needs, and do not spend the night in the pub
21 square." So he led them to his house and provided fodder
the asses. Then they washed their feet, and ate and dran

22 ***The Outrage at Gabaa*** While they were enjoying thei
selves, the men of the city, who were corrupt, surrounded t
house and beat on the door. They said to the old man who
house it was, "Bring out your guest, that we may abuse him
23 The owner of the house went out to them and said, "No, n
brothers; do not be so wicked. Since this man is my guest, c
24 not commit this crime. Rather let me bring out my maid
daughter or his concubine. Ravish them, or do whatever yo
want with them; but against the man you must not commit th
25 wanton crime." When the men would not listen to his hos
the husband seized his concubine and thrust her outside to then
They had relations with her and abused her all night until th
26 following dawn, when they let her go. Then at daybreak th
woman came and collapsed at the entrance of the house i
which her hubsand was a guest, where she lay until the morn
27 ing. When her husband rose that day and opened the door o
the house to start out again on his journey, there lay the wom
an, his concubine, at the entrance of the house with her hand
28 on the threshold. He said to her, "Come, let us go"; but ther
was no answer. So the man placed her on an ass and started ou
again for home.

19, 16-28: The whole story is reminiscent of Lot's story in Gn 19

19, 17: *Where he was going and whence he had come:* these are stil
the questions which nomads ask travelers; they are never asked for thei
names.

19, 24: At that time hospitality was superior to purity. See Gn 19
7-8 n.

29 On reaching home, he took a knife to the body of his concubine, cut her into twelve pieces and sent them throughout the
30 territory of Israel. Everyone who saw this said, "Nothing like this has been done or seen from the day the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt to this day. Take note of it, and state what you propose to do."

20

1 ***Assembly of Israelites*** So all the Israelites came out as one man: from Dan to Bersabee, and from the land of Galaad,
2 the community was gathered to the Lord at Maspha. The leaders of all the people and all the tribesmen of Israel, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who were swordsmen, presented
3 themselves in the assembly of the people of God. Meanwhile, the Benjaminites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Maspha. The Israelites asked to be told how the crime had
4 taken place, | and the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, testified: "My concubine and I went into Gabaa of
5 Benjamin for the night. But the citizens of Gabaa rose up against me by night and surrounded the house in which I was. Me they attempted to kill, and my concubine they abused so
6 that she died. So I took my concubine and cut her up and sent her through every part of the territory of Israel, because of the
7 monstrous crime they had committed in Israel. Now that you
8 are all here, O Israelites, state what you propose to do." All the people rose as one man to say, "None of us is to leave for
9 his tent or return to his home. Now as for Gabaa, this is what
10 we will do: We will proceed against it by lot, | taking from all the tribes of Israel ten men for every hundred, a hundred for every thousand, a thousand for every ten thousand, and procuring supplies for the soldiers who will go to deal fully and suitably with Gabaa of Benjamin for the crime it committed in Israel."

11 When, therefore, all the men of Israel without exception were
12 leagued together against the city, the tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin to say, "What is this evil
13 which has occurred among you? | Now give up these corrupt men of Gabaa, that we may put them to death and thus purge the evil from Israel." But the Benjaminites refused to accede

20, 1: *From Dan to Bersabee:* this stereotyped expression designates the extreme limits of Israel comparable to: "from Maine to Florida" or "from New York to San Francisco."

20, 13: *The Benjaminites refused:* even today the sheiks of Jordan and Saudi Arabia cannot legally surrender a criminal of their clan to be put to death.

14 to the demand of their brothers, the Israelites. Instead, tl
Benjaminites assembled from their other cities to Gabaa, to c
15 battle with the Israelites. The number of the Benjamini
swordsmen from the other cities on that occasion was twent
16 six thousand, in addition to the inhabitants of Gabaa. Include
in this total were seven hundred picked men who were lef
handed, every one of them able to sling a stone at a hair witl
17 out missing. Meanwhile the other Israelites who, without Ben
jamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen ready fo
18 battle, | moved on to Bethel and consulted God. When the I
raelites asked who should go first in the attack on the Ben
19 jaminites, the Lord said, "Juda shall go first." | The next da
the Israelites advanced on Gabaa with their forces.

20 ***War with Benjamin*** On the day the Israelites drew up i
21 battle array at Gabaa for the combat with Benjamin, the Ben
jaminites came out of the city and felled twenty-two thousan
22 men of Israel. Then the Israelites went up and wept before th
Lord until evening. "Shall I again engage my brother Benjami
in battle?" they asked the Lord; and the Lord answered that the
23 should. But though the Israelite soldiers took courage and agai
drew up for combat in the same place as on the previous day
24.25 when they met the Benjaminites for the second time, once
again the Benjaminites who came out of Gabaa against them
26 felled eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them swordsmen. S
the entire Israelite army went up to Bethel, where they wep
and remained fasting before the Lord until evening of that day
besides offering holocausts and peace offerings before the Lord
27 When the Israelites consulted the Lord (for the Ark of the
28 Covenant of God was there in those days, | and Phinees, son
of Eleazar, son of Aaron, was ministering to him in those days)
and asked, "Shall I go out again to battle with Benjamin, my
brother, or shall I desist?" the Lord said, "Attack! for tomor-
29 row I will deliver him into your power." So Israel set men in
ambush around Gabaa.
30 The Israelites went up against the Benjaminites for the third
time and formed their line of battle at Gabaa as on other oc-
31 casions. The Benjaminites went out to meet them, and in the
beginning they killed off about thirty of the Israelite soldiers
32 in the open field, just as on the other occasions. Therefore the
Benjaminites thought, "We are defeating them as before"; not
realizing that disaster was about to overtake them. The Israel-

20, 14-28: The same tactics were used at Hai. See Jos 8, 1-25.

ites, however, had planned the flight so as to draw them away from the city onto the highways. They were drawn away from the city onto the highways, of which the one led to Bethel, the
35 other to Gabaon. And then all the men of Israel rose from their places. They re-formed their ranks at Baal-Thamar, and the
34 Israelites in ambush rushed from their place west of Gabaa, ten thousand picked men from all Israel, and advanced against the
35 city itself. In a fierce battle, | the Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel; and on that day the Israelites killed twenty-five thousand one hundred men of Benjamin, all of them swordsmen.
36 To the Benjaminites it had looked as though the enemy were defeated, for the men of Israel gave ground to Benjamin, trust-
37 ing in the ambush they had set at Gabaa. But then the men in ambush made a sudden dash into Gabaa, overran it, and put
38 the whole city to the sword. Now, the other Israelites had agreed with the men in ambush on a smoke signal they were to
39 send up from the city. And though the men of Benjamin had begun by killing off some thirty of the men of Israel, under the impression that they were defeating them as surely as in the
40 earlier fighting, the Israelites wheeled about to resist | as the smoke of the signal column began to rise up from the city. It was when Benjamin looked back and saw the whole city in
41 flames against the sky | that the men of Israel wheeled about. Therefore the men of Benjamin were thrown into confusion,
42 for they realized the disaster that had overtaken them. They retreated before the men of Israel in the direction of the desert, with the fight being pressed against them. In their very midst, meanwhile, those who had been in the city were spreading
43 destruction. The men of Benjamin had been surrounded, and
44 were now pursued to a point east of Geba, while eighteen thou-
45 sand of them fell, warriors to a man. The rest turned and fled through the desert to the rock Rimmon. But on the highways the Israelites picked off five thousand men among them, and chasing them up to Gadaam, killed another two thousand of
46 them there. Those of Benjamin who fell on that day were in
47 all twenty-five thousand swordsmen, warriors to a man. But six hundred others who turned and fled through the desert reached the rock Rimmon, where they remained for four months.
48 The men of Israel withdrew through the territory of the Benjaminites, putting to the sword the inhabitants of the cities, the livestock, and all they chanced upon. Moreover they destroyed by fire all the cities they came upon.

21

1 ***Wives for the Survivors*** Now the men of Israel had swc
at Maspha that none of them would give his daughter in m
2 riage to anyone from Benjamin. So the people went to Bet
and remained there before God until evening, raising th
3 voices in bitter lament. They said, "Lord, God of Israel, w
has it come to pass in Israel that today one tribe of Israel shou
4 be lacking?" Early the next day the people built an altar the
5 and offered holocausts and peace offerings. Then the Israelit
asked, "Are there any among all the tribes of Israel who d
not come up to the Lord for the assembly?" For they had tak
a solemn oath that anyone who did not go up to the Lord
Maspha should be put to death without fail.
6 The Israelites were disconsolate over their brother Be
jamin and said, "Today one of the tribes of Israel has been c
7 off. What can we do about wives for the survivors, since v
have sworn by the Lord not to give them any of our daughte
8 in marriage?" And when they asked whether anyone among tl
tribes of Israel had not come up to the Lord in Maspha, the
found that none of the men of Jabes-Galaad had come to tl
9 encampment for the assembly. A roll call of the army estal
lished that none of the inhabitants of that city were presen
10 The community, therefore, sent twelve thousand warriors wit
orders to go to Jabes-Galaad and put those who lived there t
11 the sword, including the women and children. They were tol
to include under the ban all males and every woman who wa
12 not still a virgin. Finding among the inhabitants of Jabes-Galaa
four hundred young virgins, who had had no relations wit
men, they brought them to the camp at Silo in the land c
13 Chanaan. Then the whole community sent a message to th
14 Benjaminites at the rock Rimmon, offering them peace. Whe
Benjamin returned at that time, they gave them as wives th
women of Jabes-Galaad whom they had spared; but thes
proved to be not enough for them.
15 The people were still disconsolate over Benjamin becaus
16 the Lord had made a breach among the tribes of Israel. An
the elders of the community said, "What shall we do for wive
for the survivors? For every woman in Benjamin has been pu
17 to death." They said, "Those of Benjamin who survive mus
have heirs, else one of the Israelite tribes will be wiped ou
18 Yet we cannot give them any of our daughters in marriage
because the Israelites have sworn, 'Cursed be he who gives
19 woman to Benjamin!' " Then they thought of the yearly feas

21, 19: *Yearly feast of the Lord:* one of the three national feasts.

of the Lord at Silo, north of Bethel, east of the highway that
20 goes up from Bethel to Sichem, and south of Lebona. And they
instructed the Benjaminites, "Go and lie in wait in the vineyards.
21 When you see the girls of Silo come out to do their dancing,
leave the vineyards and each of you seize one of the girls of Silo
22 for a wife, and go to the land of Benjamin. When their fathers
or their brothers come to complain to us, we shall say to them,
'Release them to us as a kindness, since we did not take a wom-
an apiece in the war. Had you yourselves given them these
wives, you would now be guilty.' "
23 The Benjaminites did this; they carried off a wife for each
of them from their raid on the dancers, and went back to their
24 own territory, where they rebuilt and occupied the cities. Also
at that time the Israelites dispersed; each of them left for his
own heritage in his own clan and tribe.
25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what
he thought best.

21, 21: This is similar to the rape of the Sabines, but there is neither a literary nor a historical connection with Roman literature.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Ruth, still prescribed for reading in the Jewish liturgy Pentecost, was composed in beautiful Hebrew, most probably in th fifth century B.C. Its anonymous author does not seem to have use written accounts. His source seems to have been a story that was handc down orally after having been polished and repolished in the proce of transmission through the centuries.

Scholars dispute about the literary form of the book. Is it a sho story? A parable? An "historical novel?" The best description is, pe haps: an historical novel in miniature. The historical nucleus of th book, namely, Ruth, the Moabitess, being an ancestress of David (4, 17 is generally considered true. It is very difficult to conceive of Jew sensitive to genealogy, acknowledging a member of one of their mo bitter and lasting enemies, the Moabites, as an ancestress of their illu trious king David.

A less valuable historical argument, but worthy of some consider tion, is this: David leaving his parents in the care of the king of Moa (1 Sm 22, 3-4). If we remember the sacredness of old family ties amon Semitic peoples, the Moabite king may have shown this hospitality bc cause David's great-grandmother was Ruth, the Moabitess. Moreove although the book may have been written in the fifth century B.C., som of its historical facts may well go back to the times of the Judges a stated in 1, 1. These two historical arguments, which are stated inde pendently of the authentic background of times, places, customs, psy chology, suffice to warrant the title: historical novel. The novel aspect o the historical novel is evident in the author's artistry. After reading th story, the symbolism of the characters' names appears more strikingl artificial. Ruth means "friend;" Mahalon, "weakness;" Chelion, "con sumption;" Orpha, "she who turns her back;" Booz, "Baal is strong." See 1, 20 n. Besides, notice the sharpness with which the autho sketches several contrasts. The fidelity of Ruth (1, 15-18) in contras with that of Orpha (1, 14); the "goel" who refuses because of self interest (4, 6) heightens the generosity of Booz (4, 9-10). The pity o the townswomen expressed for Noemi (1, 19-21) is contrasted with their compliments for her (4, 14-15). The artistry is also seen in the proper use of detail and suspense. There is no villain, no great crime in the story. The author labors on his heroine more than on any other character. Ruth, though never described as beautiful, radiates with ar attractive, gentle, reserved, idyllic, graceful charm. She is a paragon of selfless devotion beyond the call of duty. Ruth surrenders her family religion, country, and, most important of all, her hopes of a second marriage. She bestows a devotion on her mother-in-law that she could have given to a husband. See 1, 16 n.

Art does not necessarily negate history, but presents it in an appealing manner.

Scholars dispute more the purpose of the author than even his literary

form. Did he write this "historical novel" to depict an edifying ideal tableau of Israelite family virtues? Even if the author did not explicitly intend this picture, it is there in the text. Or did the author write the story as an explicit response to Nehemias' policy against mixed marriages? Or, perhaps, to give David's genealogy (Ruth 4, 17)? Some scholars believe, without denying the last two proposed purposes, that the author wrote to side with the universalistic tendency of Judaism against the particularistic tendency. In other words, his purpose would have been to advocate the cause that Yahweh is interested in all men and not only in Jews.

Main divisions of the Book of Ruth are:

1. Noemi and Her Daughter-in-law, Ruth, Journey from Moab to Bethlehem, 1, 1-22
2. Ruth Gleans in the Fields of Booz and finally Marries Him, 2—4

1

1 ***Noemi in Moab*** Once in the time of the judges there was
a famine in the land; so a man from Bethlehem of Juda de-
parted with his wife and two sons to reside on the plateau of
2 Moab. The man was named Elimelech, his wife Noemi, and
his sons Mahalon and Chelion; they were Ephrathites from
Bethlehem of Juda. Some time after their arrival on the Moab-
3 ite plateau, | Elimelech, the husband of Noemi, died, and she
4 was left with her two sons, | who married Moabite women, one
named Orpha, the other Ruth. When they had lived there about
5 ten years, | both Mahalon and Chelion died also, and the wom-
6 an was left with neither her two sons nor her husband. She
then made ready to go back from the plateau of Moab because
word reached her there that the Lord had visited his people and
given them food.
7 She and her two daughters-in-law left the place where they
had been living. Then as they were on the road back to the land
8 of Juda, Noemi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back,
each of you, to your mother's house! May the Lord be kind to
9 you as you were to the departed and to me! May the Lord
grant each of you a husband and a home in which you will find
rest." She kissed them good-by, but they wept with loud sobs,
0.11 and told her they would return with her to her people. "Go
back, my daughters!" said Noemi. "Why should you come with
me? Have I other sons in my womb who may become your

1, 8: *Mother's house:* each woman lived with her daughters in her own tent. See Gn 31, 33; Jgs 4, 17.

1, 11: *Have I other sons . . . husbands:* Noemi alludes to the levirate marriage law. See Gn 38, 8 n.

12 husbands? Go back, my daughters! Go, for I am too old
marry again. And even if I could offer any hopes, or if tonig
13 I had a husband or had borne sons, would you then wait a
deprive yourselves of husbands until those sons grew up? N
my daughters! my lot is too bitter for you, because the Lord h
14 extended his hand against me." Again they sobbed aloud a
wept; and Orpha kissed her mother-in-law good-by, but Ru
stayed with her.
15 "See now!" she said, "your sister-in-law has gone back to h
16 people and her god. Go back after your sister-in-law!" B
Ruth said, "Do not ask me to abandon or forsake you! f
wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge, you
17 people shall be my people, and your God my God. Wherev
you die I will die, and there be buried. May the Lord do so a
so to me, and more besides, if aught but death separates m
18 from you!" Noemi then ceased to urge her, for she saw she w
determined to go with her.

19 ***The Return to Bethlehem*** So they went on together t
they reached Bethlehem. On their arrival there, the whole cit
was astir over them, and the women asked, "Can this b
20 Noemi?" But she said to them, "Do not call me Noemi. Call m
21 Mara, for the Almighty has made it very bitter for me. I wer
away with an abundance, but the Lord has brought me bac
destitute. Why should you call me Noemi, since the Lord ha
pronounced against me and the Almighty has brought evil upo
22 me?" Thus it was that Noemi returned with the Moabit
daughter-in-law, Ruth, who accompanied her back from th
plateau of Moab. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginnin
of the barley harvest.

2

1 ***The Meeting*** Noemi had a prominent kinsman name

1, 13: *The Lord has extended his hand against me:* what we call
misfortune, the sacred writer directly attributes to God.

1, 15: *Her god:* the ancients believed that each place had its own
sovereign god.

1, 16: The best biblical example of the friendship between two men
is that of David and Jonathan (1 Sm). The best biblical example o
the friendship between two women is that of Ruth and Noemi as this
verse proves, which is the most famous in the book.

1, 17: *May the Lord:* this is the conventional beginning of a solemn
oath which was said to the accompaniment of a symbolic gesture describ
ing an injury, as is evident in the words "do so and so to me."

1, 20: *Do not call me Noemi:* in Hebrew, Noemi means "my sweet
one." *Call me Mara:* "bitter."

2 Booz, of the clan of her husband Elimelech. Ruth the Moabite
said to Noemi, "Let me go and glean ears of grain in the field of
anyone who will allow me that favor." Noemi said to her, "Go,
3 my daughter," | and she went. The field she entered to glean
after the harvesters happened to be the section belonging to
4 Booz of the clan of Elimelech. Booz himself came from Bethle-
hem and said to the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!" and
5 they replied, "The Lord bless you!" Booz asked the overseer of
6 his harvesters, "Whose girl is this?" The overseer of the har-
vesters answered, "She is the Moabite girl who returned from
7 the plateau of Moab with Noemi. She asked leave to gather
the gleanings into sheaves after the harvesters; and ever since
she came this morning she has remained here until now, with
scarcely a moment's rest."
8 Booz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter! Do not go to glean
in anyone else's field; you are not to leave here. Stay here with
9 my women servants. Watch to see which field is to be harvested,
and follow them; I have commanded the young men to do you
no harm. When you are thirsty, you may go and drink from the
10 vessels the young men have filled." Casting herself prostrate
upon the ground, she said to him, "Why should I, a foreigner,
11 be favored with your notice?" Booz answered her: "I have had
a complete account of what you have done for your mother-in-
law after your husband's death; you have left your father and
your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a
12 people whom you did not know previously. May the Lord re-
ward what you have done! May you receive a full reward from
the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come
13 for refuge." She said, "May I prove worthy of your kindness,
my lord: you have comforted me, your servant, with your con-
14 soling words; would indeed that I were a servant of yours!" At
mealtime Booz said to her, "Come here and have some food;
dip your bread in the sauce." Then as she sat near the reapers,
he handed her some roasted grain and she ate her fill and had
15 some left over. She rose to glean, and Booz instructed his serv-
ants to let her glean among the sheaves themselves without
16 scolding her, and even to let drop some handfuls and leave them
for her to glean without being rebuked.

2, 2: According to the Mosaic Law, poor people could glean in fields already harvested. See Dt 24, 19-22. Arabs still observe this custom but it depends entirely on the good will of the proprietors.

2, 4: *The Lord be with you:* the origin of *Dominus Vobiscum*, frequently found in the Roman liturgy.

2, 16: *Let drop some handfuls:* the oriental reaper does not cut the stalks close to the ground. With one hand he clutches a group of stalks

17 She gleaned in the field until evening, and when she beat o
what she had gleaned it came to about an epha of barl
18 which she took into the city and showed to her mother-in-la
Next she brought out and gave her what she had left over fr
19 lunch. So her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you gle
today? Where did you go to work? May he who took notice
you be blessed!" Then she told her mother-in-law with wh
she had worked. "The man at whose place I worked today
20 named Booz," she said. "May he be blessed by the Lord, who
ever merciful to the living and to the dead," Noemi exclaim
to her daughter-in-law; and she continued, "He is a relative
21 ours, one of our next of kin." "He even told me," added Ru
the Moabite, "that I should stay with his servants until th
22 complete his entire harvest." "You would do well, my dear
Noemi rejoined, "to go out with his servants; for in someo
23 else's field you might be insulted." So she stayed gleaning wi
the servants of Booz until the end of the barley and whe
harvests.

3

Ruth again Presents Herself When she was back with h
1 mother-in-law, | Noemi said to her, "My daughter, I must see
2 a home for you that will please you. Now is not Booz, wit
whose servants you were, a relative of ours? This evening h
3 will be winnowing barley at the threshing floor. So bathe an
anoint yourself; then put on your best attire and go down t
the threshing floor. Do not make yourself known to the ma
4 before he has finished eating and drinking. But when he lie
down, take note of the place where he does so. Then go, un
cover a place at his feet, and lie down. He will tell you what t
5.6 do." | "I will do whatever you advise," Ruth replied. So sh
went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother
in-law had instructed her.
7 Booz ate and drank to his heart's content. Then when he wen
and lay down at the edge of the sheaves, she stole up, uncovere
8 a place at his feet, and lay down. In the middle of the night, how
ever, the man gave a start and turned around to find a woma

close to the heads and cuts them underneath his clutched hand with th
other.

3, 2: *Winnowing barley at the threshing floor:* workers with larg
forks pitch the barley with the straw into the breezy air so that the latte
blows away while the former, being heavier, falls back on the hard floor

3, 3: *Best attire:* a large cloak covering the whole body.

3, 4: After threshing, men sleep near the grain lest it be stolen.

9 lying at his feet. He asked, "Who are you?" And she replied,
"I am your servant Ruth. Spread the corner of your cloak over
10 me, for you are my next of kin." He said, "May the Lord bless
you, my daughter! You have been even more loyal now than
before in not going after the young men, whether poor or rich.
11 So be assured, daughter, I will do for you whatever you say;
12 all my townspeople know you for a worthy woman. Now,
though indeed I am closely related to you, you have another
13 relative still closer. Stay as you are for tonight, and tomorrow,
if he wishes to claim you, good! let him do so. But if he does
not wish to claim you, as the Lord lives, I will claim you myself.
14 Lie there until morning." So she lay at his feet until morning,
but rose before men could recognize one another. Booz said,
"Let it not be known that this woman came to the threshing
15 floor." Then he said to her, "Take off your cloak and hold it
out." When she did so, he poured out six measures of barley,
helped her lift the bundle, and left for the city.
16 Ruth went home to her mother-in-law, who asked, "How
have you fared, my daughter?" So she told her all the man had
17 done for her, | and concluded, "He gave me these six measures
of barley because he did not wish me to come back to my
18 mother-in-law empty-handed!" Noemi then said, "Wait here,
my daughter, until you learn what happens, for the man will
not rest, but will settle the matter today."

4

1 ***Booz Marries Ruth*** Booz went and took a seat at the gate;
and when he saw the closer relative of whom he had spoken
come along, he called to him by name, "Come and sit beside
2 me!" And he did so. | Then Booz picked out ten of the elders
of the city and asked them to sit nearby. When they had done
3 this, | he said to the near relative: "Noemi, who has come
back from the Moabite plateau, is putting up for sale the piece
4 of land that belonged to our kinsman Elimelech. So I thought
I would inform you, bidding you before those here present, in-
cluding the elders of my people, to put in your claim for it if

3, 9: *Your servant:* a courteous hyperbolic oriental title. *Spread the corner of your cloak over me:* by requesting Booz to execute this symbolic gesture, Ruth is asking Booz to marry her because he is her *"goel"* (see 4, 4 n). This gesture is still found among the Bedouins.

4, 1: *At the gate:* of the entrance to the city where all affairs are administered.

4, 2: *Ten of the elders:* they are equivalent to a modern magistrate.

4, 4: *Next of kin:* this is a translation of the Hebrew word "goel." Two of the duties of the goel which concern us here are: he is obliged to buy back the hereditary property of his kinsman, who is himself

you wish to acquire it as next of kin. But if you do not wish t
claim it, tell me so, that I may be guided accordingly, for n
one has a prior claim to yours, and mine is next." He answere
"I will put in my claim."

5 Booz continued, "Once you acquire the field from Noemi, yo
must take also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the late hei
6 and raise up a family for the departed on his estate." The nea
relative replied, "I cannot exercise my claim lest I depreciate m
own estate. Put in a claim yourself in my stead, for I cannot ex
7 ercise my claim." Now it used to be the custom in Israel that, t
make binding a contract of redemption or exchange, one part
would take off his sandal and give it to the other. This was th
8 form of attestation in Israel. So the near relative, in saying t
9 Booz, "Acquire it for yourself," drew off his sandal. Booz the
said to the elders and to all the people, "You are witnesses toda
that I have acquired from Noemi all the holdings of Elimelech
10 Chelion and Mahalon. I also take Ruth the Moabite, the widow
of Mahalon, as my wife, in order to raise up a family for he
late husband on his estate, so that the name of the departe
may not perish among his kinsmen and fellow citizens. Do you
11 witness this today?" | All those at the gate, including the eld
ers, said, "We do so. May the Lord make this wife come into
your house like Rachel and Lia, who between them built up the
house of Israel. May you do well in Ephratha and win fame in
12 Bethlehem. With the offspring the Lord will give you from this
girl, may your house become like the house of Phares, whom
Thamar bore to Juda."

13 Booz took Ruth. When they came together as man and wife,
14 the Lord enabled her to conceive and she bore a son. Then the
woman said to Noemi, "Blessed is the Lord who has not failed
to provide you today with an heir! May he become famous in
15 Israel! He will be your comfort and the support of your old

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unable to do so (Lv 25, 25). The goel must also marry his brother's widow (according to Levirate law. See Gn 38, 8 n.). If it is the Levirate marriage which comes into question here, then it is only in the Book of Ruth that not only a brother but the next closest relative must marry the widow, in this story, Ruth. The goel in the story of Ruth must buy back the land of Elimelech for the sake of Noemi (4, 3-4) and marry Ruth (3, 12-13; 4, 5), so that the son can inherit Elimelech's land (4, 5b and 4, 10).

4, 7-8: For the ancients, to put one's foot on a field was a symbolic act of taking possession of that field. Similarly, in taking off the sandal, a seller divests himself of his right and, in giving the sandal, he hands over his right. The sandal custom here is different from the one in Dt 25, 9-10.

4, 11-12: For the Israelites this was the happiest blessing a woman could desire.

age, for his mother is the daughter-in-law who loves you. She
16 is worth more to you than seven sons!" Noemi took the child,
17 placed him on her lap, and became his nurse. And the neighbor
women gave him his name, at the news that a grandson had
been born to Noemi. They called him Obed. He was the father
of Jesse, the father of David.

18 These are the descendants of Phares: Phares was the father
19 of Hesron, | Hesron was the father of Ram, Ram was the
20 father of Amminadab, | Amminadab was the father of Nahas-
21 son, Nahasson was the father of Salmon, | Salmon was the
22 father of Booz, Booz was the father of Obed, | Obed was the
father of Jesse, and Jesse became the father of David.

4, 18-22: An author different from the author of the rest of the Book of Ruth added this genealogy which is amplified in 1 Par 2, 5-15, and altered in Mt 1, 3-5.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

Otherwise called The First Book of Kings

INTRODUCTION

The two books of Samuel continue the history of Israel from the Book of Judges. They describe Samuel's founding of the kingdom with Saul as the first king, and the growth of the kingdom under David.

The traditional English Catholic Bibles use the Vulgate's term, namely "The Four Books of Kings" for these and the two following books. The present Hebrew Bible, followed by Protestant and modern Catholic scholars, speaks of 1, 2 Samuel, 1, 2 Kings. For the sake of clarity, we shall follow the system of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, namely: 1, 2 Sm, 3, 4 Kgs.

The title "Samuel" means only that he is one of the protagonists, as "Josue" and "Ruth" are in their books. The names do not denote authorship, for the authors must have been many because the sources used for the composition of the text must have been many. The reader will notice sudden changes, different viewpoints and styles, and especially a series of repetitious accounts about, e.g., the origin of the monarchy, David's first introduction to Saul.

Various snatches of historical writings were combined in one book about 700 B.C. Then a Deuteronomic editor gave 1, 2 Sm their final form in the sixth century B.C. The Deuteronomic imprint is that God rewards you if you obey His law, and punishes you if you do not (1 Sm 7, 3-14). This idea is not as apparent in 1, 2 Sm as in Josue, Judges, and in 3, 4 Kgs. (See Introduction to the Book of Josue for "Deuteronomic history.") There is another difference. The history in 1, 2 Sm and 3, 4 Kgs is more factual than that of Josue and Judges, although it is still far from modern historical writing.

The essential religious value of 1, 2 Sm is that we are shown the significance which the origin of the monarchy had in the history of salvation. David began a dynasty of kings that was directed ultimately to Christ Himself. Our Lord used David in the Gospels to reveal Himself and to surpass David. This alone would suffice to stamp 1, 2 Sm with permanent value for Christians.

Main divisions of the two books of Samuel are:

Heli, Samuel, and the Philistine War, 1 Sm 1—7

The Relations between Samuel and Saul. The Institution of the Monarchy, 1 Sm 8—15

Saul and David. Saul First Befriends David and Later Persecutes Him, 1 Sm 16—31

Saul's Death. David Becomes King of Juda, 2 Sm 1—4

David Becomes King of the United Kingdom of Juda and Israel besides Neighboring Territories, 2 Sm 5—20

Appendices to the Life of David, 2 Sm 21—24

1 1 *Anna's Vow* There was a man of Ramathaim-sophim, of
mount Ephraim, and his name was Elcana, the son of Jero-
ham, the son of Eliu, the son of Thohu, the son of Suph, an
2 Ephraimite. | And he had two wives, the name of one was
Anna, and the name of the other Phenenna. Phenenna had
3 children: but Anna had no children. | And this man went up
out of his city upon the appointed days, to adore and to offer
sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Silo. And the two sons of Heli,
4 Ophni and Phinees, were there priests of the Lord. | Now the
day came, and Elcana offered sacrifice, and gave to Phenenna
5 his wife, and to all her sons and daughters, portions. | But
to Anna he gave one portion with sorrow, because he loved
6 Anna. And the Lord had shut up her womb. | Her rival also
afflicted her, and troubled her exceedingly, insomuch that she
7 upbraided her, that the Lord had shut up her womb. | And
thus she did every year, when the time returned that they went
up to the temple of the Lord; and thus she provoked her. But
8 Anna wept, and did not eat. | Then Elcana her husband said
to her: Anna, why do you weep? And why do you not eat?
And why do you afflict your heart? Am not I better to you than
ten children?
9 So Anna arose after she had eaten and drunk in Silo. And,
Heli the priest sitting upon a stool before the door of the
10 temple of the Lord, | as Anna had her heart full of grief, she
11 prayed to the Lord, shedding many tears, | and she made a vow,
saying: O Lord of hosts, if you will look down on the affliction
of your servant, and will be mindful of me, and not forget your
handmaid, and will give to your servant a man child: I will give
him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come
12 upon his head. | And it came to pass, as she multiplied prayers
13 before the Lord, that Heli observed her mouth. | Now Anna
spoke in her heart, and only her lips moved: but her voice was
14 not heard at all. Heli therefore thought her to be drunk, | and
said to her: How long will you be drunk? Digest a little the

1—31: In this book as also in the other books from the Douay translation the names of people and places are given as used therein.

1, 3: *The Lord of hosts:* it is the first mention of the title in the Bible. It may here mean the Lord of Israel's armies. *Silo:* this was the most famous of several other shrines before it housed the Ark of the Covenant (or "temple of the Lord" in v. 9). The law of worshiping at one sanctuary was too difficult to observe because of the dispersion of the tribes in a yet unconquered land.

1, 11: *Look down on the affliction of your servant:* words of Mary in the Magnificat. *No razor shall come upon his head:* the sign of dedication to God according to the Nazirite vows as in Nm 6, 1-21.

15 wine, of which you have taken too much. | Anna answering said: Not so, my lord: for I am an exceeding unhappy woman and have drunk neither wine nor any strong drink, but I have 16 poured out my soul before the Lord. | Count not your handmaid for one of the daughters of Belial: for out of the abun- 17 dance of my sorrow and grief have I spoken till now. | The Heli said to her: Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant your 18 your petition, which you have asked of him. | And she said: Would to God your handmaid may find grace in your eyes. So the woman went on her way, and ate, and her countenance was no more changed.

19 And they rose in the morning, and worshiped before the Lord: and they returned, and came into their house at Ramatha. And Elcana knew Anna his wife: and the Lord remembered her.

20 ***The Birth of Samuel*** And it came to pass when the time was come about, Anna conceived and bore a son, and called his 21 name Samuel: because she had asked him of the Lord. | And Elcana her husband went up, and all his house, to offer to the 22 Lord the solemn sacrifice, and his vow. | But Anna went not up. For she said to her husband: I will not go till the child be weaned, and till I may carry him, that he may appear before 23 the Lord, and may abide always there. | And Elcana her husband said to her: Do what seems good to you and stay till you wean him; and I pray that the Lord may fulfill his word. So the woman stayed at home, and gave her son suck, till she weaned him.

24 And after she had weaned him, she carried him with her, with three calves, and three bushels of flour, and a bottle of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord in Silo. Now 25 the child was as yet very young. | And they immolated a calf, 26 and offered the child to Heli. | And Anna said: I beseech you, my lord, as your soul lives, my lord: I am that woman who stood 27 before you here praying to the Lord. | For this child did I pray, and the Lord has granted me my petition, which I asked of him. | 28 Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord. All the days of his life he shall be lent to the Lord. And they adored the Lord there. And Anna prayed, and said:

1, 16: *The daughters of Belial:* an expression for perverted daughters of the devil.

1, 19: *Knew Anna his wife:* a Hebraism, meaning to know her sexually.

1, 23: *Till you wean him:* for Easterners this means from two to three years.

2

1 ***The Canticle of Anna*** My heart has rejoiced in the Lord,
and my horn is exalted in my God: my mouth is enlarged over
my enemies, because I have joyed in your salvation.
2 There is none holy as the Lord is: for there is no other beside
you, and there is none strong like our God.
3 Do not multiply to speak lofty things, boasting: let old mat-
ters depart from your mouth. For the Lord is a God of all
knowledge, and to him are thoughts prepared.
4 The bow of the mighty is overcome: and the weak are girt
with strength.
5 They that were full before have hired out themselves for
bread: and the hungry are filled; so that the barren has borne
many: and she that had many children is weakened.
6 The Lord kills and makes alive: he brings down to hell and
brings back again.
7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich: he humbles and he
exalts.
8 He raises up the needy from the dust, and lifts up the poor
from the dunghill: that he may sit with princes, and hold the
throne of glory. For the poles of the earth are the Lord's, and
upon them he has set the world.
9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be si-
lent in darkness: because no man shall prevail by his own
strength.
10 The adversaries of the Lord shall fear him: and upon them
shall he thunder in the heavens. The Lord shall judge the ends
of the earth; and he shall give empire to his king, and shall
exalt the horn of his Christ.

2, 1-10: Anna's hymn of thanksgiving has been called "the Magnificat of the Old Testament" because of its influence on Mary's Magnificat in Lk 1, 46-55. The anonymous poet who put this canticle on Anna's lips made the praise of Yahweh, not of Anna, permeate the song.

2, 1: *My horn:* my strength. The horn is a symbol of strength, taken from bulls throwing their heads proudly into the air. *My mouth . . . enemies:* I freely gloat over my enemies.

2, 3: *Let old . . . mouth:* cease your boasting. *To him . . . prepared:* the Lord evaluates deeds correctly.

2, 6: *Hell:* the Hebrew word at that time did not mean hell in the sense of a place for the eternally damned, but the abode for *all* the dead both good and bad.

2, 9: *He . . . saints:* he will protect the just ones. *Be silent:* perish.

2, 10: *King . . . Christ:* the correct translation is "the anointed" which is paralleled with "king." This is the first use of Messia ("anointed") in the Bible. Since this hymn was composed at a later time during the monarchy, the king and the anointed refer to the ideal king succeeding David.

11 And Elcana went to Ramatha, to his house: but the child mi
istered in the sight of the Lord before the face of Heli the prie

12 ***Heli's Sons*** Now the sons of Heli were children of Beli
13 not knowing the Lord, | nor the office of the priests to the pe
ple: but whosoever had offered a sacrifice, the servant of t
priest came, while the flesh was in boiling, with a fleshhook
14 three teeth in his hand, | and thrust it into the kettle, or in
the caldron, or into the pot, or into the pan: and all that t
fleshhook brought up, the priest took to himself. Thus did th
15 to all Israel that came to Silo. | Also before they burned t
fat, the servant of the priest came, and said to the man that sa
rificed: Give me flesh to boil for the priest: for I will not take
16 you sodden flesh, but raw. | And he that sacrificed said to hin
Let the fat first be burned today according to the custor
and then take as much as your soul desires. But he answere
and said to him: Not so; but you shall give it me now, or else
17 will take it by force. | Wherefore the sin of the young me
was exceeding great before the Lord: because they withdre
men from the sacrifice of the Lord.

18 But Samuel ministered before the face of the Lord: being
19 child girded with a linen ephod. | And his mother made him
little coat, which she brought to him on the appointed day
when she went up with her husband, to offer the solemn sacr
20 fice. | And Heli blessed Elcana and his wife. And he said t
him: The Lord give you seed of this woman, for the loan yo
21 have lent to the Lord. And they went to their own home. | An
the Lord visited Anna: and she conceived, and bore three son
and two daughters. And the child Samuel became great befor
the Lord.

22 Now Heli was very old, and he heard all that his sons did t
all Israel: and how they lay with the women that waited at th
23 door of the tabernacle, | and he said to them: Why do yo
these kinds of things, which I hear, very wicked things, fron
24 all the people? | Do not so, my sons: for it is no good repor
that I hear, that you make the people of the Lord to transgress
25 | If one man shall sin against another, God may be appeased i
his behalf: but if a man shall sin against the Lord, who shal
pray for him? And they hearkened not to the voice of their fa
26 ther, because the Lord would slay them. | But the child Samue

2, 12: *Not knowing the Lord:* they did not care about God.

2, 22: *And how . . . tabernacle:* a gloss from Ex 38, 8, perhap
put here to heighten Heli's goodness in contrast with his sons'.

2, 25: *Because . . . slay them:* the sons were provoking God t
punish them.

advanced, and grew on, and pleased both the Lord and men.

27 ***The Prophet Rebukes Heli*** And there came a man of God to Heli, and said to him: Thus says the Lord: Did I not plainly appear to your father's house, when they were in Egypt
28 in the house of Pharao? | And I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, and burn incense to me, and to wear the ephod before me: and I gave to your father's house of all the sacrifices of the children of Israel. |
29 Why have you kicked away my victims, and my gifts which I commanded to be offered in the temple: and you have honored rather your sons than me, to eat the firstfruits of every sacrifice
30 of my people Israel? | Wherefore thus says the Lord the God of Israel: I said indeed that your house, and the house of your father should minister in my sight, for ever. But now says the Lord: Far be this from me. But whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify; but they that despise me, shall be despised. |
31 Behold the days come: and I will cut off your arm, and the arm of your father's house, that there shall not be an old man in
32 your house. | And you shall see your rival in the temple, in all the prosperity of Israel, and there shall not be an old man in
33 your house for ever. | However I will not altogether take away a man of you from my altar: but that your eyes may faint and your soul be spent. And a great part of your house shall die
34 when they come to man's estate. And this shall be a sign to you, that shall come upon your two sons, Ophni and Phinees: in one
35 day they shall both of them die. | And I will raise me up a faithful priest, who shall do according to my heart, and my soul; and I will build him a faithful house; and he shall walk
36 all days before my anointed. | And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall remain in your house, shall come that he may be prayed for; and shall offer a piece of silver, and a roll of bread; and shall say: Put me, I beseech you, to somewhat of the priestly office, that I may eat a morsel of bread.

3

1 ***God Calls Samuel Four Times*** Now the child Samuel

2, 27-36: Scholars believe that the rejection of Heli's house is a later insertion here because, among other reasons, it would seem to make 3, 11-14, repetitious.

2, 28: *The ephod:* here it is the instrument used to consult God and not the religious loin cloth vestment which is the meaning of ephod in v. 18 above.

2, 29: *You have honored your sons rather than me:* insofar as you were too lenient with them.

3, 1-21: Samuel receives his vocation to be a prophet.

ministered to the Lord before Heli. And the word of the Lord
2 was precious in those days: there was no manifest vision. | And
it came to pass one day when Heli lay in his place, and his eyes
3 were grown dim, that he could not see. | Before the lamp of
God went out, Samuel slept in the temple of the Lord, where
4 the ark of God was. | And the Lord called Samuel. And he an-
5 swered: Here am I. And he ran to Heli and said: Here am I; for
you did call me. He said: I did not call. Go back and sleep.
6 And he went and slept. | And the Lord called Samuel again.
And Samuel arose and went to Heli, and said: Here am I; for
you called me. He answered: I did not call you, my son. Return
7 and sleep. | Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord; neither
8 had the word of the Lord been revealed to him. | And the Lord
called Samuel again the third time. And he arose up and went to
9 Heli. | And said: Here am I; for you did call me. Then Heli
understood that the Lord called the child, and he said to Samuel:
Go, and sleep. And if he shall call you any more, you shall say:
Speak, Lord, for your servant hears you. So Samuel went and
slept in his place.

10 ***The Prophecy against Heli*** And the Lord came and
stood. And he called, as he had called the other times: Samuel,
Samuel. And Samuel said: Speak, Lord, for your servant hears
11 you. And the Lord said to Samuel: Behold I do a thing in Is-
rael: and whosoever shall hear it, both his ears shall tingle. |
12 In that day I will raise up against Heli all the things I have
spoken concerning his house: I will begin, and I will make an
13 end. | For I have foretold unto him, that I will judge his house
for ever, for iniquity; because he knew that his sons did wick-
14 edly and did not chastise them. | Therefore have I sworn to the
house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated
with victims nor offerings for ever.
15 And Samuel slept till morning, and opened the doors of the
house of the Lord. And Samuel feared to tell the vision to Heli. |
16 Then Heli called Samuel, and said: Samuel, my son. And he
17 answered: Here am I. | And he asked him: What is the word
that the Lord has spoken to you? I beseech you hide it not from
me. May God do so and so to you, and add so and so, if you
18 hide from me one word of all that were said to you. | So Samuel
told him all the words, and did not hide them from him. And
he answered: It is the Lord. Let him do what is good in his sight.
19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him: and not one
20 of his words fell to the ground. | And all Israel from Dan to
Bersabee, knew that Samuel was a faithful prophet of the Lord.
21 | And the Lord again appeared in Silo; for the Lord revealed

himself to Samuel in Silo, according to the word of the Lord.
And the word of Samuel came to pass to all Israel.

4
1 ***The Philistines Defeat the Israelites*** And it came to
pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered themselves to-
gether to fight: and Israel went out to war against the Philistines,
and camped by the Stone of Help. And the Philistines came to
2 Aphec, | and put their army in array against Israel. And when
they had joined battle, Israel turned their backs to the Philis-
tines. And there was slain in that fight here and there in the
3 fields about four thousand men. | And the people returned to
the camp: and the ancients of Israel said: Why has the Lord
defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us fetch unto us
the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Silo: and let it come
in the midst of us, that it may save us from the hand of our
enemies.
4 So the people sent to Silo; and they brought from thence the
ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts sitting upon the
cherubim. And the two sons of Heli, Ophni and Phinees, were
5 with the ark of the covenant of God. | And when the ark of
the covenant of the Lord had come into the camp, all Israel
6 shouted with a great shout, and the earth rang again. | And
the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, and they said: What
is this noise of a great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And
they understood that the ark of the Lord had come into the
7 camp. | And the Philistines were afraid, saying, God has come
8 into the camp. And sighing, they said: | Woe to us: for there
was no such great joy yesterday and the day before. Woe to us.
Who shall deliver us from the hand of these high gods? These
are the gods that struck Egypt with all the plagues in the
9 desert. | Take courage and behave like men, you Philistines:
lest you come to be servants to the Hebrews, as they have
10 served you. Take courage and fight. | So the Philistines fought;
and Israel was overthrown; and every man fled to his own
dwelling. And there was an exceeding great slaughter; for
there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11 ***The Ark Is Taken*** And the ark of God was taken: and the
12 two sons of Heli, Ophni and Phinees, were slain. | And there
ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Silo the
same day, with his clothes rent, and his head strewed with dust.

4, 1-22: This is the first time the Philistines are mentioned since the days of Samson in the Book of Jgs. The Israelites thought that the material presence of the Ark of the Covenant would magically make them

13 | And when he came, Heli sat upon a stool over against the
way watching. For his heart was fearful for the ark of God.
And when the man had come into the city, he told it: and all
14 the city cried out. | And Heli heard the noise of the cry, and
he said: What does the noise of this uproar mean? But he made
15 haste, and came, and told Heli. | Now Heli was ninety and
eight years old; and his eyes were dim, and he could not see. |
16 And he said to Heli: I am he that came from the battle, and
have fled out of the field this day. And he said to him: What
17 is there done, my son? | And he that brought the news an-
swered, and said: Israel has fled before the Philistines; and
there has been a great slaughter of the people. Moreover your
two sons, Ophni and Phinees, are dead. And the ark of God is
18 taken. | And when he had named the ark of God, he fell from
his stool backward by the door, and broke his neck, and died.
For he was an old man, and far advanced in years. And he
judged Israel forty years.
19 And his daughter-in-law the wife of Phinees, was big with
child, and near her time. And hearing the news that the ark of
God was taken, and her father-in-law, and her husband, were
dead, she bowed herself and fell in labor: for her pains came
20 upon her on a sudden. | And when she was upon the point of
death, they that stood about her said to her: Fear not, for you
have borne a son. She answered them not, nor gave heed to
21 them. | And she called the child Ichabod, saying: The glory is
gone from Israel, because the ark of God was taken, and for her
22 father-in-law, and her husband. And she said: The glory has
departed from Israel, because the ark of God was taken.

5

1 ***The Ark Plagues the Philistines*** And the Philistines took
the ark of God, and carried it from the Stone of Help into
2 Azotus. | And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought
3 it into the temple of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. | And when
the Azotians arose early the next day, behold Dagon lay upon
his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord. And they took
4 Dagon, and set him again in his place. | And the next day again,
when they rose in the morning, they found Dagon lying upon
his face on the earth before the ark of the Lord. And the head of

victorious (vv. 3-5). The prediction of the condemnation of Heli's house is fulfilled (vv. 11-22).

5, 4: Although the Philistines were not Semites, Dagon was a Semitic grain god who was worshiped in Mesopotamia from the twenty-fifth century B.C. Dagon resembled a man. The god was not a merman with a fish tail.

Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the
5 threshold: | And only the stump of Dagon remained in its
place. For this cause neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that
go into the temple tread on the threshold of Dagon in Azotus
unto this day.
6 And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the Azotians, and
he destroyed them, and afflicted Azotus and the coasts thereof
with emerods. And in the villages and fields in the midst of that
country, there came forth a multitude of mice; and there was
7 the confusion of a great mortality in the city. | And the men of
Azotus seeing this kind of plague, said: The ark of the God of
Israel shall not stay with us; for his hand is heavy upon us,
8 and upon Dagon our god. | And sending, they gathered to-
gether all the lords of the Philistines to them, and said: What
shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And the Gethrites
answered: Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about.
9 And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about. | And
while they were carrying it about, the hand of the Lord came
upon every city with an exceeding great slaughter. And he smote
the men of every city, both small and great, and they had
emerods in their secret parts. And the Gethrites consulted to-
gether, and made themselves seats of skins.
10 Therefore they sent the ark of God into Accaron. And when
the ark of God had come into Accaron, the Accaronites cried
out, saying: They have brought the ark of the God of Israel
11 to us, to kill us and our people. | They sent therefore and
gathered together all the lords of the Philistines: and they said:
Send away the ark of the God of Israel: and let it return into
12 its own place, and not kill us and our people. | For there was
the fear of death in every city; and the hand of God was ex-
ceeding heavy. The men also that did not die, were afflicted with
the emerods: and the cry of every city went up to heaven.

6

1 ***The Ark Is Sent Back*** Now the ark of God was in the
2 land of the Philistines seven months. | And the Philistines
called for the priests and the diviners, saying: What shall we
do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we are to send it back
3 to its place? And they said: | If you send back the ark of the
God of Israel, send it not away empty; but render unto him

5, 5: A widespread superstitious practice prevailed in ancient times to jump over the threshold because spirits were supposed to dwell there.

5, 6-12: Perhaps the Philistines sent the Ark to their different cities to see if the gods of one of their cities could overpower the God of the Israelites. The plague is attributed to Yahweh in v. 6.

what you owe for sin. And then you shall be healed; and you
4 shall know why his hand departs not from you. | They an-
swered: What is it we ought to render unto him for sin? And
5 they answered: | According to the number of the provinces of
the Philistines you shall make five golden emerods, and five
golden mice; for the same plague has been upon you all, and
upon your lords. And you shall make the likeness of your
emerods, and the likeness of the mice that have destroyed the
land; and you shall give glory to the God of Israel, to see if he
will take off his hand from you, and from your gods, and from
6 your land. | Why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt and
Pharao hardened their hearts? Did not he, after he was struck,
7 then let them go, and they departed? | Now therefore take and
make a new cart. And two kine that have calved, on which there
has come no yoke, tie to the cart; and shut up their calves at
8 home. | And you shall take the ark of the Lord, and lay it on
the cart. And the vessels of gold, which you have paid him for
sin, you shall put into a little box, at the side thereof. And send
9 it away that it may go. | And you shall look: and if it go up
by the way of his own coasts toward Bethsames, then he has
done us this great evil. But if not, we shall know that it is not
his hand that has touched us, but it has happened by chance.
10 They did therefore in this manner: and taking two kine, that
had suckling calves, they yoked them to the cart, and shut up
11 their calves at home. | And they laid the ark of God upon the
cart, and the little box that had in it the golden mice and the
12 likeness of the emerods. | And the kine took the straight way
that leads to Bethsames; and they went along the way, lowing
as they went; and turned not aside neither to the right hand
nor to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed them as
far as the borders of Bethsames.

13 ***The Bethsamites Are Smitten*** Now the Bethsamites were
reaping wheat in the valley: and lifting up their eyes they saw
14 the ark, and rejoiced to see it. | And the cart came into the field
of Josue a Bethsamite, and stood there. And there was a great
stone; and they cut in pieces the wood of the cart, and laid the
15 kine upon it, a holocaust to the Lord. | And the Levites took
down the ark of God, and the little box that was at the side of
it, wherein were the vessels of gold; and they put them upon

6, 15: *And the Levites took down the ark of God:* how explain that they took the Ark down when v. 14 says they had already cut the wood of the Ark? Perhaps v. 15 was added by an editor who was shocked at non-Levites touching the Ark.

the great stone. The men also of Bethsames offered holocausts
16 and sacrificed victims that day to the Lord. | And the five
princes of the Philistines saw: and they returned to Accaron the
same day.
17 And these are the golden emerods, which the Philistines re-
turned for sin to the Lord: For Azotus one, for Gaza one, for
18 Ascalon one, for Geth one, for Accaron one. | And the golden
mice according to the number of the cities of the Philistines, of
the five provinces, from the fenced city to the village that was
without wall, and to the great Abel *(the stone)* whereon they
set down the ark of the Lord, which was till that day in the field
of Josue the Bethsamite.
19 But he slew of the men of Bethsames, because they had seen
the ark of the Lord: and he slew of the people seventy men, and
fifty thousand of the common people. And the people lamented,
because the Lord had smitten the people with a great slaughter.
20 | And the men of Bethsames said: Who shall be able to stand
before the Lord this holy God? And to whom shall he go up
21 from us? | And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of
Cariathiarim, saying: The Philistines have brought back the ark
of the Lord. Come down and fetch it up to you.

/

1 ***The Philistines Defeated*** And the men of Cariathiarim
came and fetched up the ark of the Lord and carried it into the
house of Abinadab in Gabaa: and they sanctified Eleazar his
2 son, to keep the ark of the Lord. | And it came to pass, that
from the day the ark of the Lord abode in Cariathiarim days
were multiplied (for it was now the twentieth year), and all the
house of Israel rested following the Lord.
3 And Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying: If you
turn to the Lord with all your heart, put away the strange gods
from among you, Baalim and Astaroth: and prepare your hearts
unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out
4 of the hand of the Philistines. | Then the children of Israel put

6, 18: V. 5 says that only five provinces offered five golden mice. In v. 18 an editor may have added that all the cities offered mice.

6, 19: *But he slew . . . ark of the Lord:* the better reading is: "The sons of Jeconias did not rejoice with the men of Bethsames when they saw the ark." *And he slew of the people seventy men:* commentators cannot adequately explain the severity of this punishment. *And fifty thousand of the common people:* this does not belong to the original text.

7, 1-17: V. 13 speaks as though Samuel defeated the Philistines definitively. Yet other texts say clearly that the Philistines were not defeated until later by Saul and David (see chs. 13—14; 2 Sm 5, 17-25).

5 away Baalim and Astaroth, and served the Lord only. | And
Samuel said: Gather all Israel to Masphath, that I may pray to
6 the Lord for you. | And they gathered together to Masphath:
and they drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and
they fasted on that day, and they said there: We have sinned
against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in
Masphath.
7 And the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were
gathered together to Masphath, and the lords of the Philistines
went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard
8 this, they were afraid of the Philistines. | And they said to Sam-
uel: Cease not to cry to the Lord our God for us, that he may
9 save us out of the hand of the Philistines. | And Samuel took a
sucking lamb, and offered it whole for a holocaust to the Lord:
and Samuel cried to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him.
10 |And it came to pass, when Samuel was offering the holocaust,
the Philistines began the battle against Israel: but the Lord
thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines,
and terrified them, and they were overthrown before the face
11 of Israel. | And the men of Israel going out of Masphath pur-
sued after the Philistines, and made slaughter of them till they
12 came under Bethchar. | And Samuel took a stone, and laid
it between Masphath and Sen: and he called the place, the Stone
13 of Help. And he said: Thus far the Lord has helped us. | And
the Philistines were humbled, and they did not come any more
into the borders of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against
14 the Philistines, all the days of Samuel. | And the cities, which
the Philistines had taken from Israel, were restored to Israel,
from Accaron to Geth, and their borders. And he delivered
Israel from the hand of the Philistines; and there was peace
between Israel and the Amorrites.
15.16 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life; and he
went every year about to Bethel and to Galgal and to Masphath;
17 and he judged Israel in the aforesaid places. | And he returned
to Ramatha; for there was his house, and there he judged Israel.
He built also there an altar to the Lord.

8

1 ***The Israelites Ask for a King*** And it came to pass when
Samuel was old, that he appointed his sons to be judges over

8—12: It is generally acknowledged that there are two traditions used in these five chapters. In the older "pro-monarchical" tradition (9, 1-10, 16; 11, 1-15) God himself had Samuel anoint Saul king to unite the people against the Philistines (9, 16). His victory over the Ammonites resulted in the people taking the initiative to elect him king (11, 12).

2 Israel. | Now the name of his firstborn son was Joel: and the
3 name of the second was Abia, judges in Bersabee. | And his
sons walked not in his ways: but they turned aside after lucre,
4 and took bribes, and perverted judgment. | Then all the an-
cients of Israel being assembled, came to Samuel to Ramatha. |
5 And they said to him: Behold you are old, and your sons walk
not in your ways. Make us a king, to judge us, as all nations
6 have. | And the word was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel,
that they should say: Give us a king, to judge us. And Samuel
7 prayed to the Lord.| And the Lord said to Samuel: Hearken to
the voice of the people in all that they say to you. For they have
not rejected you, but me, that I should not reign over them. |
8 According to all their works, they have done from the day that
I brought them out of Egypt until this day: as they have for-
saken me, and served strange gods, so do they also unto you.
9 | Now therefore hearken to their voice: but yet testify to them,
and foretell them the right of the king, that shall reign over
them.

10 ***Samuel Describes a King*** Then Samuel told all the words
of the Lord to the people that had desired a king of him. |
11 And said: This will be the right of the king, that shall reign
over you: he will take your sons, and put them in his chariots,
and will make them his horsemen, and his running footmen to
12 run before his chariots. | And he will appoint of them to be his
tribunes, and centurions, and to plough his fields, and to reap
13 his corn, and to make him arms and chariots. | Your daugh-
ters also he will take to make him ointments, and to be his
14 cooks, and bakers. | And he will take your fields, and your
vineyards, and your best oliveyards, and give them to his serv-
15 ants. | Moreover he will take the tenth of your corn, and of
the revenues of your vineyards, to give his eunuchs and serv-
16 ants. | Your servants also and handmaids, and your goodliest

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This was God's historical saving act in a theocratic state—God ruling through His representative.

A later "anti-monarchical" tradition (8; 10, 17-27; 12) in the sixth century B.C., after having experienced all the evils of a centuries old monarchical system, the tradition reflected theologically on the monarchy in strong anti-monarchical tones so that it almost drowned out the older tradition epitomized in 9, 16. The later tradition gave the deep impression that God and Samuel never wanted the monarchy but, rather, a pure theocratic state with God Himself selecting individual "judges." It is this later view which dimly reflects on the origins of the monarchy and judges the idea of kingship to be a rejection of Yahweh, "like the nations" (8, 20), and it regards Saul as a king not according to the heart of Yahweh.

young men, and your asses he will take away, and put them to
17 his work. | Your flocks also he will tithe, and you shall be his
18 servants. | And you shall cry out in that day from the face of the king, whom you have chosen to yourselves: and the Lord will not hear you in that day, because you desired unto yourselves a king.
19 But the people would not hear the voice of Samuel, and they
20 said: Nay: but there shall be a king over us. | And we also will be like all nations: and our king shall judge us, and go out
21 before us, and fight our battles for us. | And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and rehearsed them in the ears of the
22 Lord. | And the Lord said to Samuel: Hearken to their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said to the men of Israel: Let every man go to his city.

9

1 ***Saul Seeks His Father's Asses*** Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Cis, the son of Abiel, the son of Seror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphia, the son of a man
2 of Jemini, valiant and strong. | And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and goodly man, and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoul-
3 ders and upward he appeared above all the people. | And the asses of Cis, Saul's father, were lost. And Cis said to his son Saul: Take one of the servants with thee, and arise, go, and seek the asses. And when they had passed through mount
4 Ephraim, | and through the land of Salisa, and had not found them, they passed also through the land of Salim, and they were not there: and through the land of Jemini, and found them
5 not. | And when they had come to the land of Suph, Saul said to the servant that was with him: Come, let us return, lest per-
6 haps my father forget the asses, and be concerned for us. | And he said to him: Behold there is a man of God in this city, a famous man: all that he says, comes certainly to pass. Now therefore let us go thither; perhaps he may tell us of our way,
7 for which we have come. | And Saul said to his servant: Behold, he will go: *but* what shall we carry to the man of God? The bread is spent in our bags: and we have no present to make
8 to the man of God, nor any thing at all. | The servant answered Saul again, and said: Behold there is found in my hand the fourth part of a sicle of silver. Let us give it to the man of God, that he may tell us our way.
9 Now in time past, in Israel when a man went to consult God he spoke thus: Come, let us go to the seer. For he that is now
10 called a prophet, in time past was called a seer. | And Saul said

to his servant: Your word is very good. Come, let us go. And they went into the city, where the man of God was.

11 And when they went up the ascent to the city, they found maids coming out to draw water, and they said to them: Is the
12 seer here? | They answered and said to them: He is: behold he is before you, make haste now. For he came today into the city, for there is a sacrifice of the people today in the high place.
13 | As soon as you come into the city, you shall immediately find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat till he comes: because he blesses the victim; and afterward they eat that are invited. Now therefore go up,
14 for today you shall find him. | And they went up into the city. And when they were walking in the midst of the city, behold Samuel was coming out over against them, to go up to the high place.

15 Now the Lord had revealed to the ear of Samuel the day
16 before Saul came, saying: | Tomorrow about this same hour I will send you a man of the land of Benjamin. And you shall anoint him to be ruler over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked
17 down upon my people, because their cry has come to me. | And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him: Behold the man, of whom I spoke to you. This man shall reign over my people.

18 ***Saul Encounters Samuel*** And Saul came to Samuel in the midst of the gate and said: Tell me, I pray you, where is the
19 house of the seer? | And Samuel answered Saul, saying: I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, that you may eat with me today; and I will let you go in the morning: and tell you
20 all that is in your heart. | And as for the asses, which were lost three days ago, be not solicitous, because they are found. And for whom shall be all the best things of Israel? Shall they not
21 be for you and for all your father's house? | And Saul answering said: Am not I a son of Jemini of the last tribe of Israel, and my kindred the last among all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken this word to me?

22 Then Samuel taking Saul and his servant, brought them into the parlor, and gave them a place at the head of them that were
23 invited. For there were about thirty men. | And Samuel said to the cook: Bring the portion, which I gave you, and com-
24 manded you to set it apart by you. | And the cook took up the shoulder and set it before Saul. And Samuel said: Behold what is left, set it before you, and eat: because it was kept of purpose for you, when I invited the people. And Saul ate with Samuel that day.

25 And they went down from the high place into the town, and
he spoke with Saul upon the top of the house: and he prepared
26 a bed for Saul on the top of the house, and he slept. | And
when they were risen in the morning, and it began now to be
light, Samuel called Saul on the top of the house, saying: Arise,
that I may let you go. And Saul arose. And they went out both
27 of them, to wit, he and Samuel. | And as they were going down
in the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul: Speak to the servant
to go before us, and pass on. But you stand still a while, that I
may tell you the word of the Lord.

10

1 ***Samuel Anoints Saul*** And Samuel took a little vial of oil,
and poured it upon his head; and kissed him; and said: Behold,
the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his inheritance: and
you shall deliver his people out of the hands of their enemies,
that are round about them. And this shall be a sign unto you,
2 that God has anointed you to be prince. | When you shall de-
part from me this day you shall find two men by the sepulcher
of Rachel in the borders of Benjamin to the south. And they
shall say to you: The asses are found which you went to seek;
and your father thinking no more of the asses is concerned for
3 you, and says: What shall I do for my son? | And when you
shall depart from thence, and go farther on, and shall come to
the oak of Thabor, there shall meet you three men going up to
God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another three
4 loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine. | And
they will salute you, and will give you two loaves. And you shall
5 take them at their hand. | After that you shall come to the hill
of God, where the garrison of the Philistines is. And when you
shall have come there into the city, you shall meet a company
of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery
and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp before them, and they
6 shall be prophesying. | And the spirit of the Lord shall come
upon you. And you shall prophesy with them, and shall be

10, 1: *And kissed him:* as a sign of homage. The rite of consecration of kings with an anointing was known in Egypt and in Syria.

10, 5: This is the first mention in the Old Testament of a company of prophets. Similar to modern dervishes, they generated ecstasy through music and dancing which proved infectious as exemplified in 19, 20-24. These prophets were fanatic purists who wanted no mixture of the Chanaanite fertility religion with Yahweh's religion. Prophecy, applied to them, did not mean prediction, nor preaching, but ritual dancing as described in 19, 20-24.

10, 6: Saul was changed not only by ecstasy but by becoming able to carry out the tasks of a king.

7 changed into another man. | When therefore these signs shall
happen to you, do whatsoever your hand shall find, for
8 the Lord is with you. | And you shall go down before me to
Galgal (for I will come down to you), that you may offer an
oblation, and sacrifice victims of peace. Seven days shall you
wait, till I come to you: and I will show you what you are to do.

9 ***Saul among the Prophets*** So when he had turned his
back to go from Samuel, God gave unto him another heart: and
10 all these things came to pass that day. | And they came to the
foresaid hill, and behold a company of prophets met him. And
the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied in the
11 midst of them. | And all that had known him yesterday and the
day before, seeing that he was with the prophets, and prophe-
sied, said to each other: What is this that has happened to the
12 son of Cis? *Is* Saul also among the prophets? | And one an-
swered another, saying: And who is their father? Therefore it
13 became a proverb: Is Saul also among the prophets? | And
when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high
14 place. | And Saul's uncle said to him, and to his servant:
Whither did you go? They answered: To seek the asses, and
15 not finding them we went to Samuel. | And his uncle said to
16 him: Tell me what Samuel said to you. | And Saul said to his
uncle: He told us that the asses were found. But of the matter
of the kingdom of which Samuel had spoken to him, he told
him not.

17 And Samuel called together the people to the Lord in Maspha.
18 | And he said to the children of Israel: Thus says the Lord the
God of Israel: I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered
you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all
19 the kings who afflicted you. | But you this day have rejected
your God, who only has saved you out of all your evils and your
tribulations; and you have said: Nay: but set a king over us.
Now therefore stand before the Lord by your tribes, and by your
20 families. | And Samuel brought to him all the tribes of Israel,
21 and the lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin. | And he brought the
tribe of Benjamin and the kindreds thereof, and the lot fell upon
the kindred of Metri, and it came to Saul the son of Cis. They
22 sought him therefore and he was not found. | And after this
they consulted the Lord whether he would come thither. And
23 the Lord answered: Behold he is hidden at home. | And they

10, 11-12: The people, being surprised to see the well known Saul in the company of uncouth prophets, said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

10, 13: *To the high place:* this should read "to his home."

ran and fetched him thence. And he stood in the midst of the people; and he was higher than any of the people from the shoulders and upward.

24 ***Saul Is Chosen King*** And Samuel said to all the people: Surely you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people. And all the people cried and
25 said: God save the king. | And Samuel told the people the law of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord: and Samuel sent away all the people, every one to his
26 own house. | Saul also departed to his own house in Gabaa: and there went with him a part of the army, whose hearts God
27 had touched. | But the children of Belial said: Shall this fellow be able to save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he dissembled as though he heard not.

11

1 ***Saul Defeats the Ammonites*** And it came to pass about a month after this that Naas, the Ammonite came up, and began to fight against Jabes Galaad. And all the men of Jabes said to Naas: Make a covenant with us; and we will serve you.
2 | And Naas the Ammonite answered them: On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may pluck out all your
3 right eyes, and make you a reproach in all Israel. | And the ancients of Jabes said to him: Allow us seven days, that we may send messengers to all the coasts of Israel, and if there be no one to defend us, we will come out to you.
4 The messengers therefore came to Gabaa of Saul; and they spoke these words in the hearing of the people. And all the
5 people lifted up their voices, and wept. | And behold Saul came, following oxen out of the field, and he said: What ails the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the men
6 of Jabes. | And the spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, when he had heard these words; and his anger was exceedingly kindled. |
7 And taking both the oxen, he cut them in pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel by messengers, saying: Whosoever shall not come forth, and follow Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell upon the

10, 25: Just as the Alliance between God and His people was deposited in the sanctuary (Jos 24, 26-27), so was the royal charter between the king and his people deposited in the same place. This custom resembled that of the ancient neighboring peoples who deposited their treaties before their gods.

11, 1-15: Saul's victory is an application of Samuel's words to him: "do whatsoever your hand shall find, for the Lord is with you" (10, 7).

8 people, and they went out as one man. | And he numbered
them in Bezec. And there were of the children of Israel three
hundred thousand: and of the men of Juda thirty thousand.
9 And they said to the messengers that came: Thus shall you
say to the men of Jabes Galaad: Tomorrow, when the sun shall
be hot, you shall have relief. The messengers therefore came,
10 and told the men of Jabes; and they were glad. | And they said:
In the morning we will come out to you; and you shall do what
11 you please with us. | And it came to pass, when morning had
come that Saul put the people in three companies. And he came
into the midst of the camp in the morning watch; and he slew
the Ammonites until the day grew hot. And the rest were scat-
tered, so that two of them were not left together.
12 And the people said to Samuel: Who is he that said: Shall
Saul reign over us? Bring the men and we will kill them. |
13 And Saul said: No man shall be killed this day, because the
14 Lord this day has wrought salvation in Israel. | And Samuel
said to the people: Come and let us go to Galgal, and let us
15 renew the kingdom there. | And all the people went to Galgal.
And there they made Saul king before the Lord in Galgal; and
they sacrificed there victims of peace before the Lord. And there
Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced exceedingly.

12

1 ***Samuel Testifies His Integrity*** And Samuel said to all
Israel: Behold I have hearkened to your voice in all that you
2 said to me, and have made a king over you. | And now the king
goes before you. But I am old and grayheaded: and my sons are
with you. Having then conversed with you from my youth unto
3 this day, behold here I am. | Speak of me before the Lord, and
before his anointed, whether I have taken any man's ox or ass:
If I have wronged any man, if I have oppressed any man, if I
have taken a bribe at any man's hand, and I will despise it this
4 day, and will restore it to you. | And they said: You have not
wronged us, nor oppressed us, nor taken ought at any man's
5 hand. | And he said to them: The Lord is witness against you,
and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found
anything in my hand. And they said: He is witness.
6 And Samuel said to the people: *It is* the Lord, who made
Moses and Aaron, and brought our fathers out of the land of

12, 1-25: At the beginning of each new era in the history of salvation, the outgoing leader recalls the past saving acts of God and points to a similar future on condition that the people remain faithful—the theme of Deuteronomic history. (See Moses' speech in Dt, chs. 29—31 and Josue's speech in Jos, ch. 24.)

7 Egypt. | Now therefore stand up, that I may plead in judgment
against you before the Lord, concerning all the kindness of the
8 Lord, which he has shown to you, and to your fathers: | How
Jacob went into Egypt, and your fathers cried to the Lord: and
the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, and brought your fathers out
9 of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. | And they forgot
the Lord their God, and he delivered them into the hands of
Sisara, captain of the army of Hasor, and into the hands of the
Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they
10 fought against them. | But afterward they cried to the Lord,
and said: We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord,
and have served Baalim and Astaroth: but now deliver us
11 from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve you. | And the
Lord sent Jerobaal, and Badan, and Jephte, and Samuel, and
delivered you from the hand of your enemies round about: and
you dwelt securely.

12 ***Samuel Reproves the People*** But seeing that Naas king
of the children of Ammon had come against you, you said to
me: Nay, but a king shall reign over us: whereas the Lord your
13 God was your king. | Now therefore your king is here, whom
you have chosen and desired: behold the Lord has given you a
14 king. | If you will fear the Lord, and serve him, and hearken
to his voice, and not provoke the mouth of the Lord: then shall
both you, and the king who reigns over you, be followers of the
15 Lord your God. | But if you will not hearken to the voice of the
Lord, but will rebel against his words, the hand of the Lord
16 shall be upon you, and upon your fathers. | Now then stand, and
17 see this great thing which the Lord will do in your sight. | Is it
not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the Lord, and he shall
send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that you
yourselves have done a great evil in the sight of the Lord, in
desiring a king over you.
18 And Samuel cried unto the Lord: and the Lord sent thunder
19 and rain that day. | And all the people greatly feared the Lord
and Samuel. And all the people said to Samuel: Pray for your
servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die; for we
20 have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for a king. | And
Samuel said to the people: Fear not. You have done all this
evil: but yet depart not from following the Lord, but serve
21 the Lord with all your heart. | And turn not aside after vain
things which shall never profit you, nor deliver you, because

12, 9-11: These are references to past history in Jgs, chs. 4—5; 13—16; 3, 12-30.

22 they are vain. | And the Lord will not forsake his people for
his great name's sake: because the Lord has sworn to make you
23 his people. | And far from me be this sin against the Lord, that
I should cease to pray for you. And I will teach you the good
24 and right way. | Therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in truth
and with your whole heart, for you have seen the great works
25 which he has done among you. | But if you will still do wick-
edly: both you and your king shall perish together.

13

1 ***The Philistines Come against Israel*** Saul was a child of
one year when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over
2 Israel. | And Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel: and
two thousand were with Saul in Machmas, and in mount Bethel:
and a thousand with Jonathan in Gabaa of Benjamin, and the
rest of the people he sent back every man to their dwellings. |
3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines which was
in Gabaa. And when the Philistines had heard of it, Saul sounded
the trumpet over all the land, saying: Let the Hebrews hear. |
4 And all Israel heard this report: Saul has smitten the garrison
of the Philistines. And Israel took courage against the Philis-
tines. And the people were called together after Saul to Galgal.
5 The Philistines also were assembled to fight against Israel:
thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and a
multitude of people besides, like the sand on the sea shore for
number. And going up they camped in Machmas at the east of
6 Bethaven. | And when the men of Israel saw that they were
straitened (for the people were distressed), they hid themselves
in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in dens, and in pits. |
7 And *some of* the Hebrews passed over the Jordán into the land
of Gad and Galaad. And when Saul was yet in Galgal, all the
people that followed him were greatly afraid.
8 And he waited seven days according to the appointment of
Samuel; and Samuel came not to Galgal, and the people
9 slipped away from him. | Then Saul said: Bring me the holo-
caust, and the peace offerings. And he offered the holocaust. |
10 And when he had made an end of offering the holocaust, behold
Samuel came: and Saul went forth to meet him and salute him.

11 ***Samuel Disapproves of Saul*** And Samuel said to him:

13, 1-22: This chapter is composed of various sections written at different times which make it difficult to understand. The correct numbers in v. 1 have been lost.

What have you done? Saul answered: Because I saw that the people slipped from me, and you had not come according to the days appointed, and the Philistines were gathered together in
12 Machmas, | I said: Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Galgal, and I have not appeased the face of the Lord.
13 Forced by necessity, I offered the holocaust. | And Samuel said to Saul: You have done foolishly, and have not kept the commandments of the Lord your God, which he commanded you. And if you had not done thus, the Lord would now have
14 established your kingdom over Israel for ever. | But your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought him a man according to his own heart: and him has the Lord commanded to be prince over his people, because you have not observed that which the Lord commanded.
15 And Samuel arose and went up from Galgal to Gabaa of Benjamin. And the rest of the people went up after Saul, to meet the people who fought against them, going from Galgal to Gabaa in the hill of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were found with him, about six hundred men. |
16 And Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, were in Gabaa of Benjamin: but the Philis-
17 tines encamped in Machmas. | And there went out of the camp of the Philistines three companies to plunder. One com-
18 pany went toward the way of Ephra to the land of Sual; | and another went by the way of Beth-horon, and the third turned to the way of the border, above the valley of Seboim toward the desert.
19 Now there was no smith to be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines had taken this precaution, lest the Hebrews
20 should make them swords or spears. | So all Israel went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his ploughshare, and
21 his spade, and his axe, and his rake. | So that their shares, and their spades, and their forks, and their axes were blunt, even to
22 the goad, which was to be mended. | And when the day of battle was come, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan, except Saul and Jonathan his son.
23 And the army of the Philistines went out in order to advance further in Machmas.

13, 13: Because it is difficult to see how Saul was so wrong, it may be that the tradition represented here is incomplete.

13, 19-22: The policy of the Philistines forbidding the Israelites the use of iron lest they arm is paralleled by Porsena forbidding iron to the Romans for the same reason.

14

1 *Jonathan and His Armorbearer* Now it came to pass one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man that bore his armor: Come, and let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines, which is on the other side of yonder place. But he told not this to his father.

2 And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gabaa under the pomegranate tree, which was in Magron: and the people with
3 him were about six hundred men. | And Achias the son of Achitob brother to Ichabod the son of Phinees, the son of Heli the priest of the Lord in Silo, wore the ephod. And the people
4 knew not whither Jonathan was gone. | Now there were between the ascents, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the garrison of the Philistines, rocks standing up on both sides, and steep cliffs like teeth on the one side, and on the other. The name of the one was Boses, and the name of the other was Sene: |
5 one rock stood out toward the north over against Machmas;
6 and the other to the south over against Gabaa. | And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armor: Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised, it may be the Lord will do for us, because it is easy for the Lord to save either by
7 many, or by few. | And his armorbearer said to him: Do all that pleases your mind. Go whither you will, and I will be with you wheresoever you have a mind.

8 And Jonathan said: Behold we will go over to these men.
9 And when we shall be seen by them, if they shall speak thus to us: Stay till we come to you: let us stand still in our place,
10 and not go up to them. | But if they shall say: Come up to us: let us go up, because the Lord has delivered them into our hands.
11 This shall be a sign unto us. | So both of them discovered themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said: Behold the Hebrews come forth out of the holes wherein
12 they were hidden. | And the men of the garrison spoke to Jonathan, and to his armorbearer, and said: Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said to his armorbearer: Let us go up, follow me: for the Lord has delivered them into the hands of Israel.

13 *Jonathan's Miraculous Victory* And Jonathan went up creeping on his hands and feet; and his armorbearer after him. And some fell before Jonathan, others his armorbearer slew as
14 he followed him. | And the first slaughter which Jonathan

14, 1-15: In recent years two Scripture professors reenacted the exploit of Jonathan by following the directions here.

and his armorbearer made, was of about twenty men, within half an acre of land, which a yoke of oxen is wont to plough in
15 a day. | And there was a miracle in the camp, through the fields: yea and all the people of their garrison, who had gone out to plunder, were amazed, and the earth trembled: and it happened as a miracle from God.
16 And the watchmen of Saul, who were in Gabaa of Benjamin looked, and behold a multitude overthrown, and fleeing this
17 way and that. | And Saul said to the people that were with him: Look, and see who is gone from us. And when they had sought, it was found that Jonathan and his armorbearer were
18 not there. | And Saul said to Achias: Bring the ark of the Lord. (For the ark of God was there that day with the children of
19 Israel.) | And while Saul spoke to the priest, there arose a great uproar in the camp of the Philistines: and it increased by degrees, and was heard more clearly. And Saul said to the priest:
20 Draw in your hand. | Then Saul and all the people that were with him, shouted together, and they came to the place of the fight: and behold every man's sword was turned upon his neigh-
21 bor; and there was a very great slaughter. | Moreover the Hebrews that had been with the Philistines yesterday and the day before, and went up with them into the camp, returned to be
22 with the Israelites, who were with Saul and Jonathan. | And all the Israelites that had hidden themselves in mount Ephraim, hearing that the Philistines fled, joined themselves with their countrymen in the fight. And there were with Saul about ten
23 thousand men. | And the Lord saved Israel that day. And the fight went on as far as Bethaven.

24 ***Saul's Oath*** And the men of Israel were joined together that day; and Saul adjured the people, saying: Cursed be the man that shall eat food till evening, till I be revenged of my
25 enemies. So none of the people tasted any food. | And all the common people came into a forest, in which there was honey
26 upon the ground. | And when the people came into the forest, behold the honey dropped, but no man put his hand to his
27 mouth. For the people feared the oath. | But Jonathan had not heard when his father adjured the people: and he put forth

14, 19: *Draw in your hand:* to learn what they should do by casting lots.

14, 20: It seems that Saul did not wait to cast lots and consult God, but joined the fray immediately.

14, 24: The vow was taken to gain God's favor for a victory.

14, 27: *And his eyes were enlightened:* because he got his strength back.

the end of the rod, which he had in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb: and he carried his hand to his mouth, and his
28 eyes were enlightened. | And one of the people answering, said: Your father has bound the people with an oath, saying: Cursed be the man that shall eat any food this day. (And the
29 people were faint.) | And Jonathan said: My father has troubled the land: you have seen yourselves that my eyes are en-
30 lightened, because I tasted a little of this honey: | How much more if the people had eaten of the prey of their enemies, which they found? Had there not been made a greater slaughter among the Philistines?
31 So they smote that day the Philistines from Machmas to
32 Ailon. And the people were wearied exceedingly. | And falling upon the spoils, they took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people ate them with the
33 blood. | And they told Saul that the people had sinned against the Lord, eating with the blood. And he said: You have trans-
34 gressed: roll here to me now a great stone. | And Saul said: Disperse yourselves among the people, and tell them to bring me every man his ox and his ram, and slay them upon this stone, and eat, and you shall not sin against the Lord in eating with the blood. So all the people brought every man his ox with
35 him till the night: and slew them there. | And Saul built an altar to the Lord: and he then first began to build an altar to the Lord.
36 And Saul said: Let us fall upon the Philistines by night, and destroy them till the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And the people said: Do all that seems good in your eyes. And the priest said: Let us draw near hither unto God. |
37 And Saul consulted the Lord: Shall I pursue after the Philistines? Will you deliver them into the hands of Israel? And he
38 answered him not that day. | And Saul said: Bring hither all the corners of the people: and know, and see by whom this sin
39 has happened today. | As the Lord lives who is the savior of Israel, if it was done by Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. In
40 this none of the people gainsaid him. | And he said to all Israel: Be you on one side, and I with Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people answered Saul: Do what seems good

14, 30: Jonathan was correct for Saul had made an imprudent vow (v. 24) by obliging the soldiers to fast and renew their battle.

14, 32: The Mosaic Law forbade the eating of blood. See Lv 17, 11 n.

14, 35: *And he then . . . Lord:* the meaning is: it was the first altar which Saul built.

14, 39: Saul makes another rash vow.

41 in your eyes. | And Saul said to the Lord: O Lord God of Israel,
give a sign, by *which we may know,* what the meaning is, that
you did not answer your servant today. If this iniquity be in me,
or in my son Jonathan, give a proof: or if this iniquity be in
your people, give holiness. And Jonathan and Saul were taken,
42 and the people escaped. | And Saul said: Cast lots between me,
and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.
43 And Saul said to Jonathan: Tell me what you have done.
And Jonathan told him, and said: I did but taste a little honey
with the end of the rod, which was in my hand; and behold I
44 *must* die. | And Saul said: May God do so and so to me, and
add still more: for dying you shall die, O Jonathan.

45 ***The People Save Jonathan*** And the people said to Saul:
Shall Jonathan then die, who has wrought this great salvation
in Israel? This must not be. As the Lord lives, there shall not
one hair of his head fall to the ground: for he has wrought
with God this day. So the people delivered Jonathan that he
46 should not die. | And Saul went back, and did not pursue after
the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own places.
47 And Saul having his kingdom established over Israel, fought
against all his enemies round about, against Moab, and against
the children of Ammon, and Edom, and the kings of Soba, and
the Philistines; and whithersoever he turned himself, he over-
48 came. | And gathering together an army, he defeated Amalec,
and delivered Israel from the hand of them that spoiled them. |
49 And the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Jessui, and Melchisua:
and the names of his two daughters, the name of the firstborn
50 *was* Merob, and the name of the younger Michol. | And the
name of Saul's wife was Achinoam the daughter of Achimaas;
and the name of the captain of his army was Abner, the son of
51 Ner, the cousin german of Saul. | For Cis was the father of
52 Saul, and Ner the father of Abner, was son of Abiel. |. And
there was a great war against the Philistines all the days of
Saul. For whomsoever Saul saw to be a valiant man, and fit for
war, he took him to himself.

14, 41: *Proof: . . . holiness:* substitute Urim for proof and Thummim for holiness: See Lv 8, 8 n, for the explanation of these two terms. This is the only text which says to some extent how these two objects were used, but it still remains a mystery how there could be no answer, as v. 37 says.

14, 44: Saul's rash passion to seek out the culprit only to discover his innocent son, whom he stoically condemns, is evocative of the pathos in a Greek tragedy.

15

1 *Saul Disobeys God* And Samuel said to Saul: The Lord
sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel: now there-
2 fore hearken unto the voice of the Lord. | Thus says the
Lord of hosts: I have reckoned up all that Amalec has done to
Israel: How he opposed them in the way when they came up
3 out of Egypt. | Now therefore go, and smite Amalec, and
utterly destroy all that he has. Spare him not, nor covet any
thing that is his: but slay both man and woman, child and
suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.
4 So Saul commanded the people, and numbered them as
lambs: two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand of
5 the men of Juda. | And when Saul had come to the city of
6 Amalec, he laid ambushes in the torrent. | And Saul said to
the Cinite: Go, depart and get yourself down from Amalec;
lest I destroy you with him. For you have shown kindness to all
the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. And
7 the Cinite departed from the midst of Amalec. | And Saul
smote Amalec from Hevila to as far as Sur, which is over
8 against Egypt. | And he took Agag the king of Amalec alive:
but all the common people he slew with the edge of the sword.
9 | And Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the
flocks of sheep and of the herds, and the garments and the
rams, and all that was beautiful, and would not destroy them:
but everything that was vile and good for nothing, that they
destroyed.

10 *Saul's Humiliation* And the word of the Lord came to
11 Samuel, saying: | I regret that I have made Saul king: for he has
forsaken me, and has not executed my commandments. And
Samuel was grieved, and he cried unto the Lord all night. |
12 And when Samuel rose early, to go to Saul in the morning, it
was told Samuel, that Saul had come to Carmel, and had erected
for himself a triumphant arch: and returning had passed on,
and gone down to Galgal. And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul
was offering a holocaust to the Lord out of the choicest of the
13 spoils which he had brought from Amalec. | And when Samuel
had come to Saul, Saul said to him: Blessed be you of the Lord.
I have fulfilled the word of the Lord.
14 And Samuel said: What means then this bleating of the
flocks, which sounds in my ears, and the lowing of the herds,
15 which I hear? | And Saul said: They have brought them from

15, 2: Allusion to Ex 17, 8-16; Dt 25, 17-19.
15, 3: For an explanation of the *herem* or ban see Jos 6, 1-25 n.

Amalec, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the herds that they might be sacrificed to the Lord your God, but
16 the rest we have slain. | And Samuel said to Saul: Suffer me, and I will tell you what the Lord has said to me this night.
17 And he said to him: Speak. | And Samuel said: When you were a little one in your own eyes, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed you to be king over
18 Israel, | and the Lord sent you on the way, and said: Go, and kill the sinners of Amalec; and you shall fight against them
19 until you have utterly destroyed them. | Why then did you not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but turn to the prey, and
20 doing evil in the eyes of the Lord? | And Saul said to Samuel: Yea, I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord, and have walked in the way by which the Lord sent me, and have brought
21 Agag the king of Amalec, and Amalec I have slain. | But the people took of the spoils sheep and oxen, *as* the firstfruits of those things that were slain, to offer sacrifice to the Lord their
22 God in Galgal. | And Samuel said: Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices: and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams.

23 ***Saul Is Cast Off*** Because it is like the sin of witchcraft, to rebel: and like the crime of idolatry, to refuse to obey. Forasmuch therefore as you have rejected the word of the Lord, the
24 Lord has *also* rejected you from being king. | And Saul said to Samuel: I have sinned because I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and your words, fearing the people,
25 and obeying their voice. | But now bear, I beseech you, my
26 sin: and return with me, that I may adore the Lord. | And Samuel said to Saul: I will not return with you, because you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected
27 you from being king over Israel. | And Samuel turned about to go away: but he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and
28 it rent. | And Samuel said to him: The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to your
29 neighbor who is better than you. | But the triumpher in Israel will not spare, and will not be moved to repentance: for he is
30 not a man that he should repent. | Then he said: I have sinned. Yet honor me now before the ancients of my people, and before Israel, and return with me, that I may adore the
31 Lord your God. | So Samuel turned again after Saul: and Saul adored the Lord.

32 And Samuel said: Bring hither to me Agag the king of Amalec. And Agag was presented to him, very fat, and trem-

bling. And Agag said: Does bitter death separate in this man-
33 ner? | And Samuel said: As your sword has made women
childless, so shall your mother be childless among women. And
34 Samuel hewed him in pieces before the Lord in Galgal. | And
Samuel departed to Ramatha: but Saul went up to his house
35 in Gabaa. | And Samuel saw Saul no more till the day of his
death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, because the
Lord repented that he had made him king over Israel.

16

1 ***Samuel Anoints David*** And the Lord said to Samuel: How
long will you mourn for Saul whom I have rejected from reign-
ing over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and come, that I may
send you to Isai the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a
2 king among his sons. | And Samuel said: How shall I go, for
Saul will hear of it, and he will kill me? And the Lord said:
You shall take with you a calf of the herd, and you shall say:
3 I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. | And you shall call Isai
to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you are to do: and
you shall anoint him whom I shall show to you.
4 Then Samuel did as the Lord had said to him. And he came to
Bethlehem, and the ancients of the city wondered, and meeting
5 him, they said: Is your coming here peaceable? | And he said:
It is peaceable. I have come to offer sacrifice to the Lord: be you
sanctified, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified
6 Isai and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. | And when
they had come in, he saw Eliab, and said: Is the Lord's anointed
7 before him? | And the Lord said to Samuel: Look not on his
countenance, nor on the height of his stature: because I have
rejected him. Nor do I judge according to the look of man: for
man sees those things that appear; but the Lord beholds the
8 heart. | And Isai called Abinadab, and brought him before
9 Samuel. And he said: Neither has the Lord chosen this. | And
Isai brought Samma, and he said of him: Neither has the Lord
10 chosen this. | Isai therefore brought his seven sons before
Samuel. And Samuel said to Isai: The Lord has not chosen
11 any one of these. | And Samuel said to Isai: Are here all your
sons? He answered: There remains yet a young one, who keeps
the sheep. And Samuel said to Isai: Send, and fetch him, for
12 we will not sit down till he comes hither. | He sent therefore
and brought him. Now he was ruddy and beautiful to behold,

15, 33: Thus did Samuel carry out the total destruction of the enemy as the ban in v. 3 required, which is not a human sacrifice even though the text reads "before the Lord."

and of a comely face. And the Lord said: Arise, and anoint
13 him, for this is he. | Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and
anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And the spirit of
the Lord came upon David from that day forward: and
Samuel rose up, and went to Ramatha.
14 But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul: and an evil
15 spirit from the Lord troubled him. | And the servants of Saul
said to him: Behold *now* an evil spirit from God troubles you.
16 | Let our lord give orders, and your servants who are before
you will seek out a man skillful in playing on the harp, that
when the evil spirit from the Lord is upon you, he may play
17 with his hand, and you may bear it more easily. | And Saul
said to his servants: Provide me then some man that can play
18 well, and bring him to me. | And one of the servants answer-
ing, said: Behold I have seen a son of Isai the Bethlehemite, a
skillful player, and one of great strength, and a man fit for war,
and prudent in his words, and a comely person. And the Lord
is with him.
19 Then Saul sent messengers to Isai, saying: Send me David
20 your son, who is in the pastures. | And Isai took an ass laden
with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid of the flock, and
21 sent them by the hand of David his son to Saul. | And David
came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him exceed-
22 ingly, and made him his armorbearer. | And Saul sent to Isai,
saying: Let David stand before me; for he has found favor in
23 my sight. | So whensoever the evil spirit from the Lord was
upon Saul, David took his harp, and played with his hand: and
Saul was refreshed, and was better, for the evil spirit departed
from him.

17

1 ***Goliath Challenges All Israel*** Now the Philistines gath-
ering together their troops to battle, assembled at Socho of

16, 23: Since everything is directly attributed to God so is Saul's "evil spirit" which was the dejected mood caused by God's rejecting him as king. Compare Alexander the Great who at the military air of his flutist would drop his food and don his armor for battle but would resume his eating as the flutist shifted to a dulcet tune.

17, 1-54: Many scholars believe that the story of 2 Sm 21, 19, which tells of one of David's soldiers, Elhanan ("Adeodatus" in our text) who killed a Philistine called Goliath, is an older story than 1 Sm 17 that describes the contest between David and Goliath. According to these scholars, it may well be that when 1 Sm 17 was first written it reported a victory of David over an extraordinary person called "The Philistine." Later the "Goliath" of 2 Sm 21, 19 was appended to "The Philistine" of 1 Sm 17.

Juda, and camped between Socho and Azeca in the borders of
2 Dommim. | And Saul and the children of Israel being gath-
ered together came to the valley of Terebinth, and they set the
3 army in array to fight against the Philistines. | And the Philis-
tines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a
mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between
4 them. | And there went out a man baseborn from the camp
of the Philistines named Goliath, of Geth, whose height was
5 six cubits and a span. | And he had a helmet of brass upon
his head, and he was clothed with a coat of mail with scales,
and the weight of his coat of mail was five thousand sicles of
6 brass. | And he had greaves of brass on his legs, and a buckler
7 of brass covered his shoulders. | And the staff of his spear was
like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six
hundred sicles of iron: and his armorbearer went before him.
8 And standing he cried out to the bands of Israel, and said to
them: Why have you come out prepared to fight? Am not I a
Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose out a man
9 of you, and let him come down and fight hand to hand. | If he
be able to fight with me, and kill me, we will be servants to
you: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, you shall be
10 servants, and shall serve us. | And the Philistine said: I have
defied the bands of Israel this day. Give me a man, and let him
11 fight with me hand to hand. | And Saul and all the Israelites
hearing these words of the Philistine were dismayed, and
greatly afraid.

12 ***David and Goliath*** Now David was the son of that
Ephrathite of Bethlehem Juda before mentioned, whose name
was Isai, who had eight sons, and was an old man in the days
13 of Saul, and of great age among men. | And his three eldest
sons followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three
sons that went to the battle, were Eliab the firstborn, and the
14 second Abinadab, and the third Samma. | But David was the
15 youngest. So, the three eldest having followed Saul, David went,
and returned from Saul, to feed his father's flock at Bethlehem.
16 | Now the Philistine came out morning and evening, and pre-
17 sented himself forty days. | And Isai said to David his son:
Take for your brethren an ephi of frumenty, and these ten
18 loaves; and run to the camp to your brethren. | And carry

17, 4-7: Scholars vary in the hazardous translation of Hebrew measurements and weights. Goliath could measure nine and one-half feet tall; his coat could have weighed from ninety to two hundred twenty pounds; and the "head of his spear" from eleven to twenty-six and one-half pounds.

these ten little cheeses to the tribune. And go see your brethren, if they are well: and learn with whom they are placed.
19 But Saul, and they, and all the children of Israel were in the
20 valley of Terebinth fighting against the Philistines. | David therefore arose in the morning, and gave the charge of the flock to the keeper: and went away loaded as Isai had commanded him. And he came to the place of Magala, and to the army, which was going out to fight, and shouted for the battle. |
21 For Israel had put themselves in array: and the Philistines who
22 stood against them were prepared. | And David leaving the vessels which he had brought, under the care of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the place of the battle and asked if all
23 things went well with his brethren. | And as he talked with them, that baseborn man whose name was Goliath, the Philistine, of Geth, showed himself coming up from the camp of the Philistines. And he spoke according to the same words; *and*
24 David heard *them.* | And all the Israelites when they saw the
25 man, fled from his face, fearing him exceedingly. | And some one of Israel said: Have you seen this man that has come up, for he has come up to defy Israel? And the man that shall slay him, the king will enrich with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and will make his father's house free from tribute
26 in Israel. | And David spoke to the men that stood by him, saying: What shall be given to the man that shall kill this Philistine, and shall take away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the
27 armies of the living God? | And the people answered him the same words saying: These things shall be given to the man that shall slay him.
28 Now when Eliab his eldest brother heard this, when he was speaking with others, he was angry with David, and said: Why did you come hither? And why did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know your pride, and the wickedness of your
29 heart: that you have come down to see the battle. | And David
30 said: What have I done? Is there not cause to speak? | And he turned a little aside from him to another: and said the same
31 word. And the people answered him as before. | And the words which David spoke were heard, and were rehearsed before Saul.

32 ***David before Saul*** And when he was brought to him, he said to him: Let not any man's heart be dismayed in him. I your servant will go, and will fight against the Philistine. |
33 And Saul said to David: You are not able to withstand this Philistine, nor to fight against him; for you are *but* a boy, but
34 he is a warrior from his youth. | And David said to Saul:

Your servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion,
35 or a bear, and took a ram out of the midst of the flock. | And
I pursued after them, and struck them, and delivered it out of
their mouth. And they rose up against me; and I caught them
36 by the throat; and I strangled and killed them. | For I your
servant have killed both a lion and a bear: and this uncircum-
cised Philistine shall be also as one of them. I will go now,
and take away the reproach of the people. For who is this
uncircumcised Philistine, who has dared to curse the army of
37 the living God? | And David said: The Lord who delivered
me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear,
he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul
said to David: Go, and the Lord be with you.
38 And Saul clothed David with his garments, and put a helmet
of brass upon his head, and armed him with a coat of mail. |
39 And David having girded his sword upon his armor, began to
try if he would walk in armor: for he was not accustomed to
it. And David said to Saul: I cannot go thus, for I am not used
40 to it. And he laid them off, | and he took his staff, which he
had always in his hands: and he chose five smooth stones out
of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he
had with him, and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth
against the Philistine.
41 And the Philistine came on, and drew nigh against David,
42 and his armorbearer before him. | And when the Philistine
looked, and beheld David, he despised him. For he was a young
43 man, ruddy, and of a comely countenance. | And the Philistine
said to David: Am I a dog, that you come to me with a staff?
44 And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. | And he said to
David: Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of
the air, and to the beasts of the earth.
45 And David said to the Philistine: You come to me with a
sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to you
in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of
46 Israel, which you have defied. | This day, and the Lord will
deliver you into my hand, and I will slay you, and take away
your head from you. And I will give the carcasses of the army
of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air, and to the
beasts of the earth: that all the earth may know that there is a
47 God in Israel. | And all this assembly shall know, that the
Lord saves not with sword and spear: for it is his battle; and
he will deliver you into our hands.

48 ***David Slays Goliath*** And when the Philistine arose and
was coming, and drew nigh to meet David, David made haste,

49 and ran to the fight to meet the Philistine. | And he put his
hand into his scrip, and took a stone, and cast it with the sling,
and fetching it about struck the Philistine in the forehead. And
the stone was fixed in his forehead: and he fell on his face upon
50 the earth. | And David prevailed over the Philistine, with a
sling and a stone: and he struck, and slew the Philistine. And
51 as David had no sword in his hand, | he ran, and stood over
the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath,
and slew him, and cut off his head. And the Philistines seeing
52 that their champion was dead, fled away. | And the men of
Israel and Juda rising up shouted, and pursued after the Philis-
tines till they came to the valley and to the gates of Accaron,
and there fell *many* wounded of the Philistines in the way of
53 Saraim, and as far as Geth, and as far as Accaron. | And the
children of Israel returning, after they had pursued the Philis-
tines, fell upon their camp.
54 And David taking the head of the Philistine brought it to
55 Jerusalem: but his armor he put in his tent. | Now at the time
that Saul saw David going out against the Philistines, he
said to Abner the captain of the army: Of what family is this
young man descended, Abner? And Abner said: As your soul
56 lives, O king, I know not. | And the king said: Inquire, whose
57 son this man is. | And when David returned, after the Philistine
was slain, Abner took him, and brought him in before Saul, with
58 the head of the Philistine in his hand. | And Saul said to him:
Young man, of what family are you? And David said: I am
the son of your servant Isai the Bethlehemite.

18

1 ***Friendship of Jonathan and David*** And it came to pass,
when he had made an end of speaking to Saul, the soul of
Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved
2 him as his own soul. | And Saul took him that day, and would
3 not let him return to his father's house. And David and
Jonathan made a covenant: for he loved him as his own soul. |
4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the coat with which he was
clothed, and gave it to David, and the rest of his garments,
even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.
5 And David went out to whatsoever business Saul sent him,

17, 55—18, 5: This account of David's introduction to king Saul's court differs from the other in 16, 18-23.

18, 4: The Arabs today still exchange arms and garments as a sign of deep friendship because each would be wearing something exhibiting the personality of the other. See Homer's *Iliad* for a parallel example between Glaucus and Diomedes exchanging armor.

and he behaved himself prudently: and Saul set him over the soldiers, and he was acceptable in the eyes of all the people, and
6 especially in the eyes of Saul's servants. | Now when David returned, after he slew the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul,
7 with timbrels of joy, and cornets. | And the women sang as they played. And they said: Saul slew his thousands, and David his
8 ten thousands. | And Saul was exceeding angry, and this word was displeasing in his eyes, and he said: They have given David ten thousands, and to me they have given *but* a thousand.
9 What can he have more but the kingdom? | And Saul did not
10 look on David with a good eye from that day forward, and the day after, the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of his house. And David played with his hand as at other times. And Saul held a spear in his hand, |
11 and threw it, thinking to nail David to the wall: and David stepped aside out of his presence twice.

12 And Saul feared David, because the Lord was with him, and
13 had departed from himself. | Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him a captain over a thousand men: and he
14 went out and came in before the people. | And David behaved
15 wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. | And Saul saw that he was exceeding prudent, and began to beware of
16 him. | But all Israel and Juda loved David, for he came in and
17 went out before them. | And Saul said to David: Behold my elder daughter Merob: her will I give you to wife: only be a valiant man, and fight the battles of the Lord. Now Saul said within himself: Let not my hand be upon him, but let the hands
18 of the Philistines be upon him. | And David said to Saul: Who am I, or what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I
19 should be son-in-law of the king? | And it came to pass at the time when Merob the daughter of Saul should have been given to David, that she was given to Hadriel the Molathite to wife.

20 ***David Marries Saul's Daughter*** But Michol the other daughter of Saul loved David. And it was told Saul, and it
21 pleased him. | And Saul said: I will give her to him, that she may be a stumbling block to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be upon him. And Saul said to David: In two
22 things you shall be my son-in-law this day. | And Saul commanded his servants to speak to David privately, saying: Behold you please the king; and all his servants love you. Now
23 therefore be the king's son-in-law. | And the servants of Saul spoke all these words in the ears of David. And David said:

Does it seem to you a small matter to be the king's son-in-law?
24 But I am a poor man, and of small ability. | And the servants
of Saul told him, saying: Such words as these has David spoken.
25 | And Saul said: Speak thus to David: The king desires not
any dowry, but only a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to
be avenged of the king's enemies. Now Saul thought to deliver
26 David into the hands of the Philistines. | And when his servants
had told David the words that Saul had said, the word was
pleasing in the eyes of David to be the king's son-in-law. |
27 And after a few days David rose up, and went with the men
that were under him. And he slew of the Philistines two hun-
dred men, and brought their foreskins and numbered them out
to the king, that he might be his son-in-law. Saul therefore gave
him Michol his daughter to wife.
28 And Saul saw, and understood that the Lord was with David.
29 And Michol the daughter of Saul loved him. | And Saul began
to fear David more: and Saul became David's enemy continu-
30 ally. | And the princes of the Philistines went forth: and from
the beginning of their going forth, David behaved himself more
wisely than all the servants of Saul. And his name became very
famous.

19

1 ***Saul again Seeks to Kill David*** And Saul spoke to Jona-
than his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David.
2 But Jonathan the son of Saul loved David exceedingly. | And
Jonathan told David, saying: Saul my father seeks to kill you.
Wherefore look to yourself, I beseech you, in the morning; and
3 you shall abide in a secret place and shall hide. | And I will go
out and stand beside my father in the field where you are. And
I will speak of you to my father; and whatsoever I shall see, I
4 will tell you. | And Jonathan spoke good things of David to
Saul his father; and said to him: Sin not, O king, against your
servant, David, because he has not sinned against you; and his
5 works are very good toward you. | And he put his life in his
hand, and slew the Philistine; and the Lord wrought great sal-
vation for all Israel. You saw it and did rejoice. Why therefore
will you sin against innocent blood by killing David, who is
without fault?
6 And when Saul heard this he was appeased with the words of
Jonathan, and swore: As the Lord lives he shall not be slain. |
7 Then Jonathan called David and told him all these words. And
Jonathan brought in David to Saul: and he was before him, as
8 he had been yesterday and the day before. | And the war began

again. And David went out and fought against the Philistines, and defeated them with a great slaughter: and they fled from his face.

9 *David Escapes from Saul* And the evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul: and he sat in his house, and held a spear in his
10 hand. And David played with his hand. | And Saul endeavored to nail David to the wall with his spear. And David slipped away out of the presence of Saul: and the spear missed him, and was fastened in the wall. And David fled and escaped that
11 night. | Saul therefore sent his guards to David's house to watch him, that he might be killed in the morning. And when Michol David's wife had told him this, saying: Unless you save
12 yourself this night, tomorrow you will die. | She let him down through a window. And he went and fled away and escaped. |
13 And Michol took an image and laid it on the bed: and put a goat's skin with the hair at the head of it, and covered it with
14 clothes. | And Saul sent officers to seize David: and it was
15 answered that he was sick. | And again Saul sent to see David, saying: Bring him to me in the bed, that he may be slain. |
16 And when the messengers came in, they found an image upon
17 the bed, and a goat's skin at its head. | And Saul said to Michol: Why have you deceived me so, and let my enemy go and flee away? And Michol answered Saul: Because he said to me: Let me go, or else I will kill you.

18 But David fled and escaped, and came to Samuel in Ramatha, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel
19 went and dwelt in Najoth. | And it was told Saul by some, say-
20 ing: Behold David is in Najoth in Ramatha. | So Saul sent officers to take David: and when they saw a company of prophets prophesying, and Samuel presiding over them, the spirit of the Lord came also upon them, and they likewise began
21 to prophesy. | And when this was told Saul, he sent other messengers; but they also prophesied. And again Saul sent messengers the third time: and they prophesied also. And Saul
22 being exceedingly angry, | went also himself to Ramatha, and came as far as the great cistern, which is in Socho, and he asked, and said: In what place are Samuel and David? And it was told
23 him: Behold they are in Najoth in Ramatha. | And he went to Najoth in Ramatha. And the spirit of the Lord came upon him also; and he went on, and prophesied till he came to Najoth in
24 Ramatha. | And he stripped himself also of his garments, and prophesied with the rest before Samuel, and lay down naked all

19, 20-24: See 10, 5 n, for an explanation of "prophets."

that day and night. This gave occasion to a proverb: What! I
Saul too among the prophets?

20

1 ***Jonathan's Kindness to David*** But David fled from Na
joth, which is in Ramatha, and came and said to Jonathan
What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what *is* my sir
2 against your father, that he seeks my life? | And he said to him
God forbid, you shall not die: for my father will do nothin
great or little, without first telling me. Has then my fathe
3 hidden this word only from me? No: this shall not be. | An
he swore again to David. And David said: Your father cer
tainly knows that I have found grace in your sight; and he wil
say: Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved. But truly
as the Lord lives, and your soul lives, there is but one step (a
4 I may say) between me and death. | And Jonathan said t
David: Whatsoever your soul shall say to me, I will do for you
5 | And David said to Jonathan: Behold tomorrow is the new
moon, and I according to custom am wont to sit beside the kin
to eat. Let me go then that I may hide in the field till the evenin
6 of the third day. | If your father should look and inquire fo
me, you shall answer him: David asked me that he might ru
to Bethlehem his own city: because there are solemn sacrifice
7 there for all his tribe. | If he shall say: *It is well:* your servan
shall have peace. But if he be angry, know that his malice ha
8 come to its height. | Deal mercifully then with your servant
for you have brought me your servant into a covenant of th
Lord with you. But if there be any iniquity in me, kill me your
self, and bring me not in to your father.
9 And Jonathan said: Far be this from you: for, if I shoul
certainly know that evil is determined by my father against you
I could do no otherwise than tell you.
10 And David answered Jonathan: Who shall bring me word
if your father should answer you harshly concerning me?
11 And Jonathan said to David: Come and let us go out into th
field. And when they were both of them gone out into the field
12 | Jonathan said to David: O Lord God of Israel, if I shall dis
cover my father's mind, tomorrow or the day after, and ther
be any thing good for David, and I send not immediately t
13 you, and make it known to you, | may the Lord do so and s
to Jonathan, and add still more. But if my father shall continu
in malice against you, I will discover it to your ear; and wil
send you away, that you may go in peace, and the Lord be with
14 you, as he has been with my father. | And if I live, you shal
15 show me the kindness of the Lord: but if I die, | you shall no

take away your kindness from my house for ever, when the Lord shall have rooted out the enemies of David, every one of them from the earth. May he take away Jonathan from his house: and may the Lord require it at the hands of David's enemies.

The Friends Make a Covenant Jonathan therefore made a covenant with the house of David: and the Lord required it at the hands of David's enemies. | And Jonathan swore again to David, because he loved him: for he loved him as his own soul.

And Jonathan said to him: Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed: | for your seat will be empty till after tomorrow. So you shall go down quickly, and come to the place, where you must be hidden on the day when it is lawful to work; and you shall remain beside the stone, which is called Ezel. | And I will shoot three arrows near it, and will shoot as if I were exercising myself at a mark. | And I will send a boy, saying to him: Go and fetch me the arrows. | If I shall say to the boy: Behold the arrows are on this side of you, take them up: come to me, because there is peace to you, and there is no evil, as the Lord lives. But if I shall speak thus to the boy: Behold the arrows are beyond you: go in peace, for the Lord has sent you away. | And concerning the word which I and you have spoken, the Lord be between you and me for ever.

So David was hidden in the field. And the new moon came: and the king sat down to eat bread. | And when the king sat down upon his chair (according to custom) which was beside the wall, Jonathan arose; and Abner sat by Saul's side; and David's place appeared empty. | And Saul said nothing that day: for he thought it might have happened to him, that he was not clean, nor purified.

And when the second day after the new moon had come, David's place appeared empty again. And Saul said to Jonathan his son: Why did the son of Isai not come to meat neither yesterday nor today? | And Jonathan answered Saul: He asked leave of me earnestly to go to Bethlehem. | And he said: Let me go, for there is a solemn sacrifice in the city. One of my brethren has sent for me; and now if I have found favor in your eyes, I will go quickly, and see my brethren. For this cause he came not to the king's table.

Saul's Anger against Jonathan Then Saul being angry against Jonathan said to him: You son of a woman that is the ravisher of a man, do I not know that you love the son of Isai

to your own confusion and to the confusion of your shameles
31 mother? | For as long as the son of Isai lives upon earth, yo
shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Therefore nov
presently send, and fetch him to me: for he is the son of death
32 | And Jonathan answering Saul his father, said: Why shall h
33 die: what has he done? | And Saul caught up a spear to strik
him. And Jonathan understood that it was determined by hi
34 father to kill David. | So Jonathan rose from the table in grea
anger, and did not eat bread on the second day after the nev
moon. For he was grieved for David, because his father ha
put him to confusion.
35 And when the morning came, Jonathan went into the field
according to the appointment with David, and a little bo
36 with him. | And he said to his boy: Go, and fetch me th
arrows which I shoot. And when the boy ran, he shot anothe
37 arrow beyond the boy. | The boy therefore came to the plac
of the arrow which Jonathan had shot: and Jonathan crie
after the boy, and said: Behold the arrow is there further be
38 yond you. | And Jonathan cried again after the boy, saying
Make haste speedily, stand not. And Jonathan's boy gathere
39 up the arrows, and brought them to his master. | And he knev
not at all what it meant: for only Jonathan and David knev
40 the matter. | Jonathan therefore gave his arms to the boy, an
said to him: Go, and carry them into the city.
41 And when the boy was gone, David rose out of his plac
which was toward the south; and falling on his face to th
ground, adored thrice. And kissing one another, they wep
42 together, but David more. | And Jonathan said to David: G
in peace. And let all stand that we have sworn both of us i
the name of the Lord, saying: The Lord be between me an
43 you, and between my seed and your seed for ever. | And Davi
arose, and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

21

1 ***David Receives Holy Bread*** And David came to Nobe t
Achimelech the priest: and Achimelech was astonished a
David's coming. And he said to him: Why are you alone, an
2 no man with you? | And David said to Achimelech the priest
The king has commanded me a business, and said: Let no ma
know the thing for which you are sent by me, and what manne
or commands I have given you. And I have appointed my serv
3 ants to such and such a place. | Now therefore if you have an
thing at hand, though it were but five loaves, give me, or what

20, 31: This verse, and 23, 17, illustrate that the palm of true friend

soever you can find. | And the priest answered David, saying: I
have no common bread at hand, but only holy bread, if the
young men be clean, especially from women? | And David
answered the priest, and said to him: Truly, as to what concerns
women, we have refrained ourselves from yesterday and the day
before, when we came out, and the vessels of the young men
were holy. Now this way is defiled, but it shall also be sanc-
tified this day in the vessels. | The priest therefore gave him
hallowed bread: for there was no bread there, but only the
loaves of proposition, which had been taken away from before
the face of the Lord, that hot loaves might be set up.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that
day, within the tabernacle of the Lord: and his name was Doeg,
an Edomite, the first of Saul's herdsmen.

8 And David said to Achimelech: Have you here at hand a
spear, or a sword? For I brought not my own sword, nor my
own weapons with me, for the king's business required haste. |
9 And the priest said: Lo, here is the sword of Goliath the Philis-
tine whom you slew in the valley of Terebinth, wrapped up in
a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take this, take it: for here
is no other but this. And David said: There is none like that.
Give it to me.

10 And David arose and fled that day from the face of Saul:
11 and came to Achis the king of Geth. | And the servants of Achis,
when they saw David, said to him: Is not this David the king
of the land? Did they not sing to him in their dances, saying:
Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? |
12 But David laid up these words in his heart, and was exceedingly
13 afraid at the face of Achis the king of Geth. | And he changed
his countenance before them, and slipped down between their
hands. And he stumbled against the doors of the gate; and his
14 spittle ran down upon his beard. | And Achis said to his serv-
ants: You saw the man *was* mad. Why have you brought him
15 to me? | Have we need of madmen, that you have brought in
this fellow, to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fel-
low come into my house?

22

1 ***Many Resort to David*** David therefore went from thence
and fled to the cave of Odollam. And when his brethren, and

---

hip goes to Jonathan, for he had everything to lose, whereas David had
verything to gain.

21, 5: *Vessels:* bodies. Since only the priests could eat the sacred
oaves kept in the Ark, Achimelech is willing to make an exception be-

all his father's house had heard of it, they went down to him
2 thither. | And all that were in distress and oppressed with debt,
and under affliction of mind gathered themselves unto him.
And he became their prince. And there were with him about
3 four hundred men. | And David departed from thence into
Maspha of Moab. And he said to the king of Moab: let my fa-
ther and my mother tarry with you, I beseech you, till I know
4 what God will do for me. | And he left them under the eyes of
the king of Moab: and they abode with him all the days that
5 David was in the hold. | And Gad the prophet said to David:
Abide not in the hold, depart, and go into the land of Juda. And
David departed, and came into the forest of Haret.

6 And Saul heard that David was seen, and the men that were
with him. Now, while Saul abode in Gabaa, and was in the
wood, which is by Rama, having his spear in his hand, and all
7 his servants were standing about him, | he said to his servants
that stood about him: Hear me now, sons of Jemini: Will the
son of Isai give every one of you fields, and vineyards, and
8 make you all tribunes, and centurions: | that all of you have
conspired against me, and there is no one to inform me, espe-
cially when even my son has entered into league with the son
of Isai? There is not one of you that pities my case, nor that
gives me any information: because my son has raised up my
servant against me, plotting against me to this day.

9 ***Doeg Accuses Achimelech*** And Doeg the Edomite who
stood by, and was the chief among the servants of Saul, an-
swering, said: I saw the son of Isai, in Nobe, with Achimelech
10 the son of Achitob the priest. | And he consulted the Lord for
him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath
the Philistine.

11 Then the king sent to call for Achimelech the priest the son
of Achitob, and all his father's house, the priests that were in
12 Nobe; and they came all of them to the king. | And Saul said
to Achimelech: Hear, you son of Achitob. He answered: Here
13 I am, my lord. | And Saul said to him: Why have you con-
spired against me, you, and the son of Isai? And you have given
him bread and a sword, and have consulted the Lord for him,

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cause David was starving, but the priest demanded sexual abstinence just as the priests had to observe before eating the sacred loaves.

22, 3-4: See Introduction to the Book of Ruth for this as an indication of Ruth's historicity.

22, 9-10: Doeg, sometimes called the Iago of Hebrew History, will feel no dread in slaughtering the priests (vv. 18-19) because of his Edomite background, though apparently a convert.

that he should rise up against me, continuing a traitor to this
14 day. | And Achimelech answering the king, said: And who
among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the
king's son-in-law, and goes forth at your bidding, and is honor-
15 able in your house? | Did I begin today to consult the Lord for
him? Far be this from me. Let not the king suspect such a thing
against his servant, *or any one* in all my father's house: for
your servant knew nothing of this matter, either little or great.

16 ***Saul Kills the Priests*** And the king said: Dying you shall
17 die, Achimelech. You and all your father's house. | And the
king said to the messengers that stood about him: Turn, and
kill the priests of the Lord. For their hand is with David: be-
cause they knew that he had fled; and they told it not to me.
And the king's servants would not put forth their hands against
18 the priests of the Lord. | And the king said to Doeg: Turn, and
fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and fell
upon the priests, and slew in that day eighty-five men that wore
19 the linen ephod. | And Nobe the city of the priests he smote
with the edge of his sword, both men and women, children,
and sucklings, and ox and ass, and sheep, with the edge of the
sword.
20 But one of the sons of Achimelech the son of Achitob, whose
21 name was Abiathar, escaped, and fled to David, | and told him
22 that Saul had slain the priests of the Lord. | And David said to
Abiathar: I knew that day when Doeg the Edomite was there,
that without doubt he would tell Saul: I have been the occasion
23 of the death of all the souls of your father's house. | Abide
with me, fear not: for he that seeks my life, seeks your life also;
and with me you shall be saved.

23
1 ***David Rescues Ceila*** And they told David, saying: Be-
hold the Philistines fight against Ceila; and they rob the barns.
2 | Therefore David consulted the Lord, saying: Shall I go and
smite these Philistines? And the Lord said to David: Go. And
3 you shall smite the Philistines, and save Ceila. | And the men
that were with David, said to him: Behold we are in fear here
in Judea. How much more if we go to Ceila against the bands
4 of the Philistines? | Therefore David consulted the Lord again.
And he answered and said to him: Arise, and go to Ceila: for I
5 will deliver the Philistines into your hand. | David therefore,
and his men, went to Ceila, and fought against the Philistines;

22, 22: A reference to 21, 7.

and brought away their cattle, and made a great slaughter of
6 them: and David saved the inhabitants of Ceila. | Now at that
time, when Abiathar the son of Achimelech fled to David to
Ceila, he came down having an ephod with him.
7 And it was told Saul that David had come to Ceila. And
Saul said: The Lord has delivered him into my hands; and
he is shut up, having come into a city, that has gates and bars
8 | And Saul commanded all the people to go down to fight against
9 Ceila, and to besiege David, and his men. | Now when David
understood, that Saul secretly prepared evil against him, he said
10 to Abiathar the priest: Bring hither the ephod. | And David
said: O Lord God of Israel, your servant has heard a report
that Saul designs to come to Ceila, to destroy the city for my
11 sake. | Will the men of Ceila deliver me into his hands? And
will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord God
of Israel, tell your servant. And the Lord said: He will come
12 down. | And David said: Will the men of Ceila deliver me
and my men, into the hands of Saul? And the Lord said: They
13 will deliver you up. | Then David and his men, who were about
six hundred, arose, and departing from Ceila, wandered up and
down uncertain where they should stay. And it was told Saul
that David had fled from Ceila, and had escaped: wherefore
he forbore to go out.

14 *David in the Desert* But David abode in the desert in
strongholds; and he remained in a mountain of the desert of
Ziph, in a woody hill. And Saul sought him always: but the
15 Lord delivered him not into his hands. | And David saw that
Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the desert
16 of Ziph, in a wood. | And Jonathan the son of Saul arose, and
went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hands in
17 God. And he said to him: | Fear not, for the hand of my father
Saul shall not find you: and you shall reign over Israel: and I
18 shall be next to you. Yea, and my father knows this. | And the
two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the
wood, but Jonathan returned to his house.
19 And the Ziphites went up to Saul in Gabaa, saying: Lo, does
not David lie hidden with us in the strongholds of the wood
in mount Hachila, which is on the right hand of the desert?
20 Now therefore come down, as your soul has desired to come
down: and it shall be our business to deliver him into the king's
21 hands. | And Saul said: Blessed be you of the Lord; for you
22 have pitied my case. | Go therefore, I pray you, and use all
diligence, and curiously inquire, and consider the place where

his foot is, and who has seen him there. For he thinks of me, that I lie craftily in wait for him.

23 ***Saul Pursues David*** Consider and see all his lurking holes, wherein he is hidden; and return to me with the certainty of the thing, that I may go with you. And if he should even go down into the earth to hide himself, I will search him out in all the
24 thousands of Juda. | And they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. And David and his men were in the desert of Maon, in the
25 plain at the right hand of Jesimon. | Then Saul and his men went to seek him. And it was told David: and forthwith he went down to the rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul had heard of it he pursued after David in the
26 wilderness of Maon. | And Saul went on this side of the mountain: and David and his men were on other side of the mountain. And David despaired of being able to escape from the face of Saul. And Saul and his men encompassed David and his
27 men round about to take them. | And a messenger came to Saul, saying: Make haste to come, for the Philistines have poured in
28 themselves upon the land. | Wherefore Saul returned, leaving the pursuit of David, and went to meet the Philistines. For this cause they called that place, the Rock of Division.

24

1 ***David Spares Saul's Life*** Then David went up from
2 thence, and dwelt in strongholds of Engaddi. | And when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, they told him, say-
3 ing: Behold, David is in the desert of Engaddi. | Saul therefore took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went out to seek after David, and his men, even upon the most craggy
4 rocks, which are accessible only to wild goats. | And he came to the sheepcotes, which were in his way. And there was a cave, into which Saul went, to ease nature. Now David and his men lay hidden in the inner part of the cave.

5 And the servants of David said to him: Behold the day, of which the Lord said to you: I will deliver your enemy unto you, that you may do to him as it shall seem good in your eyes. Then David arose, and secretly cut off the hem of Saul's robe. |
6 After which David's heart struck him, because he had cut off
7 the hem of Saul's robe. | And he said to his men: The Lord be merciful unto me, that I may do no such thing to my master the

24, 1-23: This account shows that David may well have entertained a double motive in sparing Saul's life. If David killed Saul it would not later help his claim to the throne.

Lord's anointed, as to lay my hand upon him, because he is the
8 Lord's anointed. | And David stopped his men with his words,
and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rising up
9 out of the cave, went on his way. | And David also rose up
after him: and going out of the cave cried after Saul, saying:
My lord the king. And Saul looked behind him: and David
bowing himself down to the ground, worshiped.

10 ***David Appeals to Saul*** And he said to Saul: Why do you
11 hear the words of men that say, David seeks your hurt? | Be-
hold this day your eyes have seen, that the Lord has delivered
you into my hand, in the cave, and I had a thought to kill you,
but my eye has spared you. For I said: I will not put out my
hand against my lord, because he is the Lord's anointed. |
12 Moreover see and know, O my father, the hem of your robe in
my hand, that when I cut off the hem of your robe, I would
not put out my hand against you. Reflect, and see, that there is
no evil in my hand, nor iniquity, neither have I sinned against
13 you: but you lie in wait for my life, to take it away. | The Lord
judge between me and you; and the Lord revenge me of you:
14 but my hand shall not be upon you. | As also it is said in the
old proverb: *From the wicked shall wickedness come forth.*
Therefore my hand shall not be upon you. After whom do you
15 come out, O king of Israel? | After whom do you pursue? After
16 a dead dog? After a flea? | Be the Lord judge; and judge be-
tween me and you; and see, and judge my cause; and deliver
me out of your hand.
17 And when David had made an end of speaking these words
to Saul, Saul said: Is this your voice, my son David? And Saul
18 lifted up his voice, and wept. | And he said to David: You are
more just than I. For you have done good to me; and I have
19 rewarded you with evil. | And you have shown this day what
good things you have done to me: how the Lord delivered me
20 into your hand; and you have not killed me. | For who when
he has found his enemy, will let him go well away? But the
Lord reward you for this good turn, for what you have done to
21 me this day. | And now as I know that you shall surely be
22 king, and have the kingdom of Israel in your hand: | swear to
me by the Lord, that you will not destroy my seed after me, nor
23 take away my name from the house of my father. | And David
swore to Saul. So Saul went home: and David and his men
went up into safer places.

24, 19-22: Underlying these events is the conviction of how God deeply pervades human life.

25

1 *Samuel Dies* And Samuel died. And all Israel was gathered together; and they mourned for him, and buried him in his house in Ramatha. And David rose and went down into the wilderness of Pharan.

2 Now there was a certain man in the wilderness of Maon, and his possessions were in Carmel. And the man was very great: and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats. And it happened that he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. |

3 Now the name of the man was Nabal: and the name of his wife was Abigail. And she was a prudent and very comely woman; but her husband was churlish, and very bad and ill

4 natured. And he was of the house of Caleb. | And when David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, |

5 he sent ten young men, and said to them: Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and salute him in my name with peace. |

6 And you shall say: Peace be to my brethren, and to you, and

7 peace to your house, and peace to all that you have. | I heard that your shepherds that were with us in the desert were shearing. We never molested them: neither was there aught missing to them of the flock at any time, all the while they were with

8 us in Carmel. | Ask your servants, and they will tell you. Now therefore let your servants find favor in your eyes: for we have come in a good day. Whatsoever your hand shall find give to your servants, and to your son David.

9 *Nabal Refuses David* And when David's servants came, they spoke to Nabal all these words in David's name: and then

10 held their peace. | But Nabal answering the servants of David, said: Who is David? And what is the son of Isai? Servants are

11 multiplied nowadays who flee from their masters. | Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and the flesh of my cattle, which I have killed for my shearers, and give to men whom I

12 know not whence they are? | So the servants of David went back their way: and returning came and told him all the words

13 that he said. | Then David said to his young men: Let every man gird on his sword. And they girded on every man his sword. And David also girded on his sword: and there followed David about four hundred men. And two hundred remained with the baggage.

14 But one of the servants told Abigail the wife of Nabal, say-

25, 2: *Carmel:* this is not the district of the famous Mount Carmel in the north, but another Carmel fifteen miles west of the Dead Sea.
25, 4-11: Nabal refuses to give food to David's men.

ing: Behold David sent messengers out of the wilderness, to
15 salute our master; and he rejected them. | These men were very
good to us, and gave us no trouble: neither did we ever lose any
thing all the time that we conversed with them in the desert. |
16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while
17 we were with them keeping the sheep. | Wherefore consider,
and think what you have to do: for evil is determined against
your husband, and against your house. And he is a son of
18 Belial, so that no man can speak to him. | Then Abigail made
haste and took two hundred loaves, and two vessels of wine,
and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched
corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes
19 of dry figs, and laid them upon asses. | And she said to her
servants: Go before me. Behold I will follow after you. But she
told not her husband Nabal.

20 ***Abigail Appeases David*** And when she had gotten upon
an ass, and was coming down to the foot of the mountain,
David and his men came down over against her, and she met
21 them. | And David said: Truly in vain have I kept all that
belonged to this *man* in the wilderness, and nothing was lost
of all that pertained unto him: and he has returned me evil for
22 good. | May God do so and so, and add more to the foes of
David, if I leave of all that belongs to him till the morning,
23 any male. | And when Abigail saw David she made haste and
lighted off the ass, and fell before David, on her face, and
24 adored upon the ground. | And she fell at his feet, and said:
Upon me let this iniquity be, my lord. Let your handmaid speak,
I beseech you, in your ears: and hear the words of your servant.
25 Let not my lord the king, I pray, regard this naughty man
Nabal: for according to his name, he is a fool, and folly is with
him: but I your handmaid did not see your servants, my lord,
26 whom you sent. | Now therefore, my lord, the Lord lives, and
your soul lives, who has withheld you from coming to blood,
and has saved your hand to you: and now let your enemies be
27 as Nabal, and all they that seek evil to my lord. | Wherefore
receive this blessing, which your handmaid has brought to you,
my lord: and give it to the young men that follow you, my
28 lord. | Forgive the iniquity of your handmaid: for the Lord will
surely make for my lord a faithful house, because you, my lord,

25, 17: *Son of Belial:* a worthless fellow.

25, 23-31: To save her husband, Abigail astutely appeals to David, saying that it would be to his advantage to have bloodless hands when he will later make his bid for the throne.

fight the battles of the Lord. Let not evil therefore be found in
29 you all the days of your life. | For if a man at any time shall
rise, and persecute you, and seek your life, the soul of my lord
shall be kept, as in the bundle of the living, with the Lord your
God. But the souls of your enemies shall be whirled, as with
30 the violence and whirling of a sling. | And when the Lord shall
have done to you, my lord, all the good that he has spoken
concerning you, and shall have made you prince over Israel, |
31 this shall not be an occasion of grief to you, and a scruple of
heart to my lord, that you have shed innocent blood, or have
revenged yourself: and when the Lord shall have done well by
my Lord, you shall remember your handmaid.
32 And David said to Abilgail: Blessed be the Lord the God of
Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your
33 speech. | And blessed be you, who have kept me today, from
34 coming to blood, and revenging me with my own hand. | Other-
wise, *as* the Lord lives the God of Israel, who has withheld me
from doing you any evil: if you had not quickly come to meet
me, there had not been left to Nabal by the morning light any
35 male. | And David received at her hand all that she had brought
him, and said to her: Go in peace into your house. Behold I have
heard your voice, and have honored your face.

36 ***Nabal Dies*** And Abigail came to Nabal. And behold he
had a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's
heart was merry: for he was very drunk: and she told him
37 nothing less or more until morning. | But early in the morning
when Nabal had digested his wine, his wife told him these
words and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.
38 | And after ten days had passed, the Lord struck Nabal, and
39 he died. | And when David had heard that Nabal was dead,
he said: Blessed be the Lord, who has judged the cause of my
reproach at the hand of Nabal, and has kept his servant from
evil; and the Lord has returned the wickedness of Nabal upon
his head. Then David sent and treated with Abigail, that he
40 might take her to himself for a wife. | And David's servants
came to Abigail to Carmel, and spoke to her, saying: David has
sent us to you, to take you to himself for a wife.

41 ***David Marries Abigail*** And she arose and bowed herself
down with her face to the earth, and said: Behold, let your
servant be a handmaid, to wash the feet of the servants of my

25, 37-38: It may have been a heart attack. Everything is attributed directly to God.

42 lord. | And Abigail arose, and made haste, and got upon an ass,
and five damsels went with her, her waiting maids, and she
followed the messengers of David, and became his wife.
43 Moreover David took also Achinoam of Jezrahel: and they
44 were both of them his wives. | But Saul gave Michol his
daughter, David's wife, to Phalti, the son of Lais, who was of
Gallium.

26

1 ***Saul Goes after David*** And the men of Ziph came to
Saul in Gabaa, saying: Behold David is hidden in the hill of
2 Hachila, which is over against the wilderness. | And Saul arose,
and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having with him
three thousand chosen men of Israel, to seek David in the
3 wilderness of Ziph. | And Saul encamped in Gabaa Hachila,
which was over against the wilderness in the way: and David
abode in the wilderness. And seeing that Saul had come after
4 him into the wilderness, | he sent spies, and learned that he
5 most certainly had come thither. | And David arose secretly,
and came to the place where Saul was. And when he had beheld
the place, wherein Saul slept, and Abner the son of Ner, the
captain of his army, and Saul sleeping in a tent, and the rest of
the multitude round about him.
6 David spoke to Achimelech the Hethite, and Abisai the son
of Sarvia the brother of Joab, saying: Who will go down with
me to Saul into the camp? And Abisai said: I will go with you.

7 ***David in the Tent of Saul*** So David and Abisai came
to the people by night, and found Saul lying and sleeping in
the tent, and his spear fixed in the ground at his head: and
8 Abner and the people sleeping round about him. | And Abisai
said to David: God has shut up your enemy this day into your
hands. Now then I will run him through with my spear even
to the earth at once; and there shall be no need of a second
9 time. | And David said to Abisai: Kill him not: for who shall
put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and shall be
10 guiltless? | And David said: As the Lord lives, unless the Lord
shall strike him: or his day shall come to die, or he shall go
11 down to battle and perish; | the Lord be merciful unto me,
that I extend not my hand upon the Lord's anointed. But now
take the spear, which is at his head, and the cup of water, and

26, 1-25: Since the same introduction of the "men of Ziph" seeking David occurs in ch. 24 and here, some scholars believe these to be two different traditions of only one event in which David spared Saul's life.

12 let us go. | So David took the spear, and the cup of water which was at Saul's head, and they went away. And no man saw it, or knew it, or awakened, but they were all asleep, for a
13 deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them. | And when David had gone over to the other side, and stood on the top of the hill afar off, and a good space was between them, |
14 David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying: Will you not answer, Abner? And Abner answering, said: Who are you that cries and disturbs the king?

15 ***David Reproves Abner*** And David said to Abner: Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept your lord the king? For there came one of the peo-
16 ple in to kill the king your lord. | This thing is not good, that you have done. As the Lord lives, you are the sons of death, who have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now where is the king's spear, and the cup of water, which was at his head?
17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said: Is this your voice, my son David? And David said: It is my voice, my lord the
18 king. | And he said: Wherefore does my lord persecute his servant? What have I done? Or what evil is there in my hand? |
19 Now therefore hear, I pray you, my lord the king, the words of your servant: If the Lord stirs you up against me, let him accept of sacrifice: but if the sons of men, they are cursed in the sight of the Lord, who have cast me out this day, that I should not dwell in the inheritance of the Lord, saying: Go, serve strange
20 gods. | And now let not my blood be shed upon the earth before the Lord: for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as the partridge is hunted in the mountains.

21 ***Saul Confesses His Fault*** And Saul said: I have sinned. Return, my son, David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life has been precious in your eyes this day: for it appears that I have done foolishly, and have been ignorant in
22 very many things. | And David answering, said: Behold the king's spear. Let one of the king's servants come over and fetch
23 it. | And the Lord will reward every one according to his justice, and his faithfulness: for the Lord has delivered you this day into my hand, and I would not put forth my hand

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26, 19: If God wants Saul to punish David for his sins, then David will offer sacrifice to God; but if Saul is receiving advice to kill David, then God will punish the evil advisers for they want David to "serve strange gods," i.e., to go into exile.

24 against the Lord's anointed. | And as your life has been much
set by this day in my eyes, so let my life be much set by in the
eyes of the Lord: and let him deliver me from all distress. |
25 Then Saul said to David: Blessed are you, my son David: and
truly doing you shall do, and prevailing you shall prevail. And
David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

27

1 ***David Goes again to Geth*** And David said in his heart:
I shall one day or other fall into the hands of Saul. Is it not
better for me to flee, and to be saved in the land of the Philis-
tines, that Saul may despair of me, and cease to seek me in all
2 the coasts of Israel? I will flee then out of his hands. | And
David arose and went away, both he and the six hundred men
that were with him, to Achis the son of Maoch, king of Geth. |
3 And David dwelt with Achis at Geth, he and his men: every
man with his household, and David with his two wives, Achi-
noam the Jezrahelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal of
4 Carmel. | And it was told Saul that David had fled to Geth:
and he sought no more after him.
5 And David said to Achis: If I have found favor in your
sight, let a place be given me in one of the cities of this country,
that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in
6 the royal city with you? | Then Achis gave him Siceleg that
day: for which reason Siceleg belongs to the kings of Juda unto
this day.

7 ***David Dwells among the Philistines*** And the time that
David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was four months.
8 | And David and his men went up, and pillaged Gessuri, and
Gerzi, and the Amalecites: for these were of old the inhabitants
of the countries, as men go to Sur, even to the land of Egypt. |
9 And David wasted all the land, and left neither man nor
woman alive: and took away the sheep and the oxen, and the
asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came
10 to Achis. | And Achis said to him: Whom have you gone
against today? David answered: Against the south of Juda,
and against the south of Jerameel, and against the south of
11 Ceni. | And David saved neither man nor woman, neither
brought he any of them to Geth, saying: Lest they should
speak against us. So did David, and such was his proceeding
all the days that he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. |

27, 8-12: David makes his Philistine overlord, Achis, believe that he is fighting the Israelites when he is really fighting southern tribes.

12 And Achis believed David, saying: He has done much harm to
his people Israel; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

28

1 ***Saul Invokes a Witch*** And it came to pass in those days,
that the Philistines gathered together their armies to be pre-
pared for war against Israel. And Achis said to David: Know
now assuredly, that you shall go out with me to the war,
2 you, and your men. | And David said to Achis: Now you shall
know what your servant will do. And Achis said to David: And
I will appoint you to guard my life for ever.
3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel mourned for him, and
buried him in Ramatha his city. And Saul had put away all the
4 magicians and soothsayers out of the land. | And the Philis-
tines were gathered together, and came and camped in Sunam.
And Saul also gathered together all Israel, and came to Gelboe.
5 | And Saul saw the army of the Philistines, and was afraid:
6 and his heart was very much dismayed. | And he consulted the
Lord, and he answered him not; neither by dreams, nor by
7 priests, nor by prophets. | And Saul said to his servants: Seek
me a woman that has a divining spirit; and I will go to her, and
inquire by her. And his servants said to him: There is a woman
8 that has a divining spirit at Endor. | Then he disguised himself
and put on other clothes. And he went, and two men with him,
and they came to the woman by night. And he said to her:
Divine to me by your divining spirit, and bring me up him
9 whom I shall tell you. | And the woman said to him: Behold
you know all that Saul has done, and how he has rooted out
the magicians and soothsayers from the land. Why then do
you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to be put to death? |
10 And Saul swore unto her by the Lord, saying: As the Lord lives
11 there shall no evil happen to you for this thing. | And the
woman said to him: Whom shall I bring up to you? And he
said: Bring me up Samuel.
12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud
voice, and said to Saul: Why have you deceived me? For you

28: This chapter is reminiscent of Atossa's calling in distress for the shade of Darius in Aeschylus' *Persians*.

28, 6: These were God's three ordinary channels of communications with His people. By "priests" the use of Urim and Thummim is implied.

28, 9: The recourse to mediums was forbidden by law (Lv 19, 31). Most Catholic scholars believe that God used the witch to bring back Samuel's spirit as Sir 46, 20 seems to attest.

28, 12: There are many scientific guesses on how the witch recognized Samuel.

13 are Saul. | And the king said to her: Fear not. What have you
seen? And the woman said to Saul: I saw gods ascending out of
14 the earth. | And he said to her: What form is he of? And she
said: An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle.
And Saul understood that it was Samuel, and he bowed himself
with his face to the ground, and adored.
15 And Samuel said to Saul: Why have you disturbed my rest,
that I should be brought up? And Saul said: I am in great
distress; for the Philistines fight against me; and God has
departed from me; and would not hear me, neither by the hand
of prophets, nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that
you may show me what I shall do.

16 ***Samuel's Message to Saul*** And Samuel said: Why do you
ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you, and has gone
17 over to your rival? | For the Lord will do to you as he spoke by
me, and he will rend your kingdom out of your hand, and will
18 give it to your neighbor David. | Because you did not obey the
voice of the Lord, neither did you execute the wrath of his
indignation upon Amalec. Therefore has the Lord done to you
19 what you suffer this day. | And the Lord also will deliver
Israel with you into the hands of the Philistines. And tomorrow
you and your sons shall be with me. And the Lord will also
deliver the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.
20 And forthwith Saul fell all along on the ground, for he was
frightened with the words of Samuel: and there was no strength
21 in him, for he had eaten no bread all that day. | And the woman
came to Saul (for he was very much troubled) and said to him:
Behold your handmaid has obeyed your voice, and I have put
my life in my hand, and I hearkened unto the words which you
22 spoke to me. | Now therefore hear you also the voice of your
handmaid: and let me set before you a morsel of bread, that
you may eat and recover strength, and be able to go on your
23 journey. | But he refused, and said: I will not eat. But his
servants and the woman forced him; and at length hearkening
to their voice, he arose from the ground and sat upon the bed. |
24 Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she made
haste and killed it: and taking meal kneaded it, and baked
25 some unleavened bread, | and set it before Saul, and before
his servants. And when they had eaten they rose up, and walked
all that night.

29

1 ***The Philistines Send David Back*** Now all the troops of
the Philistines were gathered together to Aphec: and Israel also

2 camped by the fountain which is in Jezrahel. ¶ And the lords of
the Philistines marched with their hundreds and their thousands.
3 But David and his men were in the rear with Achis. ¶ And the
princes of the Philistines said to Achis: What do these Hebrews
mean? And Achis said to the princes of the Philistines: Do you
not know David, who was the servant of Saul the king of Israel,
and has been with me many days, or years; and I have found
no fault in him, since the day that he fled over to me until this
4 day? ¶ But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him;
and they said to him: Let this man return, and abide in his place,
which you have appointed him. And let him not go down with
us to battle, lest he be an adversary to us, when we shall begin
to fight: for how can he otherwise appease his master, but with
5 our heads? ¶ Is not this David, to whom they sang in their
dances, saying: Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten
thousands?
6 Then Achis called David, and said to him: As the Lord lives,
you are upright and good in my sight; and so is your going out,
and your coming in with me in the army. And I have not found
any evil in you, since the day that you came to me unto this day:
7 but you do not please the lords. ¶ Return therefore, and go in
peace, and offend not the eyes of the princes of the Philistines. ¶
8 And David said to Achis: But what have I done, and what have
you found in me your servant, from the day that I have been in
your sight until this day, that I may not go and fight against the
9 enemies of my lord the king? ¶ And Achis answering said to
David: I know that you are good in my sight, as an angel of
God: but the princes of the Philistines have said: He shall not
10 go up with us to the battle. ¶ Therefore arise in the morning,
you, and the servants of your lord, who came with you; and
when you are up before day, and it shall begin to be light, go
11 on your way. ¶ So David and his men arose in the night, that
they might set forward in the morning, and returned to the land
of the Philistines: and the Philistines went up to Jezrahel.

30

1 ***The Amalecites Destroy Siceleg*** Now when David and
his men came to Siceleg on the third day, the Amalecites had
made an invasion on the south side upon Siceleg, and had smit-
2 ten Siceleg, and burned it with fire, ¶ and had taken the women
captives that were in it, both little and great: and they had not
killed any person, but had carried them with them, and went
3 on their way. ¶ So when David and his men came to the city,
and found it burned with fire, and that their wives and their
4 sons, and their daughters were taken captives, ¶ David and the

people that were with him, lifted up their voices, and wept till
5 they had no more tears. | For the two wives also of David were
taken captives, Achinoam the Jezrahelitess, and Abigail the
6 wife of Nabal of Carmel. | And David was greatly afflicted.
For the people had a mind to stone him; for the soul of every
man was bitterly grieved for his sons, and daughters: but David
7 took courage in the Lord his God. | And he said to Abiathar
the priest the son of Achimelech: Bring me hither the ephod.
8 And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. | And David con-
sulted the Lord, saying: Shall I pursue after these robbers, and
shall I overtake them, or not? And the Lord said to him: Pursue
after them: for you shall surely overtake them and recover the
prey.

9 ***David Pursues the Amalecites*** So David went, he and
the six hundred men that were with him. And they came to the
10 torrent Besor: and some being weary stayed there. | But David
pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred stayed,
11 who being weary could not go over the torrent Besor. | And
they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David:
12 and they gave him bread to eat, and water to drink, | as also
a piece of a cake of figs, and two bunches of raisins. And when
he had eaten them his spirit returned, and he was refreshed: for
he had not eaten bread, nor drunk water three days, and three
13 nights. | And David said to him: To whom do you belong?
Or from where do you come? And where are you going? He
said: I am a young man of Egypt, the servant of an Amalécite;
and my master left me, because I began to be sick three days
14 ago. | For we made an invasion on the south side of Cerethi,
and upon Juda, and upon the south of Caleb, and we burned
15 Siceleg with fire. | And David said to him: Can you bring me
to this company? And he said: Swear to me by God, that you
will not kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master,
and I will bring you to this company. And David swore to him.
16 | And when he had brought him, behold they were lying spread
upon all the ground, eating and drinking, and as it were keeping
a festival day, for all the prey, and the spoils which they had
taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of
17 Juda. | And David slew them from the evening unto the eve-
ning of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them,
but four hundred young men, who had gotten upon camels, and
fled.

18 So David recovered all that the Amalecites had taken, and
19 he rescued his two wives. | And there was nothing missing small
or great, neither of their sons or their daughters, nor of the

spoils: and whatsoever they had taken: David recovered all. |
20 And he took all the flocks and the herds, and made them go
21 before him. And they said: This is the prey of David. | And David came to the two hundred men, who being weary had stayed, and were not able to follow David, and he had ordered them to abide at the torrent Besor. And they came out to meet David, and the people that were with him. And David coming
22 to the people saluted them peaceably. | Then all the wicked and unjust men that had gone with David answering, said: Because they came not with us, we will not give them any thing of the prey which we have recovered. But let every man take his wife and children, and be contented with them, and go his way.

23 ***David Divides the Spoils*** But David said: You shall not do so, my brethren, with these things which the Lord has given us, who has kept us, and has delivered the robbers that
24 invaded us into our hands. | And no man shall hearken to you in this matter. But equal shall be the portion of him that went down to battle and of him that abode at the baggage, and
25 they shall divide alike. | And this has been done from that day forward, and since was made a statute, and an ordinance, and as a law in Israel.

26 Then David came to Siceleg, and sent presents of the prey to the ancients of Juda his neighbors, saying: Receive a blessing
27 of the prey of the enemies of the Lord. | To them that were in Bethel, and that were in Ramoth to the south, and to them
28 that were in Jether, | and to them that were in Aroer and that
29 were in Sephamoth, and that were in Esthamo, | and that were in Rachal, and that were in the cities of Jerameel, and that
30 were in the cities of Ceni, | and that were in Arama, and that
31 were in the lake Asan, and that were in Athach, | and that were in Hebron, and to the rest that were in those places, in which David had abode with his men.

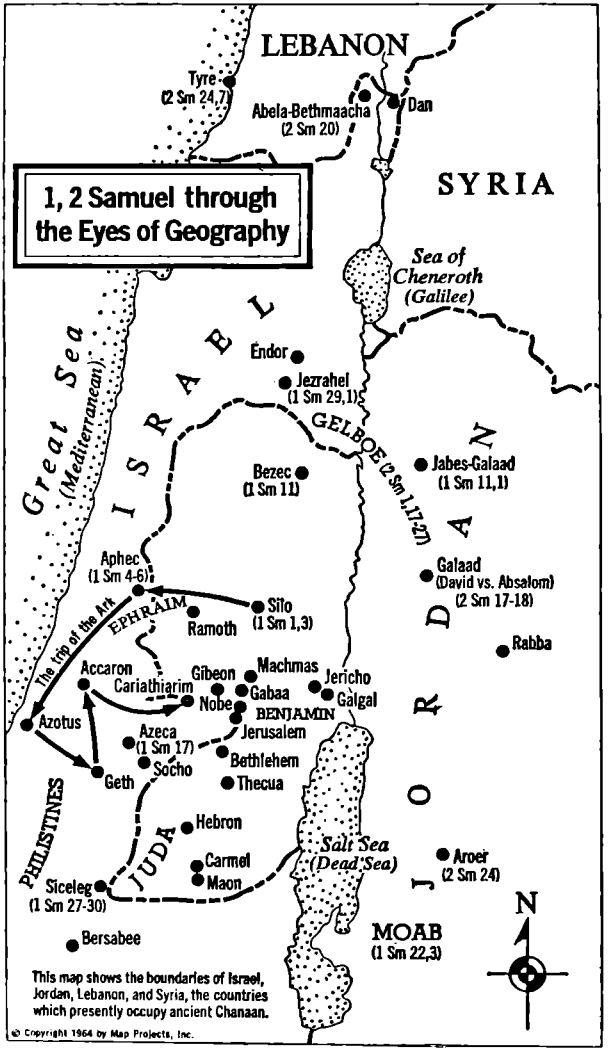
31

1 ***Saul and His Sons Are Slain*** And the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philis-
2 tines, and fell down slain in mount Gelboe. | And the Philistines fell upon Saul, and upon his sons: and they slew Jona-
3 than, and Abinadab and Melchisua the sons of Saul. | And the whole weight of the battle was turned upon Saul: and the archers overtook him, and he was grievously wounded by the
4 archers. | Then Saul said to his armorbearer: Draw your sword, and kill me: lest these uncircumcised come, and slay

me, and mock at me. And his armorbearer would not: for he was struck with exceeding great fear. Then Saul took his sword,
5 and fell upon it. | And when his armorbearer saw this, to wit, that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with
6 him. | So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armorbearer, and all his men that same day together.
7 And the men of Israel, that were beyond the valley, and beyond the Jordan, seeing that the Israelites had fled, and that Saul was dead, and his sons, forsook their cities, and fled: and the
8 Philistines came, and dwelt there. | And on the morrow the Philistines came to strip the slain: and they found Saul and his
9 three sons lying in mount Gelboe. | And they cut off Saul's head, and stripped him of his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the temples of their
10 idols, and among their people. | And they put his armor in the temple of Astaroth: but his body they hung on the wall of Bethsan.

11 ***Their Bodies Are Recovered*** Now when the inhabitants of Jabes Galaad had heard all that the Philistines had done to
12 Saul, | all the most valiant men arose, and walked all the night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Bethsan. And they came to Jabes Galaad, and burned
13 them there. | And they took their bones and buried them in the wood of Jabes: and fasted seven days.

31, 12: The burning of the dead is strange here since burial was the normal custom.



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THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

Otherwise called The Second Book of Kings

1

1 ***David Mourns Saul and Jonathan*** Now it came to pass,
after Saul was dead, that David returned from the slaughter
2 of the Amalecites, and abode two days in Siceleg. | And on
the third day, there appeared a man who came out of Saul's
camp, with his garments rent, and dust strewn on his head:
and when he came to David, he fell upon his face, and adored.
3 | And David said to him: From whence do you come? And he
4 said to him: I have fled out of the camp of Israel. | And David
said unto him: What is the matter that has come to pass? Tell
me. He said: The people have fled from the battle: and many of
the people are fallen and dead. Moreover Saul and Jonathan his
5 son are slain. | And David said to the young man that told
him: How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son, are
6 dead? | And the young man that told him, said: I came by
chance upon mount Gelboe, and Saul leaned upon his spear:
7 and the chariots and horsemen drew nigh unto him, | and
looking behind him, and seeing me, he called me. And I an-
8 swered: Here am I. | And he said to me: Who are you? And I
9 said to him: I am an Amalecite. | And he said to me: Stand
over me, and kill me. For anguish has come upon me; and as yet
10 my whole life is in me. | So standing over him, I killed him:
for I knew that he could not live after the fall. And I took the
diadem that was on his head, and the bracelet that was on his
11 arm, and have brought *them* hither to you, my lord. | Then
David took hold of his garments and rent them; and likewise all
12 the men that were with him. | And they mourned, and wept,
and fasted until evening for Saul, and for Jonathan his son,
and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel: be-
cause they were fallen by the sword.
13 And David said to the young man that told him: Who are
you? He answered: I am the son of a stranger of Amalec. |
14 David said to him: Why did you not fear to put out your hand
15 to kill the Lord's anointed? | And David calling one of his serv-
ants, said: Go near and fall upon him. And he struck him so
16 that he died. | And David said to him: Your blood be upon
your own head. For your own mouth has spoken against you,
saying: I have slain the Lord's anointed.

1, 1-27: Notice the differences in the other tradition of Saul's death (1 Sm 31).

17 And David made this kind of lamentation over Saul, and
18 over Jonathan his son. | (Also he commanded that they should teach the children of Juda the use of the bow, as it is written in the book of the just.) And he said: Consider, O Israel, for them that are dead, wounded on your high places.

19 ***David's Lament*** The illustrious of Israel are slain upon your mountains: How are the valiant fallen?
20 Tell it not in Geth, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon: lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
21 You mountains of Gelboe, let neither dew, nor rain come upon you: neither be they fields of firstfruits. For there was cast away the shield of the valiant, the shield of Saul as though he had not been anointed with oil.
22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the valiant, the arrow of Jonathan never turned back; and the sword of Saul did not return empty.
23 Saul and Jonathan, lovely, and comely in their life, even in death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.
24 You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you with scarlet in delights, who gave ornaments of gold for your attire.
25 How are the valiant fallen in battle? Jonathan slain in the high places?
26 I grieve for you my brother Jonathan: exceedingly beautiful and amiable to *me* above the love of women. As the mother loves her only son, so did I love you.
27 How are the valiant fallen, and the weapons of war perished?

2
1 ***David Is Anointed King of Juda*** And after these things David consulted the Lord, saying: Shall I go up into one of the cities of Juda? And the Lord said to him: Go up. And David

1, 17-27: The genuine sentiments of patriotism, valor in war, tender and virile friendship animate this pathetic funerary eulogy.

1, 26: See Ru 1, 16 n, for a comparison of friendships in the Bible.

1, 27: In an estimate of Saul's character, his zeal, courage, and modesty are striking. On the debit side, his religious convictions were not deep. The tragic figure of an abandoned king, who was a "creature of impulse," became steadily more pathetic after the break with Samuel. Rustic king Saul slid down the road of remorse, suspicion, and cruelty. See the contrast of jealous Saul with humble David in Browning's poem, *Saul*. Compare also Handel's oratorio, *Saul*.

said: Whither shall I go up? And he answered him: Into He-
2 bron. | So David went up, and his two wives, Achinoam the
3 Jezrahelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal of Carmel. | And the men also that were with him. David brought up every man with his household: and they abode in the towns of Hebron. |
4 And the men of Juda came, and anointed David there, to be king over the house of Juda. And it was told David that the
5 men of Jabes Galaad had buried Saul. | David therefore sent messengers to the men of Jabes Galaad, and said to them: Blessed be you to the Lord, who have shown this mercy to your
6 master Saul, and have buried him. | And now the Lord surely will render you mercy and truth; and I also will requite you for
7 this good turn, because you have done this thing. | Let your hands be strengthened; and be men of valor: for although your master Saul be dead, yet the house of Juda has anointed me to be their king.

8 ***Isboseth Reigns over Part of Israel*** But Abner the son of Ner, general of Saul's army, took Isboseth the son of Saul,
9 and led him about through the camp, | and made him king over Galaad, and over Gessuri, and over Jezrahel, and over
10 Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. | Isboseth the son of Saul was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel. And he reigned two years; and only the house of Juda
11 followed David. | And the number of the days that David abode, reigning in Hebron over the house of Juda, was seven years and six months.
12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Isboseth the
13 son of Saul, went out from the camp to Gabaon. | And Joab the son of Sarvia, and the servants of David went out, and met them by the pool of Gabaon. And when they had come together, they sat down over against one another: the one on
14 the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side. | And Abner said to Joab: Let the young men rise, and play before
15 us. And Joab answered: Let them rise. | Then there arose and went over twelve in number of Benjamin, of the part of Isboseth
16 the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. | And every one catching his fellow by the head, thrust his sword into the side of his adversary: and they fell down together. And the name of the place was called: The field of the valiant, in Gabaon.

2, 13: *Pool of Gabaon:* American archeologists, excavating since 1956, have identified Gabaon as modern el-Jib, eight miles north of Jerusalem. They cautiously claim that they have excavated this pool.

17 ***Battle between Abner and Joab*** And there was a very
fierce battle that day: and Abner was put to flight, with the
18 men of Israel, by the servants of David. | And there were the
three sons of Sarvia there, Joab, and Abisai, and Asael. Now
Asael was a most swift runner, like one of the roes that abide
19 in the woods. | And Asael pursued after Abner, and turned
not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. |
20 And Abner looked behind him, and said: Are you Asael? And
21 he answered: I am. | And Abner said to him: Go to the right
hand or to the left, and lay hold on one of the young men and
take for yourself his spoils. But Asael would not leave off fol-
22 lowing him close. | And again Abner said to Asael: Go off,
and do not follow me, lest I be obliged to stab you to the ground,
and I shall not be able to hold up my face to Joab your brother.
23 | But he refused to hearken to him, and would not turn aside;
wherefore Abner struck him with his spear with a back stroke
in the groin, and thrust him through, and he died upon the
spot: and all that came to the place where Asael fell down and
died, stood still.

24 Now while Joab and Abisai pursued after Abner, the sun
went down; and they came as far as the hill of the aqueduct,
that lies over against the valley by the way of the wilderness in
25 Gabaon. | And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves
together to Abner: and being joined in one body, they stood on
26 the top of a hill. | And Abner cried out to Joab, and said:
Shall your sword rage unto utter destruction? Do you not know
that it is dangerous to drive people to despair? How long do you
defer to bid the people cease from pursuing after their brethren?
27 | And Joab said: As the Lord lives if you had spoken sooner,
even in the morning the people should have retired from pur-
28 suing after their brethren. | Then Joab sounded the trumpet,
and all the army stood still, and did not pursue after Israel any
29 farther, nor fight any more. | And Abner and his men walked
all that night through the plains; and they passed the Jordan,
and having gone through all Beth-horon, came to the camp. |
30 And Joab returning, after he had left Abner, assembled all the
people: and there were wanting of David's servants nineteen
31 men, beside Asael. | But the servants of David had killed of
Benjamin, and of the men that were with Abner, three hundred
32 and sixty, who all died. | And they took Asael, and buried him
in the sepulcher of his father in Bethlehem. And Joab, and the
men that were with him, marched all the night, and they came
to Hebron at break of day.

3

1 ***David Grows Daily Stronger*** Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; David prospering and growing always stronger and stronger, but the house
2 of Saul decaying daily. | And sons were born to David in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon of Achinoam the Jezrahelit-
3 ess: | And his second Cheleab of Abigail the wife of Nabal of Carmel: and the third Absalom the son of Maacha the daughter
4 of Tholmai king of Gessur: | And the fourth Adonias, the son
5 of Haggith: and the fifth Saphathia the son of Abital: | And the sixth Jethraam of Egla the wife of David. These were born to David in Hebron.
6 Now while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner the son of Ner ruled the house of
7 Saul. | And Saul had a concubine named Respha, the daughter
8 of Aia. And Isboseth said to Abner: | Why did you go in to my father's concubine? And he was exceedingly angry for the words of Isboseth and said: Am I a dog's head against Juda this day, who have shown mercy to the house of Saul your father, and to his brethren and friends, and have not delivered you into the hands of David, and have you sought this day against me to
9 charge me with a matter concerning a woman? | So do God to Abner, and more also, unless as the Lord has sworn to David,
10 so I do to him, | that the kingdom be transferred from the house of Saul, and the throne of David be set up over Israel, and over
11 Juda from Dan to Bersabee. | And he could not answer him a word, because he feared him.
12 Abner therefore sent messengers to David for himself, saying: Whose is the land? And that they should say: Make a league with me, and my hand shall be with you: and I will bring
13 all Israel to you. | And he said: Very well. I will make a league with you; but one thing I require of you, saying: You shall not see my face before you bring Michol the daughter of Saul: and
14 so you shall come, and see me. | And David sent messengers to Isboseth the son of Saul, saying: Restore my wife Michol, whom I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. |
15 And Isboseth sent, and took her from her husband Phaltiel, the
16 son of Lais. | And her husband followed her, weeping as far as Bahurim. And Abner said to him: Go and return. And he
17 returned. | Abner also spoke to the ancients of Israel, saying: Both yesterday and the day before you sought for David that

3, 8: Isboseth was angry because, in oriental thinking, to appropriate a royal concubine was equivalent to high treason since it implied a claim to the throne.

18 he might reign over you. | Now then do it; because the Lord
has spoken to David, saying: By the hand of my servant David
I will save my people Israel from the hands of the Philistines,
19 and of all their enemies. | And Abner spoke also to Benjamin.
And he went to speak to David in Hebron all that seemed good
to Israel, and to all Benjamin.

20 ***Abner Comes to David*** And he came to David in Hebron
with twenty men. And David made a feast for Abner, and his
21 men that came with him. | And Abner said to David: I will rise,
that I may gather all Israel unto you my lord the king, and may
enter into a league with you, and that you may reign over all, as
your soul desires. Now when David had brought Abner on his
22 way, and he was gone in peace, | immediately David's servants
and Joab came, after having slain the robbers, with an exceed-
ing great booty. And Abner was not with David in Hebron; for
23 he had now sent him away, and he was gone in peace. | And
Joab and all the army that was with him, came afterward. And
it was told Joab, that Abner the son of Ner came to the king,
24 and he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. | And
Joab went in to the king, and said: What have you done? Behold
Abner came to you: Why did you send him away? And he has
25 gone and departed. | Do you not know Abner the son of Ner,
that to this end he came to you, that he might deceive you, and
to know your going out, and your coming in, and to know all
26 you do? | Then Joab going out from David, sent messengers
after Abner, and brought him back from the cistern of Sira,
David knowing nothing of it.

27 ***Joab Slays Abner*** And when Abner had returned to He-
bron, Joab took him aside to the middle of the gate, to speak to
him treacherously, and he stabbed him there in the groin: and
28 he died, in revenge of the blood of Asael his brother. | And
when David heard of it, after the thing was now done, he said:
I, and my kingdom are innocent before the Lord for ever of the
29 blood of Abner the son of Ner: | and may it come upon the
head of Joab, and upon all his father's house: and let there not
fail from the house of Joab one that has an issue of seed, or
that is a leper, or that holds the distaff, or that falls by the sword,
or that wants bread.

3, 27: Joab's other motive may have been to eliminate a rival as commander-in-chief of David's army.

3, 27: A reference to 2, 23.

30 So Joab and Abisai his brother slew Abner, because he had killed their brother Asael at Gabaon in the battle.

31 ***David Mourns over Abner*** And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him: Rend your garments, and gird yourselves with sackcloths, and mourn before the funeral
32 of Abner. And king David himself followed the bier. | And when they had buried Abner in Hebron, king David lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner: and all the people
33 also wept. | And the king mourning and lamenting over Abner,
34 said: Not as cowards are wont to die, has Abner died. | Your hands were not bound, nor your feet laden with fetters: but as men fall before the children of iniquity, so did you fall. And all
35 the people repeating it wept over him. | And when all the people came to take meat with David, while it was yet broad day, David swore, saying: So do God to me, and more also, if
36 I taste bread or anything else before sunset. | And all the people heard, and they were pleased, and all that the king did seemed
37 good in the sight of all the people. | And all the people, and all Israel understood that day that it was not the king's doing,
38 that Abner the son of Ner was slain. | The king also said to his servants: Do you not know that a prince and a great man is
39 slain this day in Israel? | But I as yet am tender, *though* anointed king. And these men the sons of Sarvia are too hard for me: the Lord reward him that does evil according to his wickedness.

4

1 ***Isboseth Is Killed*** And Isboseth the son of Saul heard that Abner was slain in Hebron: and his hands were weakened, and
2 all Israel was troubled. | Now the son of Saul had two men captains of his bands, the name of the one was Baana, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Remmon a Berothite of the children of Benjamin: for Beroth also was reckoned in Ben-
3 jamin. | And the Berothites fled into Gethaim, and were so-
4 journers there until that time. | And Jonathan the son of Saul had a son that was lame of his feet: for he was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan from Jezrahel. And his nurse took him up and fled: and as she made haste to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Miphiboseth.
5 And the sons of Remmon the Berothite, Rechab and Baana, coming, went into the house of Isboseth in the heat of the day: and he was sleeping upon his bed at noon. And the door-keeper of the house, who was cleansing wheat, had fallen asleep.
6 | And they entered into the house secretly taking ears of corn: and Rechab and Baana his brother stabbed him in the groin,

7 and fled away. | For when they came into the house, he was sleeping upon his bed in a parlor: and they struck him and killed him. And taking away his head they went off by the way
8 of the wilderness, *walking* all night. | And they brought the head of Isboseth to David to Hebron; and they said to the king: Behold the head of Isboseth the son of Saul your enemy who sought your life. And the Lord has revenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

9 ***David Punishes the Murderers*** But David answered Rechab, and Baana his brother, the sons of Remmon the Berothite, and said to them: As the Lord lives, who has deliv-
10 ered my soul out of all distress, | the man that told me, and said: Saul is dead, who thought he brought good tidings, I apprehended, and slew him in Siceleg, who should have been re-
11 warded for his news. | How much more now when wicked men have slain an innocent man in his own house, upon his bed, shall I not require his blood at your hand, and take you
12 away from the earth? | And David commanded his servants: and they slew them, and cutting off their hands and feet, hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But the head of Isboseth they took and buried in the sepulcher of Abner in Hebron.

5

1 ***David, King of All Israel*** Then all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron, saying: Behold we are your bone
2 and your flesh. | Moreover yesterday also and the day before, when Saul was king over us, it was you that did lead out and bring in Israel. And the Lord said to you: You shall feed my
3 people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel. | The ancients also of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they
4 anointed David to be king over Israel. | David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.
5 | In Hebron he reigned over Juda seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned three and thirty years over all Israel and Juda.
6 And the king and all the men that were with him went to Jerusalem to the Jebusites the inhabitants of the land. And they said to David: You shall not come in hither unless you take

4, 10-12: By professing that he was not implicated in these murders nor in that of Abner (3, 31-39), David sweeps away possible obstacles to the throne.

5, 6: Jerusalem is so impregnable that even the blind and the lame can defend it against David's men—so boasted the Jebusites.

away the blind and the lame that say: David shall not come in
7 hither. | But David took the castle of Sion, the same is the city
8 of David. | For David had offered that day a reward to whosoever should strike the Jebusites and get up to the gutters of the tops of the houses, and take away the blind and the lame that hated the soul of David: therefore it is said in the proverb: The blind and the lame shall not come into the temple.
9 And David dwelt in the castle, and called it, The city of
10 David: and built round about from Mello and inward. | And he went on prospering and growing up: and the Lord God of
11 hosts was with him. | And Hiram the king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons
12 for walls: and they built a house for David. | And David knew that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel, and that he
13 had exalted his kingdom over his people Israel. | And David took more concubines and wives of Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron: and there were born to David other sons
14 also and daughters. | And these are the names of them, that were born to him in Jerusalem: Samua, and Sobab, and Na-
15 than, and Solomon, | and Jebahar, and Elisua, and Nepheg,
16 | and Japhia, and Elisama, and Elioda, and Eliphaleth.
17 And the Philistines heard that they had anointed David to be king over Israel. And they all came to seek David: and when
18 David heard of it, he went down to a stronghold. | And the Philistines coming spread themselves in the valley of Raphaim.

19 ***David Defeats the Philistines*** And David consulted the Lord, saying: Shall I go up to the Philistines? And will you deliver them into my hand? And the Lord said to David: Go up,
20 for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hand. | And David came to Baal Pharisim: and defeated them there. And

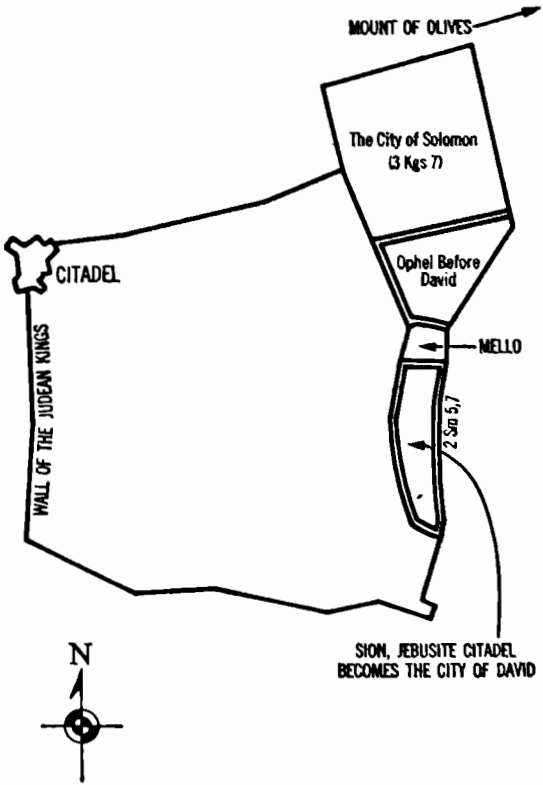
5, 7: David captured Jerusalem from the native Jebusites who were not Israelites.

5, 8: The Hebrew of this verse does not make sense. 1 Par 11, 5, a parallel, does not make sense either, for it is indefinite about Joab going up somewhere to capture the city. Archeologists discovered a water shaft which runs from the top of the city straight down and outside of the city walls to a pool filled by the Virgin Spring. Scholars piece these items of information to formulate the following educated guess: Joab led his men up the shaft and surprised the Jebusites.

5, 9: By selecting Jerusalem as the capital city, David scored a political stroke of genius. It was not known as a northern or southern city. To stress that it belonged to no tribe, David called it his own "city of David." Thus, the site placated both nations and facilitated the union under David. This is often compared to the selection of Washington, D.C., as the capital in a neutral land.

JERUSALEM

FROM BEFORE DAVID TO THE TIME OF SOLOMON



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he said: The Lord has divided my enemies before me, as waters
are divided. Therefore the name of the place was called Baal
21 Pharisim. | And they left there their idols: which David and
22 his men took away. | And the Philistines came up again; and
23 spread themselves in the valley of Raphaim. | And David consulted the Lord: Shall I go up against the Philistines, and will you deliver them into my hands? He answered: Go not up against them, but fetch a compass behind them; and you shall
24 come upon them over against the pear trees. | And when you shall hear the sound of one going in the tops of the pear trees, then shall you join battle. For then will the Lord go out before
25 your face to strike the army of the Philistines. | And David did as the Lord had commanded him: and he smote the Philistines from Gabaa to Gezer.

6

1 ***David Fetches the Ark*** And David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.
2 And David arose and went, with all the people that were with him of the men of Juda to fetch the ark of God, upon which the name of the Lord of hosts is invoked, who is sitting
3 over it upon the cherubim. | And they laid the ark of God upon a new cart; and took it out of the house of Abinadab, who was in Gabaa: and Oza, and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the
4 new cart. And when they had taken it out of the house of Abinadab, who was in Gabaa, Ahio having care of the ark of
5 God went before the ark. | But David and all Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of wood, on
6 harps and lutes and timbrels and cornets and cymbals. And when they came to the floor of Nachon, Oza put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it: because the oxen kicked and made it lean aside.

5, 23: David is instructed to make a circular rather than a frontal attack.

5, 24: David's signal to attack will be when the wind resounds through the top of the trees. Since the Urim and Thummim (see Lv 8, 8 n) answered to yes or no, these explanations may be the interpretation of a prophet.

6, 6-7: Many scholars do not believe that this is a factual historical incident because the Hebrew text is obscure. The law forbade the Levites to touch the Ark, but they carried it by poles put through rings on the sides of the Ark (Ex 25, 15).

The value of this episode is, in its illustration of the belief of the people, that contact with holy objects must be executed only under certain conditions or else God is angered to the point of taking life. This primitive belief embodies the tremendous sense of awe they had for God.

7 *Oza Struck Dead for Touching the Ark* And the indignation of the Lord was enkindled against Oza, and he struck him for his rashness: and he died there before the ark of God.
8 | And David was grieved because the Lord had struck Oza; and the name of that place was called: The striking of Oza, to this
9 day. | And David was afraid of the Lord that day, saying: How
10 shall the ark of the Lord come to me? | And he would not have the ark of the Lord brought in to himself into the city of David: but he caused it to be carried into the house of Obededom the Gethite.
11 And the ark of the Lord abode in the house of Obededom the Gethite three months: and the Lord blessed Obededom, and
12 all his household. | And it was told king David, that the Lord had blessed Obededom, and all that he had, because of the ark of God. So David went, and brought away the ark of God out of the house of Obededom into the city of David with joy. And there were with David seven choirs, and calves for victims. |
13 And when they that carried the ark of the Lord had gone six
14 paces, he sacrificed an ox and a ram, | and David danced with all his might before the Lord: and David was girded with a
15 linen ephod. | And David and all the house of Israel brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord with joyful shouting, and with sound of trumpet.

16 *The Ark Is Carried to David's House* And when the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michol the daughter of Saul, looking out through a window, saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord: and she despised him in her heart.
17 And they brought the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle, which David had pitched for it. And David offered holocausts, and peace offerings before the
18 Lord. | And when he had made an end of offering holocausts and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the
19 Lord of hosts. | And he distributed to all the multitude of Israel, both men and women, to every one, a cake of bread, and a piece of roasted beef, and fine flour fried with oil. And all the
20 people departed every one to his house. | And David returned to bless his own house. And Michol the daughter of Saul coming out to meet David, said: How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself before the handmaids of his servants, and was naked, as if one of the buffoons should be naked. |
21 And David said to Michol: Before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father, and than all his house, and com-
22 manded me to be ruler over the people of the Lord in Israel, | I

will both play and make myself meaner than I have done.
And I will be little in my own eyes: and with the handmaids of
23 whom you speak, I shall appear more glorious. | Therefore
Michol the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her
death.

7

1 ***David Proposes to Build a Temple*** And it came to pass
when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest
2 on every side from all his enemies, | he said to Nathan the
prophet: Do you see that I dwell in a house of cedar, and the
3 ark of God is lodged within skins? | And Nathan said to the
king: Go, do all that is in your heart; because the Lord is with
4 you. | But it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord
5 came to Nathan, saying: | Go, and say to my servant David:
Thus says the Lord: Shall you build me a house to dwell in? |
6 Whereas I have not dwelt in a house from the day that I brought
the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt even to this day:
7 but have walked in a tabernacle, and in a tent. | In all the places
that I have gone through with all the children of Israel, did ever
I speak a word to any one of the tribes of Israel, whom I com-
manded to feed my people Israel, saying: Why have you not
built me a house of cedar?
8 And now thus shall you speak to my servant David: Thus
says the Lord of hosts: I took you out of the pastures from fol-
9 lowing the sheep to be ruler over my people Israel. | And I have
been with you wheresoever you have walked, and have slain all
your enemies from before your face: and I have made you a
great man, like unto the name of the great ones that are on the
earth.

10 ***Blessings Promised to David's Seed*** And I will appoint
a place for my people Israel; and I will plant them, and they

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7, 2: *Within skins:* in a tent.

7, 8-16: Nathan's prophecy was written during his time or shortly after. The prophecy is interpreted in a slightly different way in 1 Par 17, 1-15, and in Ps 88. In this most important Messianic text, God renews His covenant made with the patriarchs and Moses. This time, God adopts David as His son, appoints him king, and *forever* pledges protection to him and his successors as heads of their people. At different subsequent historical stages, this promise will be repeated and understood in the light of Nathan's prophecy. The repetition and renewal of this promise together with its additions to the original prophecy of Nathan constitute the royal Messianic strand. Each succeeding Davidic king will realize Nathan's prophecy, for he embodies God's promises to the nation.

shall dwell therein, and shall be disturbed no more: neither
shall the children of iniquity afflict them any more as they did
11 before, | from the day that I appointed judges over my people
Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. And the
Lord foretells to you, that the Lord will make you a house. |
12 And when your days shall be fulfilled, and you shall sleep with
your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which shall
proceed out of your bowels: and I will establish his kingdom. |
13 He shall build a house to my name: and I will establish the
14 throne of his kingdom for ever. | I will be to him a father: and
he shall be to me a son: and if he should commit any iniquity,
I will correct him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of
15 the children of men. | But my mercy I will not take away from
him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before my
16 face. | And your house shall be faithful, and your kingdom
for ever before your face: and your throne shall be firm for ever.
17 According to all these words and according to all this vision,
so did Nathan speak to David.

18 ***David's Prayer*** And David went in, and sat before the
Lord, and said: Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house,
that you have brought me thus far?
19 But yet this has seemed little in your sight, O Lord God, un-
less you did also speak of the house of your servant for a long
time to come: for this is the law of Adam, O Lord God.
20 And what can David say more unto you? For you know your
servant, O Lord God.
21 For your word's sake, and according to your own heart you
have done all these great things, so that you would make it
known to your servant.
22 Therefore you are magnified, O Lord God, because there is
none like to you: neither is there any God besides you, in all
the things that we have heard with our ears.
23 And what nation is there upon earth, as your people Israel,
whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make
him a name, and to do for them great and terrible things, upon
the earth, before the face of your people, whom you redeemed
to yourself out of Egypt, from the nations and their gods?
24 For you have confirmed to yourself your people Israel to be
an everlasting people: and you, O Lord God, have become
their God.
25 And now, O Lord God, raise up for ever the word that you

7, 19: *This is the law of Adam:* a gloss.

have spoken, concerning your servant and concerning his house: and do as you have spoken,
26 That your name may be magnified for ever, and it may be said: The Lord of hosts *is* God over Israel. And the house of your servant David shall be established before the Lord.
27 Because you, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed to the ear of your servant, saying: I will build you a house. Therefore has your servant found in his heart to pray this prayer to you.
28 And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words shall be true: for you have spoken to your servant these good things.
29 And now begin, and bless the house of your servant, that it may endure for ever before you: because you, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with your blessing let the house of your servant be blessed for ever.

8

1 ***Wars and Victories of David*** And it came to pass after this that David defeated the Philistines, and brought them down, and David took the bridle of tribute out of the hand of the
2 Philistines. | And he defeated Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the earth: and he measured with two lines, one to put to death, and one to save alive: and Moab was
3 made to serve David under tribute. | David defeated also Adarezer the son of Rohob king of Soba, when he went to extend his
4 dominion over the river Euphrates. | And David took from him a thousand and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen, and hamstrung all the chariot horses: and only re-
5 served of them for one hundred chariots. | And the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Adarezer the king of Soba: and David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. |
6 And David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and Syria served David under tribute. And the Lord preserved David in all his enterprises wherever he went.
7 And David took the arms of gold, which the servants of
8 Adarezer wore, and brought them to Jerusalem. | And out of Bete, and out of Beroth cities of Adarezer, king David took an
9 exceeding great quantity of brass. | And Thou the king of Emath heard that David had defeated all the forces of Adarezer.
10 | And Thou sent Joram his son to king David, to salute him, and to congratulate with him, and to return him thanks: because he had fought against Adarezer, and had defeated him.

8, 1: *And David took:* the rest of the verse does not make sense in the Hebrew.

For Thou was an enemy to Adarezer: and in his hand were ves-
11 sels of gold, and vessels of silver, and vessels of brass. | And
king David dedicated them to the Lord, together with the silver
and gold that he had dedicated of all the nations, which he had
12 subdued: | of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Am-
mon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalec, and of the spoils
of Adarezer the son of Rohob king of Soba.
13 David also made himself a name, when he returned after
taking Syria in the valley of the saltpits, killing eighteen thou-
14 sand. | And he put guards in Edom, and placed *there* a garri-
son: and all Edom was made to serve David: and the Lord
15 preserved David in all enterprises he went about. | And David
reigned over all Israel: and David did judgment and justice to
all his people.

16 ***David's Officers*** And Joab the son of Sarvia was over the
17 army: and Josaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder: | and
Sadoc the son of Achitob, and Achimelech the son of Abiathar,
18 were the priests: and Saraias was the scribe: | and Banaias
the son of Joiada was over the Cerethi and Phelethi: and the
sons of David were the princes.

9

1 ***David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son*** And David said: Is
there any one, do you think, left of the house of Saul, that I
may show kindness to him for Jonathan's sake?
2 Now there was of the house of Saul a servant named Siba.
And when the king had called him to him, he said: Are you
3 Siba? And he answered: I am Siba your servant. | And the king
said: Is there any one left of the house of Saul, that I may show
the mercy of God unto him? And Siba said to the king: There is
4 a son of Jonathan left, who is lame of his feet. | Where is he?
said he. And Siba said to the king: Behold he is in the house of
5 Machir the son of Ammiel in Lodabar. | Then king David sent,
and brought him out of the house of Machir the son Ammiel of
6 Lodabar. | And when Miphiboseth the son of Jonathan the
son of Saul came to David, he fell on his face and worshiped.

8, 16: *Recorder:* a vizier or "secretary of state."
8, 17: *Scribe:* he probably wrote and preserved the official documents.
8, 18: *Cerethi and Phelethi:* foreign mercenary bodyguard.
9—20: These chapters, called The Court History of David, are prized as the most lifelike narrative in the Old Testament, and for accuracy in historical writing it is one of the best, if not the best, in the ancient world of its day. It is the oldest written part in 1, 2 Sm, perhaps by an eyewitness.

And David said: Miphiboseth? And he answered: Behold your
7 servant. | And David said to him: Fear not, for I will surely show you mercy for Jonathan your father's sake; and I will restore the lands of Saul your father, and you shall eat bread at
8 my table always. | He bowed down to him, and said: Who am I your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I am?
9 Then the king called Siba, the servant of Saul, and said to him: All that belonged to Saul, and all his house, I have
10 given to your master's son. | You therefore and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him: and you shall bring in food for your master's son, that he may be maintained: and Miphiboseth the son of your master shall always eat bread at
11 my table. And Siba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. | And Siba said to the king: As you my lord the king have commanded your servant, so will your servant do: and Miphiboseth shall eat
12 at my table, as one of the sons of the king. | And Miphiboseth had a young son whose name was Micha: and all the kindred of
13 the house of Siba served Miphiboseth. | But Miphiboseth dwelt in Jerusalem: because he ate always of the king's table. And he was lame of both feet.

10

1 ***The Ammonites Abuse David's Ambassadors*** And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon
2 died, and Hanon his son reigned in his stead. | And David said: I will show kindness to Hanon the son of Daas, as his father showed kindness to me. So David sent his servants to comfort him for the death of his father. But when the servants of David
3 had come into the land of the children of Ammon, | the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanon their lord: Do you think that for the honor of your father, David has sent comforters to you; and has not David rather sent his servants to you
4 to search, and spy into the city, and overthrow it? | Wherefore Hanon took the servants of David, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut away half of their garments even to the
5 buttocks, and sent them away. | When this was told David, he sent to meet them. For the men were sadly put to confusion, and David commanded them, *saying:* Stay at Jericho, till your beards are grown, and then return.
6 And the children of Ammon seeing that they had done an injury to David, sent and hired the Syrians of Rohob, and the

10, 4: Even today the Orientals consider the beard as man's pride. Hence to shave it is effeminate: to shave part of it, ludicrous.

Syrians of Soba, twenty thousand footmen, and of the king of Maacha a thousand men, and of Istob twelve thousand men. |
7 And when David heard this, he sent Joab and the whole army of
8 warriors. | And the children of Ammon came out, and set their men in array at the entering in of the gate: but the Syrians of Soba, and of Rohob, and of Istob, and of Maacha were by themselves in the field.

9 ***The Syrians and Their Allies Are Overthrown*** Then Joab seeing that the battle was prepared against him, both before and behind, chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put
10 them in array against the Syrians. | And the rest of the people he delivered to Abisai his brother, who set them in array against
11 the children of Ammon. | And Joab said: If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me. But if the children of
12 Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. | Be of good courage, and let us fight for our people, and for the city of
13 our God: and the Lord will do what is good in his sight. | And Joab and the people that were with him, began to fight against
14 the Syrians: and they immediately fled before him. | And the children of Ammon seeing that the Syrians fled, they fled also before Abisai, and entered into the city. And Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 Then the Syrians seeing that they had fallen before Israel,
16 gathered themselves together. | And Adarezer sent and fetched the Syrians, that were beyond the river, and brought *over* their army: and Sobach, the captain of the host of Adarezer, was
17 their general. | And when this was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David; and
18 fought against him. | And the Syrians fled before Israel. And David slew of the Syrians *the men* of seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen: and smote Sobach the captain of
19 the army, who presently died. | And all the kings that were auxiliaries of Adarezer, seeing themselves overcome by Israel, were afraid and fled away, eight and fifty thousand men before Israel. And they made peace with Israel: and served them; and all the Syrians were afraid to help the children of Ammon any more.

11

1 ***David Commits Adultery*** And it came to pass at the return of the year, at the time when kings go forth to war, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they spoiled the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabba: but

2 David remained in Jerusalem. | In the meantime it happened
that David arose from his bed after noon, and walked upon the
roof of the king's house. And he saw from the roof of his house
a woman washing herself, opposite him: and the woman
3 was very beautiful. | And the king sent, and inquired who the
woman was. And it was told him, that she was Bethsabee the
4 daughter of Eliam, the wife of Urias the Hethite. | And David
sent messengers, and took her, and she came in to him, and he
slept with her: and presently she was purified from her un-
5 cleanness. | And she returned to her house having conceived.
And she sent and told David, and said: I have conceived.

6 ***David's Crime against Urias*** And David sent to Joab, say-
ing: Send me Urias the Hethite. And Joab sent Urias to David.
7 | And Urias came to David. And David asked how Joab did,
8 and the people, and how the war was carried on. | And David
said to Urias: Go into your house, and wash your feet. And
Urias went out from the king's house; and there went out after
9 him a mess of meat from the king. | But Urias slept before the
gate of the king's house, with the other servants of his lord; and
10 went not down to his own house. | And it was told David by
some that said: Urias went not to his house. And David said
to Urias: Did you not come from your journey? Why did you
11 not go down to your house? | And Urias said to David: The ark
of God and Israel and Juda dwell in tents, and my lord Joab
and the servants of my lord abide upon the face of the earth.
And shall I go into my house, to eat and to drink, and to sleep
with my wife? By your welfare and by the welfare of your soul
12 I will not do this thing. | Then David said to Urias: Tarry
here today; and tomorrow I will send you away. Urias tarried in
13 Jerusalem that day and the next. | And David called him to eat
and to drink before him, and he made him drunk. And he went
out in the evening, and slept on his couch with the servants of
his lord; and went not down into his house.
14 And when the morning had come, David wrote a letter to
15 Joab: and sent it by the hand of Urias, | writing in the letter:

11, 4: *She was purified from her uncleanness:* by a ritual bath as commanded in Lv 15, 18.

11, 6-13: David failed in his attempt to conceal his sin by having Urias spend his furlough with his wife. To David's dismay, even intoxication did not drown Urias' resolution. David's invitation, "wash your feet" (v. 8) is a summary of eat, drink and sleep (v. 11). Urias is listed on David's roster of heroes in 23, 39.

11, 15-16: Joab could have blackmailed David and struck a military coup to take the throne himself. However, his loyalty never wavered.

Set Urias in the front of the battle, where the fight is strongest:
16 and leave him, that he may be wounded and die. | Wherefore as Joab was besieging the city, he put Urias in the place where he knew the bravest men were.

17 ***The Death of Urias*** And the men coming out of the city, fought against Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David. And Urias the Hethite was killed also. |
18 Then Joab sent, and told David all things concerning the bat-
19 tle. | And he charged the messenger, saying: When you have
20 told all the wôrds of the battle to the king, | if you see him to be angry, and he shall say: Why did you approach so near to the wall to fight? Did you not know that many darts are thrown
21 from above off the wall? | Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerobaal? Did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, and slew him in Thebes? Why did you go near the wall? You shall say: Your servant Urias the Hethite is also slain.
22 So the messenger departed; and came and told David all that
23 Joab had commanded him. | And the messenger said to David: The men prevailed against us; and they came out to us into the field: and we vigorously charged and pursued them even to the
24 gate of the city. | And the archers shot their arrows at your servants from off the wall above. And some of the king's servants are slain: and your servant Urias the Hethite is also dead. |
25 And David said to the messenger: Thus shall you say to Joab: Let not this thing discourage you; for various is the event of war. And sometimes one, sometimes another is consumed by the sword. Encourage your warriors against the city: and exhort them that you may overthrow it.
26 And the wife of Urias heard that Urias her husband was
27 dead: and she mourned for him. | And the mourning being over, David sent and brought her into his house. And she became his wife; and she bore him a son. And this thing which David had done, was displeasing to the Lord.

12

1 ***Nathan's Parable*** And the Lord sent Nathan to David. And when he had come to him, he said to him: There were two
2 men in one city, the one rich, and the other poor. | The rich
3 man had exceeding many sheep and oxen. | But the poor man had nothing at all but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and which had grown up in his house to-

11, 21: A reference to Jgs 9, 50-54.

gether with his children, eating of his bread, and drinking of his cup, and sleeping in his bosom: and it was unto him as a
4 daughter. | And when a certain stranger came to the rich man, he spared to take of his own sheep and oxen, to make a feast for that stranger, who had come to him, but took the poor man's
5 ewe, and dressed it for the man that had come to him. | And David's anger being exceedingly kindled against that man, he said to Nathan: As the Lord lives, the man that has done this
6 is a child of death. | He shall restore the ewe fourfold: because he did this thing, and had no pity.

7 And Nathan said to David: You are the man. Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel; and I
8 delivered you from the hand of Saul, | and gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and Juda. And if these things be
9 little, I shall add far greater things unto you. | Why therefore have you despised the word of the Lord, to do evil in my sight? You have killed Urias the Hethite with the sword, and taken his wife to be your wife; and you have slain him with the sword
10 of the children of Ammon. | Therefore the sword shall never depart from your house: because you have despised me, and
*11 taken the wife of Urias the Hethite to be your wife. | Thus says the Lord: Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor: and he shall lie with your wives
12 in the sight of this sun. | For you did it secretly: but I will do this thing in the sight of all Israel, and in the sight of the sun.

13 ***David Repents*** And David said to Nathan: I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David: The Lord also has
14 taken away your sin. You shall not die. | Nevertheless, because you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing, the child that is born to you, shall surely die.
15 And Nathan returned to his house. The Lord also struck the child which the wife of Urias had borne to David; and his life
16 was despaired of. | And David besought the Lord for the child: and David kept a fast, and going in by himself lay upon the
17 ground. | And the ancients of his house came, to make him rise from the ground: but he would not, neither did he eat meat with

12, 14: The better reading is "Nevertheless because you have blasphemed the Lord in this affair, the child. . . ."

12, 16-23: David, following his own idea, did not pray and fast as penance for his sins, as was customarily done. Since his sin was forgiven (v. 13), he thought he did not have to do penance. He prayed and fasted to try to prevent the threatened loss of his child.

18 them. | And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child
died. And the servants of David feared to tell him, that the child
was dead. For they said: Behold when the child was yet alive,
we spoke to him, and he would not hearken to our voice. How
much more will he afflict himself if we tell him that the child is
19 dead? | But when David saw his servants whispering, he under-
stood that the child was dead. And he said to his servants: Is the
20 child dead? They answered him: He is dead. | And David arose
from the ground, and washed and anointed himself. And when
he had changed his apparel, he went into the house of the Lord:
and worshiped. And then he came into his own house; and he
21 called for bread, and ate. | And his servants said to him: What
thing is this that you have done? You did fast and weep for
the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, you
22 did rise up, and eat bread. | And he said: While the child
was yet alive, I fasted and wept for him, for I said: Who knows
whether the Lord may not give him to me, and the child may
23 live? | But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Shall I be
able to bring him back any more? I shall go to him rather, but
he shall not return to me.

24 *The Birth of Solomon* And David comforted Bethsabee
his wife, and went in unto her, and slept with her. And she
bore a son; and he called his name Solomon; and the Lord
25 loved him. | And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet,
and called his name, Amiable to the Lord, because the Lord
loved him.
26 And Joab fought against Rabbath of the children of Ammon,
27 and laid close siege to the royal city. | And Joab sent messengers
to David, saying: I have fought against Rabbath; and the city
28 of waters is about to be taken. | Now therefore gather the rest
of the people together, and besiege the city and take it: lest
when the city shall be wasted by me, the victory be ascribed
to my name.
29 Then David gathered all the people together, and went out
30 against Rabbath: and after fighting, he took it. | And he took

12, 24: In all the ancient Near East the story of a king admitting the guilt of adultery, murder, and accepting the reprimand by one of his prophets could happen only in Israel. Any other king in David's world would have deemed these his privileges, but in Israel the moral law ruled supreme, and not a king as in pagan lands. This was the point of Nathan's parable. Moreover, only an Israelite scribe would objectively write the crimes of his king because he wrote to glorify Yahweh and not national heroes. See Carlyle's penetrating remarks on David's "repentance" in *Lecture on the Hero as Prophet.*

the crown of their king from his head, the weight of which was a talent of gold, set with most precious stones, and it was put upon David's head. And the spoils of the city which were very
31 great he carried away. | And bringing forth the people thereof, he sawed them, and drove over them chariots armed with iron: and divided them with knives, and made them pass through brick-kilns. So did he to all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David returned, with all the army to Jerusalem.

13

1 ***Amnon Defiles Thamar*** And it came to pass after this, that Amnon the son of David loved the sister of Absalom the son of David, who was very beautiful: and her name was
2 Thamar. | And he was exceedingly fond of her, so that he fell sick for the love of her: for, as she was a virgin, he thought it
3 hard to do any thing dishonestly with her. | Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab the son of Semmaa the brother of David,
4 a very wise man. | And he said to him: Why do you grow so lean from day to day, O son of the king? Why do you not tell me the reason of it? And Amnon said to him: I am in love with Thamar the sister of my brother Absalom.
5 And Jonadab said to him: Lie down upon your bed, and feign yourself sick; and when your father shall come to visit you say to him: Let my sister Thamar, I pray you, come to me, to give me to eat, and to make me a mess, that I may eat it at
6 her hand. | So Amnon lay down, and made as if he were sick: and when the king came to visit him, Amnon said to the king: I pray you let my sister Thamar come, and make in my sight two
7 little messes, that I may eat at her hand. | Then David sent home to Thamar, saying: Come to the house of your brother
8 Amnon, and make him a mess. | And Thamar came to the house of Amnon her brother: but he was laid down. And she took meal and tempered it: and dissolving it in his sight she
9 made little messes. | And taking what she had boiled, she poured it out, and set it before him, but he would not eat. And Amnon said: Put out all persons from me. And when they had
10 put all persons out, | Amnon said to Thamar: Bring the mess into the chamber, that I may eat at your hand. And Thamar took the little messes which she had made, and brought them in
11 to her brother Amnon in the chamber. | And when she had presented him the meat, he took hold of her, and said: Come lie
12 with me, my sister. | She answered him: Do not so, my brother, do not force me: for no such thing must be done in Israel. Do
13 not do this folly. | For I shall not be able to bear my shame; and you shall be as one of the fools in Israel. But rather speak to the

14 king: and he will not deny me to you. | But he would not
hearken to her prayers; but being stronger overpowered her and
lay with her.
15 Then Amnon hated her with an exceeding great hatred: so
that his hatred was greater than the love that he had felt for
her before. And Amnon said to her: Arise, and be gone.
16 She answered him: This evil which you now did against me,
in driving me away, is greater than that which you did before.
17 And he would not hearken to her. | But calling the servants that
ministered to him, he said: Thrust this woman out from me,
18 and shut the door after her. | And she was clothed with a long
robe: for the king's daughters that were virgins, used such kind
of garments. Then his servant thrust her out, and shut the door
19 after her. | And she put ashes on her head, and rent her long
robe, and laid her hands upon her head, and went on crying.

20 ***Absalom Kills Amnon*** And Absalom her brother said to
her: Has your brother Amnon lain with you? But now, sister,
hold your peace, he is your brother: and afflict not your heart
for this thing. So Thamar remained pining away in the house of
21 Absalom her brother. | And when king David heard of these
things he was exceedingly grieved: and he would not afflict the
spirit of his son Amnon, for he loved him, because he was his
22 firstborn. | But Absalom spoke not to Amnon neither good nor
evil: for Absalom hated Amnon because he had ravished his
sister Thamar.
23 And it came to pass after two years, that the sheep of Ab-
salom were shorn in Baalhasor, which is near Ephraim: and
24 Absalom invited all the king's sons. | And he came to the king,
and said to him: Behold your servant's sheep are shorn. Let the
25 king, I pray, with his servants come to his servant. | And the
king said to Absalom: Nay, my son, do not ask that we should
all come, and be chargeable to you. And when he pressed him,
26 and he would not go, he blessed him. | And Absalom said: If
you will not come, at least let my brother Amnon, I beseech you,
come with us. And the king said to him: It is not necessary
27 that he should go with you. | But Absalom pressed him, so
that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. And
28 Absalom made a feast as it were the feast of a king. | And
Absalom had commanded his servants, saying: Take notice
when Amnon shall be drunk with wine, and when I shall say
to you: Strike him, and kill him; fear not for it is I that com-
29 mand you. Take courage, and be valiant men. | And the serv-

13, 15: He suddenly hated her for his sin.

ants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded them. And all the king's sons arose and got up every man upon his mule, and fled.

30 And while they were yet in the way, a rumor came to David, saying: Absalom has slain all the king's sons; and there is not
31 one of them left. | Then the king rose up, and rent his garments: and fell upon the ground. And all his servants, that
32 stood about him, rent their garments. | But Jonadab the son of Semmaa David's brother answering, said: Let not my lord the king think that all the king's sons are slain: Amnon only is dead, for he was appointed by the mouth of Absalom from the day
33 that he ravished his sister Thamar. | Now therefore let not my lord the king take this thing into his heart, saying: All the king's sons are slain; for Amnon only is dead.

34 But Absalom fled away. And the young man that kept the watch, lifted up his eyes and looked: and behold there came
35 much people by a by-way on the side of the mountain. | And Jonadab said to the king: Behold the king's sons have come: as
36 your servant said, so it is. | And when he made an end of speaking, the king's sons also appeared. And coming in they lifted up their voice, and wept: and the king also and all his servants
37 wept very much. | But Absalom fled, and went to Tholomai the son of Ammiud the king of Gessur. And David mourned
38 for his son every day. | And Absalom, after he had fled into Gessur, was there three years. And king David ceased to pursue after Absalom, because he was comforted concerning the death of Amnon.

14

1 ***The Woman of Thecua*** And Joab the son of Sarvia, understanding that the king's heart was turned to Absalom, |
2 sent to Thecua, and fetched from thence a wise woman: and said to her: Feign yourself to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel, and be not anointed with oil, that you may be as a woman that had a long time been mourning for one dead. |
3 And you shall go in to the king, and shall speak to him in this manner. And Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Thecua had come in to the king, she fell before him upon the ground, and worshiped, and said:
5 Save me, O king. | And the king said to her: What is the matter with you? She answered: Alas, I am a widow woman, for
6 my husband is dead. | And your handmaid had two sons: and they quarrelled with each other in the field, and there was none to part them. And the one struck the other, and slew him. |
7 And behold the whole kindred rising against your handmaid,

said: Deliver him that has slain his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother, whom he slew, and that we may destroy the heir. And they seek to quench my spark which is left, and will leave my husband no name, nor remainder upon
8 the earth. | And the king said to the woman: Go to your house;
9 and I will give charge concerning you.| And the woman of Thecua said to the king: Upon me, my lord, be the iniquity, and upon the house of my father; but may the king and his throne be
10 guiltless. | And the king said: If any one shall say aught against you, bring him to me; and he shall not touch you any more. |
11 And she said: Let the king remember the Lord his God, that the next of kin be not multiplied to take revenge, and that they may not kill my son. And he said: As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of your son fall to the earth.

12 Then the woman said: Let your handmaid speak one word
13 to my lord the king. And he said: Speak. | And the woman said: Why have you thought such a thing against the people of God, and why has the king spoken this word, to sin, and not
14 bring home again his own exile? | We all die, and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth. Neither will God have a soul to perish, but recalled; meaning that he that is
15 cast off should not altogether perish. | Now therefore have I come, to speak this word to my lord the king before the people. And your handmaid said: I will speak to the king, it may be
16 the king will perform the request of his handmaid. | And the king has hearkened to me to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of all that would destroy me and my son together, out of
17 the inheritance of God. | Then let your handmaid say, that the word of the lord the king be made as a sacrifice. For even as an angel of God, so is my lord the king, that he is neither moved with blessing nor cursing: wherefore the Lord your God is also with you.

18 And the king answering, said to the woman: Hide not from me the thing that I ask you. And the woman said to him: Speak,
19 my lord the king. | And the king said: Is not the hand of Joab with you in all this? The woman answered and said: By the health of your soul, my lord, O king, it is neither on the left hand, nor on the right, in all these things which my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab, he commanded me, and
20 he put all these words into the mouth of your handmaid. | That I should come about with this form of speech, your servant Joab commanded this: but you, my lord, O king, are wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to understand all things upon earth.

21 ***Absalom's Return*** And the king said to Joab: Behold I am appeased and have granted your request. Go therefore and
22 fetch back the boy Absalom. | And Joab falling down to the ground upon his face, adored, and blessed the king. And Joab said: This day your servant has understood, that I have found grace in your sight, my lord, O king; for you have fulfilled the
23 request of your servant. | Then Joab arose and went to Gessur,
24 and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. | But the king said: Let him return into his house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned into his house, and saw not the king's face.
25 But in all Israel there was not a man so comely, and so exceedingly beautiful as Absalom: from the sole of the foot to the
26 crown of his head there was no blemish in him. | And when he polled his hair (now he was polled once a year, because his hair was burdensome to him) he weighed the hair of his head at two
27 hundred sicles, according to the common weight. | And there were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Thamar; and she was very beautiful.
28 And Absalom dwelt two years in Jerusalem, and saw not
29 the king's face. | He sent therefore to Joab, to send him to the king: but he would not come to him. And when he had sent the
30 second time, and he would not come to him, | he said to his servants: You know the field of Joab near my field, that has a crop of barley. Go now and set it on fire. So the servants of Absalom set the corn on fire. And Joab's servants coming with their garments rent said: The servants of Absalom have set part
31 of the field on fire. | Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom to his house, and said: Why have your servants set my corn on
32 fire? | And Absalom answered Joab: I sent to you beseeching you to come to me, that I might send you to the king, to say to him: Wherefore have I come from Gessur? It had been better for me to be there. I beseech you therefore that I may see the face of the king: and if he be mindful of my iniquity, let him
33 kill me. | So Joab going in to the king, told him all; and Absalom was called for. And he went in to the king, and prostrated himself on the ground before him: and the king kissed Absalom.

15

1 ***Absalom's Conspiracy*** Now after these things Absalom made himself chariots, and horsemen, and fifty men to run
2 before him. | And Absalom rising up early stood by the entrance of the gate; and when any man had business to come to the king's judgment, Absalom called him to him, and said: Of what city are you? He answered, and said: Your servant is of
3 such a tribe of Israel. | And Absalom answered him: Your

words seem to me good and just. But there is no man appointed
4 by the king to hear you. And Absalom said: | O that they
would make me judge over the land, that all that have business
5 might come to me, that I might do them justice. | Moreover
when any man came to him to salute him, he put forth his hand,
6 and took him, and kissed him. | And this he did to all Israel
that came for judgment, to be heard by the king: and he en-
ticed the hearts of the men of Israel.
7 And after forty years, Absalom said to king David: Let me
go, and pay my vows which I have vowed to the Lord in He-
8 bron. | For your servant made a vow, when he was in Gessur
of Syria, saying: If the Lord shall bring me again into Jerusalem,
9 I will offer sacrifice to the Lord. | And king David said to him:
10 Go in peace. And he arose, and went to Hebron. | And Absalom
sent spies into all the tribes of Israel, saying: As soon as you
shall hear the sound of the trumpet, you shall say: Absalom
11 reigns in Hebron. | Now there went with Absalom two hun-
dred men out of Jerusalem that were called, going with sim-
12 plicity of heart, and knowing nothing of the design. | Absalom
also sent for Achitophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from
his city Gilo. And while he was offering sacrifices, there was a
strong conspiracy: and the people running together increased
13 with Absalom. | And there came a messenger to David, say-
ing: All Israel with their whole heart follows Absalom.

14 *David Flees from Jerusalem* And David said to his serv-
ants, that were with him in Jerusalem: Arise and let us flee;
for otherwise we shall not escape from the face of Absalom.
Make haste to go out, lest he come and overtake us, and bring
ruin upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. |
15 And the king's servants said to him: Whatsoever our lord the
king shall command, we your servants will willingly execute.
16 | And the king went forth, and all his household on foot. And
the king left ten women his concubines to keep the house. |
17 And the king going forth and all Israel on foot, stood afar off
18 from the house. | And all his servants walked by him: and
the bands of the Cerethi, and the Phelethi, and all the Gethites,
valiant warriors, six hundred men who had followed him from
19 Geth on foot, went before the king. | And the king said to Ethai
the Gethite: Why do you come with us? Return and dwell with
the king, for you are a stranger, and have come out of your own
20 place. | Yesterday you came and today you should be forced
to go forth with us? But I shall go where I am going: yet you
return, and take back your brethren with you. And the Lord will
show you mercy, and truth, because you have shown grace and

21 fidelity. And Ethai answered the king, saying: As the Lorc
lives, and as my lord the king lives: in whatever place you shal
be, my lord, O king, either in death, or in life, there will you
22 servant be. | And David said to Ethai: Come, and pass over
And Ethai the Gethite passed; and all the men that were with
23 him, and the rest of the people. | And they all wept with a
loud voice, and all the people passed over. The king also him-
self went over the brook Cedron: and all the people marched
toward the way that looks to the desert.

24 ***The Ark Returned to Jerusalem*** And Sadoc the priest
also came, and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the
covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God. And
Abiathar went up, till all the people that had come out of the
25 city had done passing. | And the king said to Sadoc: Carry
back the ark of God into the city. If I shall find grace in the
sight of the Lord, he will bring me again: and he will show me
26 it, and his tabernacle. | But if he shall say to me: You please
me not: I am ready, let him do that which is good before him
27 | And the king said to Sadoc the priest: O seer, return into the
city in peace; and let Achimaas your son, and Jonathan the son
28 of Abiathar, your two sons, be with you. | Behold I will lie
hidden in the plains of the wilderness, till word will come from
29 you to certify me. | So Sadoc and Abiathar carried back the
ark of God into Jerusalem: and they tarried there.
30 But David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, going up
and weeping, walking barefoot, and with his head covered: and
all the people that were with them, went up with their heads
31 covered, weeping. | And it was told David that Achitophel also
was in the conspiracy with Absalom, and David said: Infatuate
32 O Lord, I beseech you, the counsel of Achitophel. | And when
David had come to the top of the mountain, where he was
about to adore the Lord, behold Chusai the Arachite, came to
meet him with his garment rent and his head covered with earth
33 | And David said to him: If you come with me, you will be a
34 burden to me. | But if you return into the city, and say to
Absalom: I am your servant, O king: as I have been your fa-
ther's servant, so I will be your servant: you shall defeat the
counsel of Achitophel.
35 And you have with you Sadoc and Abiathar, the priests: and
whatever thing you shall hear out of the king's house, you shall
36 tell it to Sadoc and Abiathar, the priests. | And there are with
them their two sons Achimaas the son of Sadoc, and Jonathan
the son of Abiathar: and you shall send by them to me every

37 thing that you shall hear. | Then Chusai the friend of David went into the city: and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

16

1 ***Siba Brings Provisions to David*** And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold Siba the servant of Miphiboseth came to meet him with two asses, laden with two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred 2 cakes of figs, and a vessel of wine. | And the king said to Siba: What do these things mean? And Siba answered: The asses *are* for the king's household to sit on: and the loaves and figs for your servants to eat: and the wine to drink if any man be faint 3 in the desert. | And the king said: Where is your master's son? And Siba answered the king: He remained in Jerusalem, saying: Today will the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my fa- 4 ther. | And the king said to Siba: I give you all that belonged to Miphiboseth. And Siba said: I beseech you let me find grace before you, my lord, O king.

5 ***Semei Curses David*** And king David came as far as Bahurim: and behold there came out from thence a man of the kindred of the house of Saul named Semei, the son of Gera. 6 And coming out he cursed as he went on. | And he threw stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people, and all the warriors walked on the right, and on 7 the left side of the king. | And thus said Semei when he cursed the king: Come out, come out, you man of blood, and 8 you man of Belial. | The Lord has repaid you for all the blood of the house of Saul: because you have usurped the kingdom in his stead. And the Lord has given the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son: and behold your evils press upon you, be- 9 cause you are a man of blood. | And Abisai the son of Sarvia said to the king: Why should this dead dog curse my lord the 10 king? I will go, and cut off his head. | And the king said: What have I to do with you, sons of Sarvia? Let him alone and let him curse: for the Lord has bid him curse David. And who is 11 he that shall dare say, why has he done so? | And the king said to Abisai, and to all his servants: Behold my son, who came forth from my bowels, seeks my life. How much more now a son of Jemini? Let him alone that he may curse as the Lord has 12 bidden him. | Perhaps the Lord may look upon my affliction and the Lord may render me good for the cursing of this day. 13 | And David and his men with him went by the way. And Semei by the hill's side went over against him, cursing, and 14 casting stones at him, and scattering earth. | And the king and

all the people with him came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

15 But Absalom and all his people came into Jerusalem; and
16 Achitophel was with him. | And when Chusai the Arachite, David's friend, had come to Absalom, he said to him: God save
17 you, O king; God save you, O king. | And Absalom said to him: Is this your kindness to your friend? Why did you not go
18 with your friend? And Chusai answered Absalom: Nay: for I will be his, whom the Lord has chosen, and all this people, and
19 all Israel; and with him will I abide. | Besides this, whom shall I serve? Is it not the king's son? As I have served your father, so will I serve you also.

20 ***Achitophel's Counsel*** And Absalom said to Achitophel:
21 Consult what we are to do. | And Achitophel said to Absalom: Go in to the concubines of your father, whom he has left to keep the house: that when all Israel shall hear that you have disgraced your father, their hands may be strengthened with
22 you. | So they spread a tent for Absalom on the top of the house: and he went in to his father's concubines before all Israel.
23 | Now the counsel of Achitophel, which he gave in those days, *was* as if a man should consult God. So was all the counsel of Achitophel, both when he was with David, and when he was with Absalom.

17

1 ***Chusai's Counsel Prevails over Achitophel's*** And Achitophel said to Absalom: I will choose me twelve thousand men;
2 and I will arise and pursue after David this night. | And coming upon him (for he is now weary and weak handed) I will defeat him: and when all the people are put to flight that are
3 with him, I will kill the king who will be left alone. | And I

16, 21-22: Achitophel counsels Absalom to appropriate half of David's harem. In this way, the people will not fear David returning, pardoning Absalom, and punishing them for rallying to him. Everyone will know that reconciliation will be impossible, for Absalom is already acting as an established successor to the throne (see 3, 8 n).

The wedding tent on the roof of the palace is still recognized in the canopy at Jewish weddings.

16, 23: Achitophel was listened to with the same respect shown to the divine oracles themselves.

17, 1-29: Achitophel's plan to attack at once was the more strategic one (vv. 1-3). Chusai appealed to the pretender's vanity by advising that Absalom himself lead the soldiers representing the whole nation "from Dan to Bersabee" (v. 11). It would take time to muster them, and thus David would have time to organize.

will bring back all the people, as if they were but one man; for
you seek *but* one man. And all the people shall be in peace.
4 And his saying pleased Absalom, and all the ancients of
5 Israel. | But Absalom said: Call Chusai the Arachite; and let
6 us hear what he also says. | And when Chusai had come before
Absalom, Absalom said to him: Achitophel has spoken after
this manner. Shall we do it or not? What counsel do you give?
7 | And Chusai said to Absalom: The counsel that Achitophel
8 has given this time is not good. | And again Chusai said: You
know your father, and the men that are with him, that they are
very valiant, and bitter in their mind, as a bear raging in the
wood when her whelps are taken away. And your father is a
9 warrior, and will not lodge with the people. | Perhaps he now
lies hidden in pits, or in some other place where he may list.
And when any one shall fall at the first, every one that hears
it shall say: There is a slaughter among the people that fol-
10 lowed Absalom. | And the most valiant man whose heart is as
the heart of a lion, shall melt for fear: for all the people of Is-
rael know your father to be a valiant man, and that all who are
11 with him are valiant. | But this seems to me to be good counsel:
Let all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Bersabee, as the
sand of the sea which cannot be numbered. And you shall be in
12 the midst of them. | And we shall come upon him in whatever
place he shall be found: and we shall cover him, as the dew
falls upon the ground: and we shall not leave of the men that
13 are with him not so much as one. | And if he shall enter into
any city, all Israel shall cast ropes round about that city: and
we will draw it into the river, so that there shall not be found
14 so much as one small stone thereof. | And Absalom, and all
the men of Israel said: The counsel of Chusai the Arachite is
better than the counsel of Achitophel. And by the will of the
Lord the profitable counsel of Achitophel was defeated, that the
Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

15 ***Chusai Informs David*** And Chusai said to Sadoc and
Abiathar the priests: Thus and thus did Achitophel counsel
Absalom, and the ancients of Israel; and thus and thus did I
16 counsel them. | Now therefore send quickly and tell David,
saying: Tarry not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but
without delay pass over: lest the king be swallowed up, and all
17 the people that are with him. | And Jonathan and Achimaas
stayed by the fountain Rogel: and there went a maid and told
them; and they went forward, to carry the message to king
David, for they might not be seen, nor enter into the city. |
18 But a certain boy saw them, and told Absalom: but they mak-

ing haste went into the house of a certain man in Bahurim, who
19 had a well in his court, and they went down into it. | And a
woman answered them: They passed on in haste, after they had
as it were to dry sodden barley: and so the thing was not known.
20 | And when Absalom's servants came into the house, they said
to the woman: Where is Achimaas and Jonathan? And the
woman answered them: They passed on in haste, after they had
tasted a little water. But they that sought them, when they
21 found them not, returned into Jerusalem. | And when they
were gone, they came up out of the well, and going on told king
David, and said: Arise, and pass quickly over the river; for this
22 manner of counsel has Achitophel given against you. | So
David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they
passed over the Jordan, until it grew light, and not one of them
was left that had not gone over the river.

23 ***Achitophel Hangs Himself*** But Achitophel seeing that
his counsel was not followed, saddled his ass, and arose and
went home to his house and to his city. And putting his house
in order, he hanged himself, and was buried in the sepulcher of
his father.

24 But David came to the camp, and Absalom passed over the
25 Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. | Now Absalom
appointed Amasa in Joab's stead over the army: and Amasa
was the son of a man who was called Jethra of Jezrael, who
went in to Abigail the daughter of Naas, the sister of Sarvia
26 who was the mother of Joab. | And Israel camped with Absa-
27 lom in the land of Galaad. | And when David had come to the
camp, Sobi the son of Naas of Rabbath of the children of Am-
mon, and Machir the son of Ammihel of Lodabar, and Berzellai
28 the Galaadite of Rogelim, | brought him beds, and tapestry,
and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, and
29 parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and fried pulse, | and
honey, and butter, and sheep, and fat calves. And they gave to
David and the people that were with him, to eat: for they
suspected that the people were faint with hunger and thirst in
the wilderness.

18

1 ***David Prepares for Battle*** And David having reviewed
his people, appointed over them captains of thousands and of

17, 23: Achitophel knew that David would return and execute him as a traitor. He became the classical figure of a traitor and type of Judas (Jn 13, 18). See John Dryden's *Achitophel.*

hundreds, | and sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abisai the son of Sarvia, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ethai, who was of Geth. And the king said to the people: I also will go forth with you. | And the people answered: You shall not go forth; for if we flee away, they will not much mind us. Or if half of us should fall, they will not greatly care: for you alone are accounted for ten thousand. It is better therefore that you should be in the city to succor us. | And the king said to them: What seems good to you, that will I do. And the king stood by the gate: and all the people went forth by their troops, by hundreds and by thousands. | And the king commanded Joab, and Abisai, and Ethai, saying: Save me the boy Absalom. And all the people heard the king giving charge to all the princes concerning Absalom.

So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. | And the people of Israel were defeated there by David's army: and a great slaughter was made that day of twenty thousand men. | And the battle was scattered over the face of all the country: and there were many more of the people whom the forest consumed, than whom the sword devoured that day.

Absalom Defeated and Slain And it happened that Absalom met the servants of David, riding on a mule: and as the mule went under a thick and large oak, his head stuck in the oak: and while he hung between the heaven and the earth, the mule on which he rode passed on. | And one saw this and told Joab, saying: I saw Absalom hanging upon an oak. | And Joab said to the man that told him: If you saw him, why did you not stab him to the ground, and I would have given you ten sicles of silver, and a belt? | And he said to Joab: If you would have paid down in my hands a thousand pieces of silver, I would not lay my hands upon the king's son. For in our hearing the king charged you, and Abisai, and Ethai, saying: Save me the boy Absalom. | Yea, and if I should have acted boldly against my own life, this could not have been hidden from the king. And would you have stood by me? | And Joab said: Not as you will but I will set upon him in your sight. So he took three lances in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom. And while he yet panted for life, sticking on the oak, | ten young men, armorbearers of Joab, ran up, and striking him slew him. | And Joab sounded the trumpet, and kept back the people from pursuing after Israel in their flight, being willing to spare the multitude. | And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in

the forest: and they laid an exceeding great heap of stones upon
18 him. But all Israel fled to their own dwellings. | Now Absalom had reared up for himself, in his lifetime, a pillar, which is in the king's valley, for he said: I have no son, and this shall be the monument of my name. And he called the pillar by his own name, and it is called the hand of Absalom, to this day.

19 ***The Messengers*** And Achimaas the son of Sadoc said: I will run and tell the king, that the Lord has done judgment for
20 him from the hand of his enemies. | And Joab said to him: You shall not be the messenger this day, but shall bear tidings another day. This day I will not have you bear tidings, because
21 the king's son is dead. | And Joab said to Chusai: Go, and tell the king what you have seen. Chusai bowed down to Joab, and
22 ran. | Then Achimaas the son of Sadoc said to Joab again: Why might not I also run after Chusai? And Joab said to him: Why will you run, my son? You will not be the bearer of good tid-
23 ings. | He answered: But what if I run? And he said to him: Run. Then Achimaas running by a nearer way passed Chusai.
24 And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman that was on the top of the gate upon the wall, lifting up his eyes,
25 saw a man running alone, | and crying out he told the king. And the king said: If he be alone, there are good tidings in his mouth. And as he was coming apace, and drawing nearer, |
26 the watchman saw another man running; and crying aloud from above, he said: I see another man running alone. And the
27 king said: He also is a good messenger. | And the watchman said: The running of the foremost seems to me like the running of Achimaas the son of Sadoc. And the king said: He is a good
28 man, and comes with good news. | And Achimaas crying out said to the king: God save you, O king. And falling down before the king with his face to the ground, he said: Blessed be the Lord your God, who has shut up the men that have lifted up
29 their hands against the lord my king. | And the king said: Is the young man Absalom safe? And Achimaas said: I saw a great tumult, O king, when your servant Joab sent me your servant.
30 I know nothing else. | And the king said to him: Pass, and
31 stand here. | And when he had passed, and stood still, Chusai appeared. And coming up he said: I bring good tidings, my lord, the king; for the Lord has judged for you this day from

18, 18: *I have no son:* this differs from another tradition in 14, 27.
18, 21: *Chusai:* this messenger mentioned from here to v. 32 should read a "Chusite," probably an Ethiopian slave.

32 the hand of all that have risen up against you. | And the king said to Chusai: Is the young man Absalom safe? And Chusai answering him, said: Let the enemies of my lord, the king, and all that rise against him unto evil, be as the young man is.

33 The king therefore being much moved, went up to the high chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went he spoke in this manner: My son Absalom, Absalom my son! Would to God that I might die for you, Absalom my son, my son Absalom!

19

1 ***David Mourns for Absalom*** And it was told Joab, that
2 the king wept and mourned for his son. | And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people. For the
3 people heard say that day: The king grieves for his son. | And the people shunned the going into the city that day as a people would do that has turned their backs, and fled away from the
4 battle. | And the king covered his head, and cried with a loud
5 voice: O my son Absalom, O Absalom my son, O my son! | Then Joab going into the house to the kings, said: You have shamed this day the faces of all your servants, that have saved your life, and the lives of your sons, and of your daughters, and the lives
6 of your wives, and the lives of your concubines. | You love them that hate you, and you hate them that love you. And you have shown this day that you do not care for your nobles, nor for your servants. And I now plainly perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had been slain, then it would have pleased
7 you. | Now therefore arise, and go out, and speak to the satisfaction of your servants: for I swear to you by the Lord, that if you will not go forth, there will not tarry with you so much as one this night. And that will be worse to you, than all the evils that have befallen you from your youth until now.

8 Then the king arose and sat in the gate: and it was told to all the people that the king sat in the gate. And all the people came
9 before the king: but Israel fled to their own dwellings. | And all the people were at strife in all the tribes of Israel, saying: The king delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he has fled out of the land for Absalom.

19, 5-7: Joab, a typical Semite, speaks in extremes of black and white ("love and hate").

19, 8: *The king . . . sat in the gate:* the busiest part of the city. *But Israel fled to their own dwellings:* those who had followed Absalom.

19, 9-12: David asks why the Judeans do not invite him back as king since the non-Judeans, "The tribes of Israel," are reputed to have already expressed this desire.

10 ***David Is Invited to Return*** But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in the battle. How long are you silent,
11 and bring not back the king? | And king David sent to Sadoc and Abiathar, the priests, saying: Speak to the ancients of Juda saying: Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house? (For the talk of all Israel had come to the king in his
12 house.) | You are my brethren; you are my bone, and my flesh:
13 why are you the last to bring back the king? | And say to Amasa: Are not you my bone, and my flesh? So do God to me and add more, if you be not the chief captain of the army before
14 me always in the place of Joab. | And he inclined the heart of all the men of Juda, as it were of one man. And they sent to the king, saying: Return, you, and all your servants.
15 And the king returned and came as far as the Jordan: and all Juda came as far as Galgal to meet the king, and to bring
16 him over the Jordan. | And Semei the son of Gera the son of Jemini of Bahurim, made haste and went down with the men of
17 Juda to meet king David, | with a thousand men of Benjamin, and Siba the servant of the house of Saul. And his fifteen sons, and twenty servants were with him. And going over the Jordan,
18 | they passed the fords before the king, that they might help over the king's household, and do according to his commandment. And Semei the son of Gera falling down before the king,
19 when he had crossed the Jordan, | said to him: Impute not to me, my lord, the iniquity, nor remember the injuries of your servant on the day that you, my lord, the king, went out of Jeru-
20 salem, nor lay it up in your heart, O king. | For I your servant acknowledge my sin: and therefore I have come this day the first of all the house of Joseph, and have come down to meet my lord the king.

21 ***David Pardons Semei*** But Abisai the son of Sarvia answering, said: Shall Semei for these words not be put to death,
22 because he cursed the Lord's anointed? | And David said: What have I to do with you, sons of Sarvia? Why are you a satan this day to me? Shall there any man be killed this day in Israel? Do not I know that this day I am made king over Israel?
23 | And the king said to Semei: You shall not die. And he swore unto him.

19, 13: Amasa was Absalom's general. His replacement of Joab might please the Judean followers of Absalom and rid David of a gruff, disagreeable, and disobedient commander.

19, 22: *A satan:* an adversary.

24 And Miphiboseth the son of Saul came down to meet the
king: and he had neither washed his feet, nor trimmed his
beard, nor washed his garments from the day that the king went
25 out, until the day of his return in peace. | And when he met the
king at Jerusalem, the king said to him: Why did you not come
26 with me, Miphiboseth? | And he answering, said: My lord, O
king, my servant despised me. For I your servant spoke to him
to saddle me an ass, that I might get on and go with the king:
27 for I your servant am lame. | Moreover he has also accused
me your servant to you, my lord the king: but you, my lord the
28 king, are as an angel of God. Do what pleases you. | For all of
my father's house were no better than worthy of death before
my lord the king; and you have set me your servant among the
guests of your table. What just complaint therefore have I? Or
29 what right to cry any more to the king? | Then the king said to
him: Why do you speak any more? What I have said is de-
30 termined: you and Siba divide the possessions. | And Miphibo-
seth answered the king: Yea, let him take all: forasmuch as my
lord the king is returned peaceably into his house.

31 ***David Blesses Berzellai*** Berzellai also the Galaadite com-
ing down from Rogelim, brought the king over the Jordan, being
32 ready also to wait on him beyond the river. | Now Berzellai the
Galaadite was of a great age, that is to say, fourscore years old:
and he provided the king with sustenance when he abode in the
33 camp; for he was a man exceeding rich. | And the king said to
Berzellai: Come with me that you may rest secure with me in
34 Jerusalem. | And Berzellai said to the king: How many are the
days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the king
35 to Jerusalem? | I am this day fourscore years old. Are my
senses quick to discern sweet and bitter? Or can meat or drink
delight your servant? Or can I hear any more the voice of sing-
ing men and singing women? Why should your servant be a
36 burden to my lord, the king? | I your servant will go on a little
way from the Jordan with you. I need not this recompense. |
37 But I beseech you let your servant return, and die in my own
city, and be buried by the sepulcher of my father and of my
mother. But there is your servant Chamaam, let him go with
you, my lord, the king, and do to him whatsoever seems good
38 to you. | Then the king said to him: Let Chamaam go over with
me, and I will do for him whatsoever shall please you; and all
39 that you shall ask of me, you shall obtain. | And when all the
people and the king had passed over the Jordan, the king kissed
Berzellai, and blessed him; and he returned to his own place. |

40 So the king went on to Galgal, and Chamaam with him. Now
all the people of Juda had brought the king over, and only half
of the people of Israel were there.
41 Therefore all the men of Israel running together to the king,
said to him: Why have our brethren the men of Juda stolen
you away, and have brought the king and his household over
42 the Jordan, and all the men of David with him? | And all the
men of Juda answered the men of Israel: Because the king is
nearer to me. Why are you angry for this matter? Have we
eaten any thing of the king's, or have any gifts been given us? |
43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Juda, and said:
I have ten parts in the king more than you; and David belongs
to me more than to you. Why have you done me a wrong, and
why was it not told me first, that I might bring back my king?
And the men of Juda answered more harshly than the men of
Israel.

20

1 ***Seba's Rebellion*** And there happened to be there a man of
Belial, whose name was Seba, the son of Bochri, a man of
Jemini. And he sounded the trumpet, and said: We have no
part in David, nor inheritance in the son of Isai. Return to your
2 dwellings, O Israel. | And all Israel departed from David, and
followed Seba the son of Bochri: but the men of Juda stuck to
3 their king from the Jordan unto Jerusalem. | And when the
king had come into his house at Jerusalem, he took the ten
women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and
put them in ward, allowing them provisions. And he went not
in unto them; but they were shut up unto the day of their death
living in widowhood.
4 And the king said to Amasa: Assemble to me all the men of
5 Juda on the third day. And be you also present. | So Amasa
went to assemble the men of Juda; but he tarried beyond the
6 set time which the king had appointed him. | And David said
to Abisai: Now will Seba the son of Bochri do us more harm
than did Absalom. Take therefore the servants of your lord,
and pursue after him, lest he find fenced cities, and escape us. |
7 So Joab's men went out with him, and the Cerethi and the
Phelethi: and all the valiant men went out of Jerusalem to pur-
8 sue after Seba the son of Bochri. | And when they were at the

19, 40-43: The non-Judeans felt hurt that the Judeans accompanied David back to Jerusalem with an eye to receiving partial treatment.

20, 1-2: Seba leads the rest of the tribes in revolt against David's tribe of Juda.

great stone which is in Gabaon, Amasa coming met them. And
Joab had on a close coat of equal length with his habit; and
over it was girded with a sword hanging down to his flank, in a
scabbard, made in such manner as to come out with the least
9 motion and strike. | And Joab said to Amasa: God save you,
my brother. And he took Amasa by the chin with his right hand
10 as him him. | But Amasa, did not take notice of the sword,
which Joab had: and he struck him in the side, and shed out
his bowels to the ground, and gave him not a second wound,
and he died. And Joab, and Abisai his brother pursued after
11 Seba the son of Bochri. | In the meantime some men of Joab's
company stopping at the dead body of Amasa, said: Behold he
that would have been in Joab's stead the companion of David. |
12 And Amasa, imbrued with blood, lay in the midst of the way.
A certain man saw this that all the people stood still to look
upon him. So he removed Amasa out of the highway into the
field, and covered him with a garment, that they who passed
13 might not stop on his account. | And when he was removed out
of the way, all the people went on following Joab to pursue
after Seba the son of Bochri.

14 Now he had passed through all the tribes of Israel unto
Abela and Bethmaacha: and all the chosen men were gathered
15 together unto him. | And they came, and besieged him in Abela
and in Bethmaacha, and they cast up works round the city,
and the city was besieged. And all the people that were with
16 Joab, labored to throw down the walls. | And a wise woman
cried out from the city: Hear, hear, and say to Joab: Come near
17 hither, and I will speak with you. | And when he came near to
her, she said to him: Are you Joab? And he answered: I am.
And she spoke thus to him: Hear the words of your handmaid.
18 He answered: I do hear. | And she again said: A saying was
used in the old proverb: They that inquire, let them inquire in
19 Abela: and so they made an end. | Am not I she that answers
truth in Israel? And you seek to destroy the city, and to over-
throw a mother in Israel? Why will you throw down the in-
20 heritance of the Lord? | And Joab answering said: God forbid,
God forbid that I should. I do not throw down nor destroy.

21 ***Seba Is Beheaded*** The matter is not so, but a man of
mount Ephraim, Seba the son of Bochri by name, has lifted up
his hand against king David: deliver him only, and we will
depart from the city. And the woman said to Joab: Behold his

20. 19: Thus did Joab dispose of a rival.
20. 19: *Overthrow a mother:* a distinguished and venerable city.

22 head shall be thrown to you from the wall. | So she went to all
the people, and spoke to them wisely. And they cut off the head
of Seba the son of Bochri, and cast it out to Joab. And he
sounded the trumpet: and they departed from the city, every
one to their home. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.
23 So Joab was over all the army of Israel: and Banaias the son
24 of Joiada was over the Cerethites and Phelethites. | But Adu-
ram over the tributes: and Josaphat the son of Ahilud was re-
25 corder. | And Siva *was* scribe: and Sadoc and Abiathar, priests.
26 | And Ira the Jairite was the priest of David.

21

1 ***Seven Sons of Saul Crucified*** And there was a famine
in the days of David for three years successively: and David
consulted the oracle of the Lord. And the Lord said: *It is* for
Saul, and his bloody house, because he slew the Gabaonites. |
2 Then the king, calling for the Gabaonites, said to them: (Now
the Gabaonites were not of the children of Israel, but the re-
mains of the Amorrites: and the children of Israel had sworn
to them, and Saul sought to slay them out of zeal, as it were
3 for the children of Israel and Juda:) | David therefore said to
the Gabaonites: What shall I do for you? And what shall be
the atonement for you that you may bless the inheritance of the
4 Lord? | And the Gabaonites said to him: We have no contest
about silver and gold, but against Saul and against his house.
Neither do we desire that any man be slain of Israel. And the
king said to them: What will you then that I should do for
5 you? | And they said to the king: The man that crushed us and
oppressed us unjustly, we must destroy in such manner that
there be not so much as one left of his stock in all the coasts of
6 Israel. | Let seven men of his children be delivered unto us,
that we may crucify them to the Lord in Gabaa of Saul, once
the chosen of the Lord. And the king said: I will give them. |
7 And the king spared Miphiboseth the son of Jonathan the son
of Saul, because of the oath of the Lord, that had been between
8 David and Jonathan the son of Saul. | So the king took the two
sons of Respha the daughter of Aia, whom she bore to Saul,
Armoni, and Miphiboseth: and the five sons of Michol the
daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Hadriel the son of Ber-

21—24: Six appendices to David's history from various sources are inserted here. The logical sequel to 20, 26 is 3 Kgs 1, 1ff.

21, 1: According to the ideas of the time, a calamity (the famine) is always ascribed to some sin. Saul's slaughter of the Gabaonites, the adopted reason for the famine, is not otherwise mentioned in the Bible.

21, 8: *Miphiboseth:* not the one mentioned in the preceding v. 7.

9 zellai, that was of Molathi, | and gave them into the hands of the Gabaonites. And they crucified them on a hill before the Lord: and these seven died together in the first days of the harvest, when the barley began to be reaped.

10 And Respha the daughter of Aia took haircloth, and spread it under her upon the rock, from the beginning of the harvest, till water dropped upon them out of heaven: and suffered neither the birds to tear them by day, nor the beasts by night. |

11 And it was told David, what Raspha the daughter of Aia, the
12 concubine of Saul, had done. | And David went, and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabes Galaad, who had stolen them from the street of Bethsan, where the Philistines had hanged them when they
13 had slain Saul in Gelboe. | And he brought from thence the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son: and they
14 gathered up the bones of them that were crucified, | and they buried them with the bones of Saul, and of Jonathan his son in the land of Benjamin, in the side, in the sepulcher of Cis his father. And they did all that the king had commanded: and God showed mercy again to the land after these things.

15 ***War with the Philistines*** And the Philistines made war again against Israel, and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines. And David grow-
16 ing faint, | Jesbibenob, who was of the race of Arapha, the iron of whose spear weighed three hundred ounces, being girded
17 with a new sword, attempted to kill David. | And Abisai the son of Sarvia rescued him, and striking the Philistine killed him. Then David's men swore unto him, saying: You shall go no more out with us to battle, lest you put out the lamp of Israel. |

18 There was also a second battle in Gob against the Philistines: then Sobochai of Husathi slew Saph of the race of Arapha of
19 the family of the giants. | And there was a third battle in Gob against the Philistines, in which Adeodatus the son of the For-

21, 10: Respha guarded the corpses of her sons from birds and beasts for the whole summer until David granted them a decent burial. The ancients considered an unburied corpse outrageous.

This verse is the most pathetic in all literature to paint a tragic mother's loss. Kipling's words are a pointed commentary here:

"If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love would follow me still, . . ."

21, 12-13: The anecdote of the proper burial of Saul and Jonathan is interwoven here with the seven crucified sons.

21, 15-21: The death of four Philistine giants.

21, 19: *Goliath:* see 1 Sm 17, 1-54 n.

rest an embroiderer of Bethlehem slew Goliath the Gethite, the
20 shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. | A fourth
battle was in Geth: where there was a man of great stature, that
had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, four and
21 twenty in all. And he was of the race of Arapha. | And he re-
proached Israel: and Jonathan the son of Samaa the brother of
22 David slew him. | These four were born of Arapha in Geth:
and they fell by the hand of David and of his servants.

22

1 ***David's Psalm of Thanksgiving*** And David spoke to the
Lord the words of this canticle, in the day that the Lord de-
livered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the
hand of Saul.

2 And he said: The Lord is my rock, and my strength, and my
savior.

3 God is my strong one, in him will I trust: my shield, and the
horn of my salvation. He lifts me up, and *is* my refuge: my
savior, you will deliver me from iniquity.

4 I will call on the Lord who is worthy to be praised: and I shall
be saved from my enemies.

5 For the pangs of death have surrounded me: the floods of
Belial have made me afraid.

6 The cords of hell compassed me: the snares of death prevented
me.

7 In my distress I will call upon the Lord, and I will cry to my
God: and he will hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry
shall come to his ears.

8 The earth shook and trembled, the foundations of the moun-
tains were moved, and shaken: because he was angry with them.

9 A smoke went up from his nostrils, and a devouring fire out of
his mouth: coals were kindled by it.

10 He bowed the heavens, and came down: and darkness *was*
under his feet.

11 And he rode upon the cherubim, and flew: and slid upon the
wings of the wind.

12 He made darkness a covering round about him: dropping
waters out of the clouds of the heavens.

13 By the brightness before him, the coals of fire were kindled.

14 The Lord shall thunder from heaven: and the most high shall
give forth his voice.

15 He shot arrows and scattered them: lightning, and consumed
them.

22, 1-51: See Ps 17 where it is repeated with slight variations.

16 And the overflowings of the sea appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid open at the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of the spirit of his wrath.
17 He sent from on high, and took me, and drew me out of many waters.
18 He delivered me from my most mighty enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.
19 He prevented me in the day of my affliction, and the Lord became my stay.
20 And he brought me forth into a large place, he delivered me, because I pleased him.
21 The Lord will reward me according to my justice: and according to the cleanness of my hands he will render to me.
22 Because I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.
23 For all his judgments are in my sight: and his precepts I have not removed from me.
24 And I shall be perfect with him: and shall keep myself from my iniquity.
25 And the Lord will recompense me according to my justice: and according to the cleanness of my hands in the sight of his eyes.
26 With the holy one you will be holy: and with the valiant perfect.
27 With the elect you will be elect: and with the perverse you will be perverted.
28 And the poor people you will save: and with your eyes you will humble the haughty.
29 For you are my lamp, O Lord: and you, O Lord, will enlighten my darkness.
30 For in you I will run girded: in my God I will leap over the wall.
31 God, his way *is* immaculate, the word of the Lord is tried by fire: he is the shield of all that trust in him.
32 Who is God but the Lord: and who is strong but our God?
33 God who has girded me with strength, and made my way perfect.
34 Making my feet like the feet of harts, and setting me upon my high places.
35 He teaches my hands to war: and makes my arms like a bow of brass.
36 You have given me the shield of my salvation: and your mildness has multiplied me.
37 You shall enlarge my steps under me: and my ankles shall not fail.

38 I will pursue after my enemies, and crush them: and will not return again till I consume them.
39 I will consume them and break them in pieces, so that they shall not rise: they shall fall under my feet.
40 You have girded me with strength to battle: you have made them that resisted me to bow under me.
41 My enemies you have made to turn their back to me: them that hated me, and I shall destroy them.
42 They shall cry, and there shall be none to save: to the Lord, and he shall not hear them.
43 I shall beat them as small as the dust of the earth: I shall crush them and spread them abroad like the mire of the streets.
44 You will save me from the contradictions of my people: you will keep me to be the head of the Gentiles: the people which I know not, shall serve me,
45 The sons of the stranger will resist me, at the hearing of the ear they will obey me.
46 The strangers are melted away, and shall be straitened in their distresses.
47 The Lord lives, and my God is blessed: and the strong God of my salvation shall be exalted.
48 God who gives me revenge, and brings down people under me:
49 Who brings me forth from my enemies, and lifts me up from them that resist me: from the wicked man you shall deliver me.
50 Therefore will I give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and will sing to your name.
51 Giving great salvation to his king, and showing mercy to David his anointed, and to his seed for ever.

23

1 ***David's Last Words*** Now these are David's last words. David the son of Isai said: The man to whom it was appointed concerning the Christ of the God of Jacob, the excellent psalmist
2 of Israel, said: | The spirit of the Lord has spoken by me and
3 his word by my tongue. | The God of Israel said to me, the strong one of Israel spoke, the ruler of men, the just ruler in the
4 fear of God. | As the light of the morning, when the sun rises, shines in the morning without clouds, and as the grass springs

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23, 1-7: Most likely this poorly preserved poem on God's promise to David's dynasty was not written by David but ascribed to him. The more authentic last words of David are in 3 Kgs 2, 5-9.

23, 1: *The man . . . of Jacob:* the man who was appointed the anointed (king) of the God of Jacob.

5 out of the earth by rain. | Neither is my house so great with
God, that he should make with me an eternal covenant, firm in
all things and assured. For *he is* all my salvation, and all my
6 will: neither is there aught thereof that springs not up. | But
transgressors shall all of them be plucked up as thorns: which
7 are not taken away with hands. | And if a man will touch them,
he must be armed with iron and with the staff of a lance: but
they shall be set on fire and burned to nothing.

8 ***The Valiant Men of David*** These are the names of the
valiant men of David. *Jesbaham* sitting in the chair *was* the
wisest chief among the three: he was like the most tender little
worm of the wood, who killed eight hundred men at one onset.
9 | After him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of
the three valiant men that were with David when they defied
the Philistines, and they were there gathered together to battle.
10 | And when the men of Israel had gone away, he stood and
smote the Philistines till his hand was weary, and grew stiff
with the sword. And the Lord wrought a great victory that day:
and the people that had fled away, returned to take spoils of
11 them that were slain. | And after him was Semma the son of
Age of Arari. And the Philistines were gathered together in
a troop: for there was a field full of lentils. And when the peo-
12 ple had fled the face of the Philistines, | he stood in the
midst of the field, and defended it, and defeated the Philistines:
and the Lord gave a great victory.
13 Moreover also before this the three who were princes among
the thirty, went down and came to David in the harvest time
into the cave of Odollam: and the camp of the Philistines
14 was in the valley of the giants. | And David was then in a
hold: and there was a garrison of the Philistines then in Bethle-
15 hem. | And David longed, and said: O that some man would
get me a drink of the water out of the cistern, that is in Bethle-
16 hem, by the gate. | And the three valiant men broke through
the camp of the Philistines, and drew water out of the cistern
of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and brought it to David:
17 but he would not drink, but offered it to the Lord, | saying: The
Lord be merciful to me, that I may not do this: shall I drink
the blood of these men that went, and the peril of their lives?
Therefore he would not drink. These things did these three
mighty men.
18 Abisai also the brother of Joab, the son of Sarvia, was chief
among three: and he lifted up his spear against three hundred

23, 5: *Eternal covenant:* a reference to 7, 13.

19 whom he slew, and he was renowned among the three, | and
the noblest of three, and was their chief, but to the three first he
20 attained not. | And Banaias the son of Joiada a most valiant
man, of great deeds, of Cabseel: he slew the two lions of Moab,
and he went down, and slew a lion in the midst of a pit, in the
21 time of snow. | He also slew an Egyptian, a man worthy to be
a sight, having a spear in his hand: but he went down to him
with a rod, and forced the spear out of the hand of the Egyptian,
22 and slew him with his own spear. | These things did Banaias
23 the son of Joiada. | And he *was* renowned among the three
valiant men, who were the most honorable among the thirty:
but he attained not to the first three, and David made him of
his privy council.
24 Asael the brother of Joab was one of the thirty, Elehanan
25 the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, | Semma of Harodi, Elica of
26 Harodi, | Heles of Phalti, Hira the son of Acces of Thecua, |
27.28 Abiezer of Anathoth, Mobonnai of Husati, | Selmon the
29 Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, | Heled the son of Baana,
also a Netophathite, Ithai the son of Ribai of Gabaath of the
30 children of Benjamin, | Banaia the Pharathonite, Heddai of
31 the torrent Gaas, | Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth of Ber-
32 omi, | Eliaba of Salaboni, the sons of Jassen, Jonathan, |
33.34 Semma of Ororí, Aliam the son of Sarar the Arorite, | Eliphe-
let the son of Aasbai the son of Machati, Eliam the son of Achit-
35.36 ophel the Gelonite, | Hesrai of Carmel, Pharai of Arbi, Igaal
37 the son of Nathan of Soba, Bonni of Gadi, | Selec of Ammoni,
Naharai the Berothite, armorbearer of Joab the son of Sarvia,
38.39 | Ira the Jethrite, Gareb also a Jethrite, | Urias the Hethite:
thirty and seven in all.

24

1 ***David Numbers the People*** And the anger of the Lord
was again kindled against Israel, and stirred up David among
them, saying: Go, number Israel and Juda.
2 And the king said to Joab the general of his army: Go
through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Bersabee, and
3 number the people that I may know the number of them. | And
Joab said to the king: The Lord your God increase your people,
and make them as many more as they are now, and again mul-
tiply them a hundredfold in the sight of my lord the king. But
4 what does my lord the king mean by this kind of thing? | But

23, 23: *Thirty:* a round number here.

24, 1-3: David ordered a military census of his entire kingdom (v. 9). Moderns see nothing unusual about this. But Joab, reflecting

the king's words prevailed over the words of Joab, and of the captains of the army: and Joab, and the captains of the soldiers went out from the presence of the king, to number the people
5 of Israel. | And when they had passed the Jordan, they came to Aroer to the right side of the city, which is in the vale of Gad.
6 | And by Jazer they passed into Galaad, and to the lower land of Hodsi: and they came into the woodlands of Dan. And going
7 about by Sidon, | they passed near the walls of Tyre, and all the land of the Hevite, and the Chanaanite: and they came to
8 the south of Juda into Bersabee. | And having gone through the whole land, after nine months and twenty days, they came
9 to Jerusalem. | And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people to the king, and there were found of Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword: and of Juda five hundred thousand fighting men.

10 But David's heart struck him, after the people were numbered. And David said to the Lord: I have sinned very much in what I have done; but I pray you, O Lord, to take away the iniquity of your servant, because I have done exceeding fool-
11 ishly. | And David arose in the morning, and the word of the Lord came to Gad the prophet and the seer of David, saying:
12 | Go, and say to David: Thus says the Lord: I give you your choice of three things. Choose one of them whichever you will,
13 that I may do it to you. | And when Gad came to David, he told him, saying: Either seven years of famine shall come to you in your land: or you shall flee three months before your adversaries, and they shall pursue you: or for three days there shall be a pestilence in your land. Now therefore deliberate, and see
14 what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said to Gad: I am in a great strait; but it is better that I should fall into the hands of the Lord (for his mercies are many) than into the hands of men.

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the mentality of his day, objected (v. 3). A pagan king taking a census denoted his absolute power. But since God was the true ruler of the nation only *He* has absolute power. (Ex 30, 11-12, reflects a later mentality when the census was not interpreted as offensive to God, yet to avert the plague of past history, they made an offering.) Since everything is directly attributed to God, He is mentioned with the command of the census (v. 1) and with the punishment flowing from it (vv. 15ff). However, the chronicler more correctly interprets the idea of the census as coming from Satan not from God (1 Par 21, 1).

24, 5-7: These verses are valuable to show the extent of David's kingdom.

24, 9: Most likely the numbers are inflated.

24, 13: Famine, war, and pestilence are a popular trilogy to express misery in the Bible, which is echoed in modern liturgical litanies.

15 ***God Sends a Pestilence*** And the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning unto the time appointed. And there died of the people from Dan to Bersabee seventy thou-
16 sand men. | And when the angel of the Lord had stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord had pity on the affliction, and said to the angel that slew the people: It is enough. Now hold your hand. And the angel of the Lord was
17 by the thrashing-floor of Areuna the Jebusite. | And David said to the Lord, when he saw the angel striking the people: It is I; I am he that has sinned, I have done wickedly. These that are the sheep, what have they done? Let your hand, I beseech you, be turned against me, and against my father's house.
18 And Gad came to David that day, and said: Go up, and build an altar to the Lord in the thrashingfloor of Areuna the
19 Jebusite. | And David went up according to the word of Gad
20 which the Lord had commanded him. | And Areuna looked,
21 and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. | And going out he worshiped the king, bowing with his face to the earth, and said: Wherefore has my lord the king come to his servant? And David said to him: To buy the thrashingfloor from you, and build an altar to the Lord, that the plague, which rages among the people may cease.

22 ***The Plague Is Stayed*** And Areuna said to David: Let my Lord the king take, and offer, as it seems good to him. You have here oxen for a holocaust, and the wain, and the yokes of the
23 oxen for wood. | All these things Areuna as a king gave to the king. And Areuna said to the king: The Lord your God receive
24 your vow. | And the king answered him, and said: Nay, but I will buy it from you at a price, and I will not offer to the Lord my God holocausts free cost. So David bought the floor, and
25 the oxen, for fifty sicles of silver. | And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered holocausts and peace offerings. And the Lord became merciful to the land: and the plague was stayed from Israel.

24, 15-17: The angel of the Lord is used here as a personification of the pestilence, as in 4 Kgs 19, 35.

24, 18-25: It is universally agreed in archeological circles that Areuna's thrashingfloor is the general area where Solomon later built his temple in Jerusalem (1 Par 22, 1). The preferred of two opinions today states that David's altar was on the highest point of the huge Rock seen nowadays in the Mosque of Omar. But this rock was later to serve as the base for the altar of holocausts in front of Solomon's temple.

24, 24: David underscores the theology of making a vow to God, namely, we should give Him the very best.

THE THIRD BOOK OF KINGS

INTRODUCTION

The two books of Kings continue the narrative of 2 Samuel from the death of David to the long, glorious reign of Solomon whose death snapped Palestine into the divided monarchy of the northern ("Israel") and southern ("Juda") kingdoms. The northern kingdom encompassed ten loosely united tribes. In its two hundred years there were continual revolts against its nineteen kings till its fall in 722-21 B.C. The fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. closes the Fourth Book of Kings with the last Judean king entering his Babylonian exile.

The anonymous author composes his twin books (3, 4 Kgs) from three main sources: the book of acts of Solomon; the book of the chronicles of the kings of Juda; and the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. The most important minor source used by the author are the cycle stories of Elijah (Elias), 3 Kgs 17-4 Kgs 1, and Elisha (Eliseus), 4 Kgs 2-13. The Elias cycle may have been written about 875 B.C. and that of Eliseus about 825 B.C. The purpose of a stylized biography of Elias is not to diminish the historical facts embodied, but to make their essential meaning shine all the more brilliantly, i.e., that Yahweh is God, not Baal.

Eliseus' cycle is not as unified and not as literary as that of Elias. The former is more involved in the political life of the nation than is the latter. The "miracles" in the Eliseus cycle are not as intimately connected with the preaching of Yahweh as they are in the Elias cycle. Although the disciples of Eliseus narrated extraordinary feats of their master, similar to the *Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*, yet the stories illustrate the sincere solicitude of Eliseus to help a person; indeed, even the insignificant loss of an ax head concerned him. The "miracles" of both prophets disclose the lasting impression made by these holy men on their times.

The framework unifying 3, 4 Kgs consists of stereotyped opening and closing formulas on the duration of the reigns. The reign of one king is synchronized with that of the king ruling contemporaneously in the other kingdom. An evaluation of the reign seals the account. See 3 Kgs 14, 21-22, as an example.

When the scholars test the accuracy of the synchronized periods of reign they reveal inconsistencies. Until new evidence appears, none of the numerous systems, devised to level off the inconsistencies, will prevail. The present measure of accuracy is this: the period of reign of some kings varies from ten to twenty years, but the variation is less in most cases. It is already an achievement that for the last 150 years of the kingdom of Juda the dates are accurate almost to the year.

A first edition of 3, 4 Kgs appeared before the exile; a final edition during the exile was by the Deuteronomic writer who continued to leave his imprint, begun in the Book of Josue. His theme here appears under this form: there is only one God, Yahweh, and He must be worshiped in only one place, the temple of Jerusalem. In conformity

with religious writing, the author allots more space to kings faithful to Yahweh than to those successful in politics.

Main divisions of the two books of Kings are:

David's Death and Intrigues at Court, 3 Kgs 1—2
Solomon's Reign, 3 Kgs 3—10
Solomon's Idolatry, Death, and Schism of the Two Kingdoms, 3 Kgs 11—12
The Synchronistic History of Israel and Juda, 3 Kgs 13—4 Kgs 17
The History of Juda to Its Fall in 587 B.C., 4 Kgs 18—25

1

1 ***Adonias Usurps the Throne*** Now king David was old,
and advanced in years: and when he was covered with clothes,
2 he was not warm. | His servants therefore said to him: Let us
seek for our lord the king, a young virgin, and let her stand
before the king, and cherish him, and sleep in his bosom, and
3 warm our lord the king. | So they sought a beautiful young
woman in all the coasts of Israel, and they found Abisag a
4 Sunamitess, and brought her to the king. | And the damsel was
exceeding beautiful; and she slept with the king, and served
him: but the king did not know her.
5 And Adonias the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying: I
will be king. And he made himself chariots and horsemen, and
6 fifty men to run before him. | Neither did his father rebuke him
at any time, saying: Why have you done this? And he also was
7 very beautiful, the next in birth after Absalom. | And he con-
ferred with Joab the son of Sarvia, and with Abiathar the priest,
8 who furthered Adonias' side. | But Sadoc the priest, and
Banaias the son of Joiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Semei,
and Rei, and the strength of David's army, was not with
9 Adonias. | And Adonias, having slain rams and calves and all
fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which was near the fountain
Rogel, invited all his brethren, the king's sons, and all the men
10 of Juda, the king's servants. | But Nathan the prophet, and
Banaias, and all the valiant men, and Solomon his brother, he
invited not.
11 And Nathan said to Bethsabee the mother of Solomon: Have
you not heard that Adonias the son of Haggith reigns, and our
12 lord David knows it not? | Now then come, take my counsel
13 and save your life, and the life of your son Solomon. | Go, and

1, 5: *Fifty men:* his bodyguard.
1, 13: This is the first mention of David's promise to Bethsabee.

get in to king David, and say to him: Did not you, my lord O king, swear to me your handmaid, saying: Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne? Why then
14 does Adonias reign? | And while you are yet speaking there with the king, I will come in after you, and will fill up your
15 words. | So Bethsabee went in to the king into the chamber. Now the king was very old, and Abisag the Sunamitess ministered
16 to him. | Bethsabee bowed herself, and worshiped the king.
17 And the king said to her: What is your will? | She answered and said: My lord, you did swear to your handmaid by the Lord your God, saying: Solomon your son shall reign after me, and
18 he shall sit on my throne. | And behold now Adonias reigns:
19 and you, my lord the king, know nothing of it. | He has killed oxen, and all fat cattle, and many rams, and invited all the king's sons, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the general of the
20 army: but Solomon your servant he invited not. | And now, my lord O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon you, that you should tell them, who shall sit on your throne, my lord the king,
21 after you. | Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

22 As she was yet speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet
23 came. | And they told the king, saying: Nathan the prophet is here. And when he had come in before the king, and had wor-
24 shiped, bowing down to the ground, | Nathan said: My lord O king, have you said: Let Adonias reign after me, and let him sit
25 upon my throne? | Because he has gone down today, and has killed oxen, and fatlings, and many rams, and invited all the king's sons, and the captains of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and they are eating and drinking before him, and say-
26 ing: God save king Adonias. | But me your servant, and Sadoc the priest, and Banaias the son of Joiada, and Solomon
27 your servant he has not invited. | Has this word come out from my lord the king, and have you not told me your servant who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

28 ***David Chooses Solomon*** And king David answered and said: Call to me Bethsabee. And when she came in to the king,
29 and stood before him, | the king swore and said: As the Lord
30 lives, who has delivered my soul out of all distress, | even as I swore to you by the Lord the God of Israel, saying: Solomon your son shall reign after me; and he shall sit upon my throne
31 in my stead, so will I do this day. | And Bethsabee bowing with her face to the earth worshiped the king, saying: May my lord David live for ever.

32 King David also said: Call me Sadoc the priest, and Nathan
the prophet, and Banaias the son of Joiada. And when they
33 had come in before the king, | he said to them: Take with you
the servants of your lord, and set my son Solomon upon my
34 mule, and bring him to Gihon. | And let Sadoc the priest, and
Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel. And
you shall sound the trumpet, and shall say: God save king
35 Solomon. | And you shall come up after him: and he shall
come, and shall sit upon my throne. And he shall reign in my
stead: and I will appoint him to be ruler over Israel, and over
36 Juda. | And Banaias the son of Joiada answered the king, say-
ing: Amen. So say the Lord the God of my lord the king! |
37 As the Lord has been with my lord the king, so be he with
Solomon, and make his throne higher than the throne of my lord
38 king David. | So Sadoc the priest, and Nathan the prophet
went down, and Banaias the son of Joiada, and the Cerethi,
and Phelethi: and they set Solomon upon the mule of king
David, and brought him to Gihon.

39 ***Solomon Is Anointed King*** And Sadoc the priest took a
horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And
they sounded the trumpet; and all the people said: God save
40 king Solomon. | And all the multitude went up after him, and
the people played with pipes, and rejoiced with a great joy: and
the earth rang with the noise of their cry.
41 And Adonias, and all that were invited by him, heard it, and
now the feast was at an end. Joab also hearing the sound of the
trumpet, said: What means this noise of the city in an uproar?
42 | While he yet spoke, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest
came. And Adonias said to him: Come in, because you are a
43 valiant man, and you bring good news. | And Jonathan an-
swered Adonias: Not so: for our lord king David has appointed
44 Solomon king, | and has sent with him Sadoc the priest, and
Nathan the prophet, and Banaias the son of Joiada, and the
Cerethi, and Phelethi: and they have set him upon the king's
45 mule. | And Sadoc the priest, and Nathan the prophet have
anointed him king in Gihon: and they have gone up from
thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise
46 that you have heard. | Moreover Solomon sits upon the throne
47 of the kingdom, | and the king's servants going in have blessed
our lord king David, saying: May God make the name of Solo-
mon greater than your name, and make his throne greater than

1, 38: *Cerethi, and Phelethi:* David's loyal bodyguard.
1, 39: Solomon was about twenty years old.

48 your throne. And the king adored in his bed, and he said:
Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has given this day
one to sit on my throne, my eyes seeing it.

49 ***Solomon Spares Adonias*** Then all the guests of Ado-
nias were afraid: and they all arose and every man went his
50 way. | And Adonias fearing Solomon, arose, and went, and
51 took hold on the horn of the altar. | And they told Solomon,
saying: Behold Adonias, fearing king Solomon, has taken hold
of the horn of the altar, saying: Let king Solomon swear to me
52 this day, that he will not kill his servant with the sword. | And
Solomon said: If he be a good man, there shall not so much as
one hair of his head fall to the ground; but if evil be found in
53 him, he shall die. | Then king Solomon sent, and brought him
out from the altar. And going in he worshiped king Solomon,
and Solomon said to him: Go to your house.

2

1 ***David Instructs Solomon and Dies*** And the days of
David drew nigh that he should die, and he charged his son
2 Solomon, saying: | I am going the way of all flesh. Take cour-
3 age, and show yourself a man. | And keep the charge of the Lord
your God, to walk in his ways, and observe his ceremonies, and
his precepts, and judgments, and testimonies, as it is written
in the law of Moses: that you may understand all that you do
4 at whatever turn you take, | that the Lord may confirm his
words, which he has spoken of me, saying: If your children
shall take heed to their ways, and shall walk before me in
truth, with all their heart, and with all their soul, there shall
not be taken away from you a man on the throne of Israel.
5 You also know what Joab the son of Sarvia has done to me,
what he did to the two captains of the army of Israel, to Abner
the son of Ner, and to Amasa the son of Jether: whom he slew,
and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war on
his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on
6 his feet. | Do therefore according to your wisdom: and let not
7 his hoary head go down to hell in peace. | But show kindness
to the sons of Berzellai the Galaadite, and let them eat at your
table: for they met me when I fled from the face of Absalom

1, 50-53: The altar with four protuberances ("horns") afforded the right of asylum according to Ex 21, 13-14.

2, 4: A reference to Nathan's prophecy, 2 Sm 7, 11-16.

2, 6: *Hell:* the nether world. David might appear ungrateful here in ordering the execution of a devoted generalissimo. Although Joab irked David on several occasions, yet he was the power behind the throne

8 your brother. | You have also with you Semei the son of Gera,
the son of Jemini of Bahurim, who cursed me with a grievous
curse, when I went to the camp; but because he came down to
meet me when I passed over the Jordan, I swore to him by
9 the Lord, saying: I will not kill you with a sword. | Do not hold
him guiltless. But you are a wise man, and know what to do with
him: and you shall bring down his gray hairs with blood to hell.
10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city
11 of David. | And the days that David reigned in Israel, were
forty years. In Hebron he reigned seven years; in Jerusalem
12 thirty-three. | And Solomon sat upon the throne of his father
David: and his kingdom was strengthened exceedingly.

13 ***Adonias' Request and Death*** And Adonias the son of
Haggith came to Bethsabee the mother of Solomon. And she
said to him: Is your coming peaceable? He answered: Peaceable.
14 | And he added: I have a word to speak with you. She said to
15 him: Speak. And he said: | You know that the kingdom was
mine, and all Israel had preferred me to be their king: but the
kingdom has been transferred and become my brother's; for it
16 was appointed him by the Lord. | Now therefore I ask one
17 petition: turn me not away. And she said to him: Say on. | And
he said: I pray you speak to king Solomon (for he cannot deny
18 you any thing) to give me Abisag the Sunamitess to wife. | And
19 Bethsabee said: Well, I will speak for you to the king. | Then
Bethsabee came to king Solomon, to speak to him for Adonias:
and the king arose to meet her, and bowed to her, and sat down
upon his throne. And a throne was set for the king's mother:
20 and she sat on his right hand. | And she said to him: I desire
one small petition of you; do not put me to confusion. And the

---

which David could hardly have kept firmly without Joab. David perhaps felt that a calamity might befall the nation if Joab were left unpunished for his murders (see vv. 31-33).

2, 8: For the ancients a curse was efficacious. Semei cursed David (2 Sm 16, 5ff.), but he forgave him (2 Sm 19, 23). Therefore, David himself could not kill Semei but he could pass on the charge to Solomon because the curse was thought to continue its efficacy upon the offspring (Solomon) of the person originally cursed, namely, David. The way to prevent the curse from attaining its fulfillment was to "return" it to the curser by killing him as in v. 44.

2, 11: The prophets after David considered him an ideal king. He was a soldier, statesman, psalm poet, and musician. In spite of his adultery and murder, he was a pious king for his day, and the biblical type of Christ Himself.

2, 19: Recent studies have shown the high prestige of the queen mother in ancient oriental courts and in Israel. Athalia is the best biblical example of a queen mother abusing her office (4 Kgs 11).

king said to her: My mother, ask; for I must not deny you. |
21 And she said: Let Abisag the Sunamitess be given to Adonias
22 your brother to wife. | And king Solomon answered, and said to his mother: Why do you ask Abisag the Sunamitess for Adonias? Ask for him also the kingdom: for he is my elder brother, and has Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Sarvia.
23 Then king Solomon swore by the Lord, saying: So and so may God do to me, and add more, if Adonias has not spoken this
24 word against his own life. | And now, as the Lord lives, who has established me, and placed me upon the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised, Adonias
25 shall be put to death this day. | And king Solomon sent by the hand of Banaias the son of Joiada, who slew him: and he died. |
26 And the king said also to Abiathar the priest: Go to Anathoth to your lands, for indeed you are worthy of death. But I will not at this time put you to death, because you did carry the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and you have endured
27 trouble in all the troubles my father endured. | So Solomon cast out Abiathar, from being the priest of the Lord, that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he spoke concerning the house of Heli in Silo.

28 ***Joab Put to Death*** And the news came to Joab, because Joab had turned after Adonias, and had not turned after Solomon. And Joab fled into the tabernacle of the Lord and laid
29 hold on the horn of the altar. | And it was told king Solomon, that Joab had fled into the tabernacle of the Lord, and was by the altar. And Solomon sent Banaias the son of Joiada, saying: Go,
30 kill him. | And Banaias came to the tabernacle of the Lord, and said to him: Thus says the king: Come forth. And he said: I will not come forth, but here I will die. Banaias brought word back to the king, saying: Thus says Joab, and thus he answered
31 me. | And the king said to him: Do as he has said: and kill him, and bury him. And you shall remove the innocent blood, which has been shed by Joab, from me, and from the house of
32 my father. | And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head, because he murdered two men, just and better than himself; and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing it: Abner the son of Ner, general of the army of Israel, and
33 Amasa the son of Jether, general of the army of Juda. | And

2, 22f.: Since Abisag was a wife of David, and the royal successor inherits the harem automatically, Solomon correctly understood that Adonias was making a claim for the throne.
2, 27: A reference to 1 Sm 2, 30-36.

their blood shall return upon the head of Joab, and upon the
head of his seed for ever. But to David and his seed and his
34 house, and to his throne be peace for ever from the Lord. | So
Banaias the son of Joiada went up, and setting upon him slew
35 him: and he was buried in his house in the desert. | And the
king appointed Banaias the son of Joiada in his room over the
army: and Sadoc the priest he put in the place of Abiathar.
36 The king also sent, and called for Semei, and said to him:
Build yourself a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there; and go
37 not out from thence to any other place. | For on whatever day
you shall go out and pass over the brook Cedron, know that
you shall be put to death. Your blood shall be upon your own
38 head. | And Semei said to the king: The saying is good. As my
lord the king has said, so will your servant do. And Semei dwelt
in Jerusalem, many days.

39 ***Semei's Death*** And it came to pass after three years, that
the servants of Semei ran away to Achis the son of Maacha the
king of Geth: and it was told Semei that his servants were gone
40 to Geth. | And Semei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to
Achis at Geth to seek his servants: and he brought them out of
41 Geth. | And it was told Solomon that Semei went from Jeru-
42 salem to Geth, and had come back. | And sending he called for
him, and said to him: Did I not protest to you by the Lord,
and tell you before: On whatever day you shall go away to
any other place, know you shall die? And you answered me:
43 The word that I have heard is good. | Why then have you not
kept the oath of the Lord, and the commandment that I have
44 laid upon you? | And the king said to Semei: You know all
the evil, of which your heart is conscious, which you did to
David my father. The Lord has returned your wickedness upon
45 your own head. | And king Solomon shall be blessed: and the
throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever. |
46 So the king commanded Banaias the son of Joiada. And he went
out and struck him: and he died.

3

1 ***Solomon Asks for Wisdom*** And the kingdom was estab-

2, 34: See 2, 6 n. Banaias did not violate the right of sanctuary which Joab claimed by holding on to the horns of the altar (v. 28), because Joab was guilty and therefore he could not claim this right according to Ex 21, 14.

2, 36-40: See 2, 8 n.

3, 1: Scholars still widely differ on the identity of the Pharao whose daughter married Solomon.

linked in the land of Solomon, and he made affinity with Pharao
the king of Egypt: for he took his daughter, and brought her
into the city of David, until he had made an end of building
his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall of Jeru-
2 salem round about. | But yet the people sacrificed in the high
places: for there was no temple built to the name of the Lord
until that day.
3 And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the precepts of David
his father. Only he sacrificed in the high places, and burned
4 incense. | He went therefore to Gabaon, to sacrifice there: for
that was the great high place. A thousand victims for holocausts
5 did Solomon offer upon that altar in Gabaon. | And the Lord
appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, saying: Ask what
6 you will that I should give you. | And Solomon said: You have
shown great mercy to your servant David my father, even as
he walked before you in truth, and justice, and an upright heart
with you; and you kept your great mercy for him, and gave him
7 a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. | And now, O Lord
God, you made your servant king instead of David my father.
And I am but a child, and know not how to go out and come in.
8 | And your servant is in the midst of the people which you have
chosen, an immense people, which cannot be numbered nor
9 counted for multitude. | Give therefore to your servant an
understanding heart, to judge your people, and discern between
good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people, your
people which is so numerous?
10 And the word was pleasing to the Lord that Solomon had
11 asked such a thing. | And the Lord said to Solomon: Because
you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long
life or riches, nor the lives of your enemies, but have asked for
12 yourself wisdom to discern judgment, | behold I have done for
you according to your words, and have given you a wise and
understanding heart; insomuch that there has been no one like
13 you before you, nor shall arise after you. | Yea and the things
also which you did not ask, I have given you: to wit, riches and
glory, so that no one has been like you among the kings in all
14 days heretofore. | And if you will walk in my ways, and keep
my precepts, and my commandments, as your father walked, I
15 will lengthen your days. | And Solomon awakened, and per-

3. 3-9: This prayer is outstanding in the annals of ancient Near Eastern kings because of its unselfishness. See v. 11.

3. 7: *I child*: this is an expression of humble admission of inexperience. *How to go out and come in*: an expression meaning inexperience, as above.

3. 12: An accepted Semitic hyperbole.

ceived that it was a dream. And when he came to Jerusalem, he stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered holocausts, and sacrificed victims of peace offerings, and made a great feast for all his servants.

16 ***Solomon's Judgment*** Then there came two women that
17 were harlots, to the king, and stood before him: | and one of them said: I beseech you, my lord, I and this woman dwelt in one house, and I was delivered of a child with her in the cham-
18 ber. | And the third day, after that I was delivered, she also was delivered: and we were together, and no other person with us
19 in the house, only we two. | And this woman's child died in the
20 night: for in her sleep she overlaid him. And rising in the dead time of the night, she took my child from my side, while I your handmaid was asleep, and laid it in her bosom: and laid her
21 dead child in my bosom. | And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold it was dead: but considering him more diligently when it was clear day, I found that it was not
22 mine which I bore. | And the other woman answered: It is not so as you say, but your child is dead, and mine is alive. On the contrary she said: You lie, for my child lives, and your child is dead. And in this manner they strove before the king.
23 Then said the king: The one says: My child is alive, and your child is dead. And the other answers: Nay, but your child is
24 dead, and mine lives. | The king therefore said: Bring me a sword. And when they had brought a sword before the king: |
25 Divide, said he, the living child in two, and give half to the one,
26 and half to the other. | But the woman whose child was alive, said to the king (for her bowels were moved upon her child): I beseech you, my lord, give her the child alive, and do not kill it. But the other said: Let it be neither mine nor yours, but
27 divide it. | The king answered, and said: Give the living child to this woman, and let it not be killed; for she is the mother
28 thereof. | And all Israel heard the judgment which the king had judged: and they feared the king, seeing that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.

4

1 ***Solomon's Chief Officers*** And king Solomon reigned over

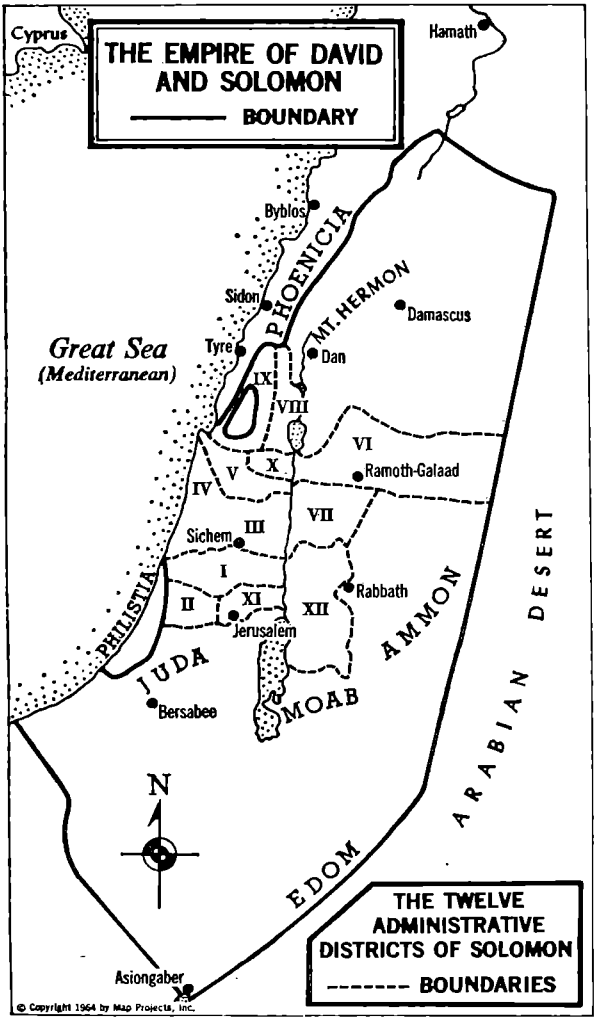
3, 16-28: There were about twenty-two similar stories in circulation. One is on the frescoes of Pompeii. The undisputed historical truth which this legend indicates is the people's belief in Solomon's reputation for prudence.

Even today any subject can approach some of the Arab chiefs for a case of justice.

2 all Israel: | And these were the princes which he had: Azarias
3 the son of Sadoc, the priest: | Elihoreph, and Ahia, the sons of
4 Sisa, scribes: Josaphat the son of Ahilud, recorder: | Banaias
the son of Joiada, over the army: and Sadoc and Abiathar,
5 priests: | Azarias the son of Nathan, over them that were about
the king: Zabud, the son of Nathan the priest, the king's friend:
6 | And Ahisar, governor of the house: and Adoniram the son of
Abda, over the tribute.
7 And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who pro-
vided victuals for the king and for his household: for every one
8 provided necessaries, each man his month in the year. | And
9 these are their names: Benhur, in mount Ephraim. | Bendecar,
in Macces, and in Salebim, and in Bethsames, and in Elon, and
10 in Bethanan. | Benhesed, in Aruboth: his was Socho, and all
11 the land of Epher. | Benabinadab, to whom belonged all
Nephath-Dor: he had Tapheth the daughter of Solomon to
12 wife. | Bana the son of Ahilud, who governed Thanac and
Mageddo, and all Bethsan, which is by Sarthana beneath
Jezrael, from Bethsan unto Abelmehula over against Jecmaan.
13 | Bengaber, in Ramoth Galaad: he had the towns of Jair the
son of Manasses in Galaad: he was chief in all the country of
Argob, which is in Basan, threescore great cities with walls, and
14 brazen bolts. | Abinadab the son of Addo was chief in Manaim.
15 | Achimaas in Nephtali: he also had Basemath the daughter of
16 Solomon to wife. | Baana the son of Husi, in Aser and in Baloth.
17.18 | Josaphat the son of Pharus, in Issachar. | Semei the son of
19 Ela, in Benjamin. | Gaber the son of Uri, in the land of Galaad,
in the land of Sehon the king of the Amorrites and of Og the
king of Basan: over all that were in that land.
20 Juda and Israel *were* innumerable, as the sand of the sea in
21 multitude: eating and drinking, and rejoicing. | And Solomon
had under him all the kingdoms from the river to the land of
the Philistines, even to the border of Egypt: and they brought
him presents, and served him, all the days of his life.

22 ***The Power and Riches of Solomon*** And the provision
of Solomon for each day was thirty measures of fine flour, and
23 threescore measures of meal; | ten fat oxen and twenty out of

4, 2-6: Some of the functions are not clear.
4, 7-19: Solomon divided the land into twelve administrative districts without scrupulous regard for the twelve tribal divisions which made for greater unity. See map: The Empire of David and Solomon, p. 572.
4, 21: *The river:* Euphrates. The limits of the kingdom are exaggerated. Solomon's kingdom was the same size as David's.


THE EMPIRE OF DAVID AND SOLOMON
BOUNDARY
Cyprus
Hamath
Byblos
PHOENICIA
Sidon
MT. HERMON
Damascus
Great Sea
(Mediterranean)
Tyre
Dan
IX
VIII
VI
X
V
Ramoth-Galaad
IV
VII
III
Sichem
I
Rabbath
II
XI
XII
Jerusalem
PHILISTIA
JUDA
AMMON
DESERT
ARABIAN
Bersabee
MOAB
N
EDOM
THE TWELVE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS OF SOLOMON
BOUNDARIES
Asiongaber
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the pastures, and a hundred rams, besides venison of harts, roes,
24 and buffles, and fatted fowls. | For he had all the country which
was beyond the river, from Thaphsa to Gazan, and all the kings
of those countries; and he had peace on every side round about.
25 | And Juda and Israel dwelt without any fear, every one under
his vine, and under his fig tree, from Dan to Bersabee, all the
26 days of Solomon. | And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of
27 chariot horses, and twelve thousand for the saddle. | And the
foresaid governors of the king fed them: and they furnished the
necessaries also for king Solomon's table, with great care in
28 their time. | They brought barley also and straw for the horses
and beasts, to the place where the king was, according as it was
appointed them.

29 And God gave to Solomon wisdom and understanding ex-
ceeding much, and largeness of heart as the sand that is on the
30 shore. | And the wisdom of Solomon surpassed the wisdom of
31 all the Orientals and of the Egyptians, | and he was wiser than
all men: wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chal-
col, and Dorda the son of Mahol. And he was renowned in all
32 nations round about. | Solomon also spoke three thousand
33 parables: and his poems were a thousand and five. | And he
treated about trees from the cedar that is in Libanus, unto the
hyssop, that comes out of the wall: and he discoursed of beasts,
34 and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes. | And they
came from all nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon and from
all the kings of the earth who heard of his wisdom.

5

1 ***Hiram Agrees to Help Solomon*** And Hiram king of
Tyre sent his servants to Solomon: for he heard that they had
anointed him king in the room of his father. For Hiram had
2 always been David's friend. | And Solomon sent to Hiram,
3 saying: | You know the will of David my father, and that he
could not build a house to the name of the Lord his God, be-

4, 25: *Vine . . . fig tree:* a frequent biblical idyllic expression for happiness.

4, 26: *Forty thousand:* an exaggerated number probably from 10, 26. See 2 Par 9, 25, which mentions four thousand.

4, 29-34: Solomon was a patron of writers and of the arts.

5, 1-18: King Hiram agreed to supply his own Phoenician skilled laborers to supervise Solomon's Israelites who would fell the trees in Lebanon, transport them to the sea, and float them on rafts to Joppa (2 Par 2, 16). Solomon gave in return 220,000 bushels of wheat and 180,000 gallons of olive oil (v. 11).

cause of the wars that were round about him, until the Lor
4 put them under the soles of his feet. | But now the Lord m
God has given me rest round about: and there is no adversar
5 nor evil occurrence. | Wherefore I purpose to build a templ
to the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spoke to Davi
my father, saying: Your son, whom I will set upon the thron
6 in your place, he shall build a house to my name. | Give order
therefore that your servants cut me down cedar trees out o
Libanus: and let my servants be with your servants. And I wil
give you the hire of your servants whatsoever you will ask: fo
you know how there is not among my people a man that ha
skill to hew wood like to the Sidonians.
7 Now when Hiram had heard the words of Solomon, he re
joiced exceedingly, and said: Blessed be the Lord God this da
who has given to David a very wise son over this numerou
8 people. | And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying: I have heard a
you have desired of me; and I will do all you desire concern
9 ing cedar trees and fir trees. | My servants shall bring them
down from Libanus to the sea. And I will put them together i
floats in the sea, and convey them to the place, which you sha
signify to me; and will land them there. And you shall receiv
them: and you shall allow me necessaries, to furnish food fo
10 my household. | So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees, and f
11 trees, according to all his desire. | And Solomon allowed Hira
twenty thousand measures of wheat, for provision for his hous
and twenty measures of the purest oil. Thus gave Solomon t
12 Hiram every year. | And the Lord gave wisdom to Solomo
as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram an
Solomon, and they two made a league together.

13 ***Solomon's Workmen and Laborers*** And king Solomo
chose workmen out of all Israel: and the levy was of thirt
14 thousand men. | And he sent them to Libanus, ten thousan
every month by turns, so that two months they were at hom
15 And Adoniram was over this levy. | And Solomon had seven
thousand to carry burdens, and eight thousand to hew ston
16 in the mountain: | besides the overseers who were over ever
work, in number three thousand: and three hundred that rule
17 over the people, and them that did the work. | And the kin
commanded, that they should bring great stones, costly stone
for the foundation of the temple, and should square them.
18 And the masons of Solomon, and the masons of Hiram hewe
them: and the Giblians prepared timber and stones to buil
the house.

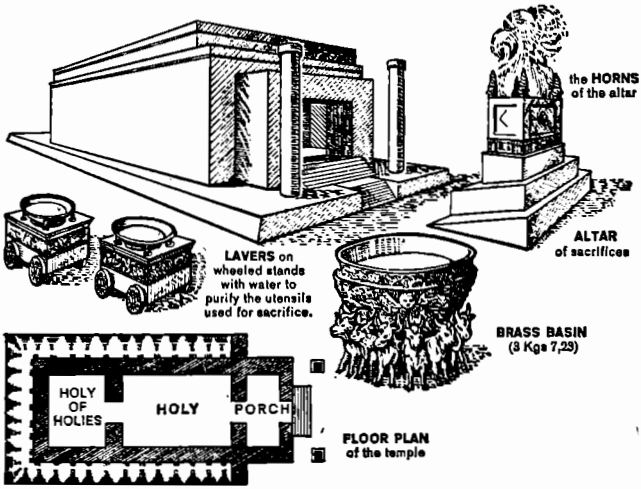
6

1 ***The Building of Solomon's Temple*** And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of the reign of Solomon over Israel, in the month Zio (the same is the second month), he began to build a house to the Lord.
2 And the house, which king Solomon built to the Lord, was three-score cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and
3 thirty cubits in height. | And there was a porch before the temple of twenty cubits in length, according to the measure of the breadth of the temple: and it was ten cubits in breadth
4 before the face of the temple. | And he made in the temple
5 oblique windows.| And upon the wall of the temple he built floors round about, in the walls of the house round about the
6 temple and the oracle: and he made sides round about. | The floor that was underneath, was five cubits in breadth; and the middle floor was six cubits in breadth; and the third floor was seven cubits in breadth. And he put beams in the house round about on the outside, that they might not be fastened in the
7 walls of the temple. | And the house, when it was in building, was built of stones hewed and made ready: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house
8 when it was in building. | The door for the middle side was on the right hand of the house: and by winding stairs they went up to the middle room, and from the middle to the third. |
9 So he built the house, and finished it: and he covered the house
10 with roofs of cedar. | And he built a floor over all the house five cubits in height: and he covered the house with timber of cedar.
11.12 And the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying: | This house, which you are building, if you will walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments, walking in them, I will fulfill my word to you which I spoke to
13 David your father. | And I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.
14.15 So Solomon built the house and finished it. | And he built the walls of the house on the inside, with boards of cedar,

6, 1: The scholars cannot reproduce an exact model of Solomon's temple. Since the text has been altered by editors, thinking of the second temple of later times, the Howland-Garber model now supersedes the traditional model of Conrad Schick in approximating the original temple.

The temple was a rectangular building divided into a porch, a nave (the "holy place"), and an inner shrine (the "Holy of Holies"). The very probable present-day opinion is that the temple faced East. One opinion holds that the Tyrians took this idea of the temple from the Syrians.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON FRONT VIEW



the **ENTRANCE** to the Holy of Holies showing the throne-bearing cherubim guarding the Ark of the Covenant.



from the floor of the house to the top of the walls, and to the roofs; he covered it with boards of cedar on the inside: and he covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

16 ***The Holy of Holies*** And he built up twenty cubits with boards of cedar at the furthest part of the temple, from the floor to the top: and made the inner house of the oracle to be the
17 Holy of Holies. | And the temple itself before the doors of the
18 oracle was forty cubits long. | And all the house was covered within with cedar, having the turnings, and the joints thereof artfully wrought and carvings projecting out. All was covered with boards of cedar: and no stone could be seen in the wall at
19 all. | And he made the oracle in the midst of the house, in the inner part, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord. |
20 Now the oracle was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in height. And he covered and overlaid it with most pure gold. And the altar also he covered
21 with cedar. | And the house before the oracle he overlaid with most pure gold, and fastened on the plates with nails of gold.
22 | And there was nothing in the temple that was not covered with gold: the whole altar of the oracle he covered also with gold.

23 And he made in the oracle two cherubim of olive tree, of
24 ten cubits in height. One wing of the cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub was five cubits: that is, in all ten cubits, from the extremity of one wing to the extremity of the
25 other wing. | The second cherub also was ten cubits. And the measure, and the work, was the same in both the cherubim: |
26 That is to say, one cherub was ten cubits high, and in like man-
27 ner the other cherub. | And he set the cherubim in the midst of the inner temple: and the cherubim stretched forth their wings. And the wing of the one touched one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall: and the other wings in the
28 midst of the temple touched one another. | And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

29 And all the walls of the temple round about he carved with divers figures and carvings: and he made in them cherubim and palm trees, and divers representations, as it were, standing out,
30 and coming forth from the wall. | And the floor of the house he also overlaid with gold within and without.

31 And in the entrance of the oracle he made little doors of olive
32 tree, and posts of five corners: | And two doors of olive tree. And he carved upon them figures of cherubim, and figures of palm trees, and carvings very much projecting: and he overlaid them with gold. And he covered both the cherubim and the

palm trees, and the other things with gold. | And he made in
the entrance of the temple posts of olive tree four-square: | And
two doors of fir tree, one of each side. And each door was dou-
ble, and so opened with folding leaves. | And he carved cher-
ubim, and palm trees, and carved work standing very much
out: and he overlaid all with golden plates in square work by
rule. | And he built the inner court with three rows of polished
stones, and one row of beams of cedar.
In the fourth year was the house of the Lord founded in the
month Zio. | And in the eleventh year in the month Bul (which
is the eight month) the house was finished in all the works
thereof, and in all the appurtenances thereof. And he was seven
years in building it.

7

Solomon's Palaces And Solomon built his own house in
thirteen years, and brought it to perfection. | He built also the
house of the forest of Libanus. The length of it was a hundred
cubits, and the breadth fifty cubits, and the height thirty
cubits: and four galleries between pillars of cedar: for he had
cut cedar trees into pillars. | And he covered the whole vault
with boards of cedar, and it was held up with five and forty
pillars. And one row had fifteen pillars, | set one against an-
other, | and looking one upon another, with equal space be-
tween the pillars, and over the pillars were square beams in all
things equal. | And he made a porch of pillars of fifty cubits
in length, and thirty cubits in breadth: and another porch before
the greater porch; and pillars, and chapiters upon the pillars. |
He made also the porch of the throne, wherein is the seat of
judgment: and covered it with cedar wood from the floor to the
top. And in the midst of the porch was a small house where he
sat in judgment, of the like work. He made also a house for the
daughter of Pharao (whom Solomon had taken to wife) of the
same work as this porch.
All was built of costly stones, which were sawed by a certain
rule and measure both within and without: from the founda-
tion to the top of the walls, and without unto the great court. |
And the foundations were of costly stones, great stones of ten
cubits or eight cubits: | and above there were costly stones, of
equal measure, hewed; and, in like manner, planks of cedar. |
And the greater court *was made* round with three rows of hewed
stones, and one row of planks of cedar: moreover also in the

7, 2: *The house of the forest of Libanus:* the plan is not easy to follow in the original text.

inner court of the house of the Lord, and in the porch of the house.

13 ***The Pillars of Brass*** And king Solomon sent, and brought
14 Hiram from Tyre, | the son of a widow woman of the tribe of Nephtali, whose father was a Tyrian, an artificer in brass, and full of wisdom, and understanding, and skill to work all work in brass. And when he had come to king Solomon, he wrought all
15 his work. | And he cast two pillars in brass, each pillar was eighteen cubits high: and a line of twelve cubits compassed both
16 the pillars. | He made also two chapiters of molten brass, to be set upon the tops of the pillars (the height of one chapiter with five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter was five cubits),
17 | and a kind of network, and chain work wreathed together with wonderful art. Both the chapiters of the pillars were cast: seven rows of nets were on one chapiter, and seven nets on the
18 other chapiter. | And he made the pillars, and two rows round about each network to cover the chapiters, that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and in like manner did he to the other
19 chapiter. | And the chapiters that were upon the top of the
20 pillars were of lily work in the porch, of four cubits. | And again other chapiters in the top of the pillars above, according to the measure of the pillar over against the network: and of pomegranates there were two hundred in rows round about the
21 other chapiter. | And he set up the two pillars in the porch of the temple. And when he had set up the pillar on the right hand, he called the name thereof Jachin: in like manner he set
22 up the second pillar, and called the name thereof Booz. | And upon the tops of the pillars he made lily work: so the work of the pillars was finished.

23 ***Ornaments and Vessels for the Temple*** He made also a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round all about; the height of it was five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits com-
24 passed it round about. | And a graven work under the brim of it compassed it, for ten cubits going about the sea: there were
25 two rows cast of chamfered sculptures. | And it stood upon twelve oxen, of which three looked toward the north, and three toward the west, and three toward the south, and three toward the east: and the sea was above upon them, and their hinder
26 parts were all hidden within. | And the laver was a hand-

7, 15-22: *Two pillars in brass:* similar pillars standing in front of temples have been found in the ancient Near East.

7, 23: *Molten sea:* this bronze bowl could contain 16,000 gallons.

breadth thick: and the brim thereof was like the brim of a cup, or the leaf of a crisped lily: it contained two thousand bates.
27 And he made ten bases of brass, every base was four cubits in
28 length, and four cubits in breadth, and three cubits high. | And the work itself of the bases was intergraven: and there were
29 gravings between the joinings. | And between the little crowns and the ledges were lions, and oxen, and cherubim: and in the joinings likewise above: and under the lions and oxen, as it were
30 bands of brass hanging down. | And every base had four wheels, and axletrees of brass: and at the four sides were undersetters under the laver molten, looking one against another. |
31 The mouth also of the laver within was in the top of the chapiter. And that which appeared without was of one cubit all round, and together it was one cubit and a half; and in the corners of the pillars were divers engravings: and the spaces
32 between the pillars were square, not round. | And the four wheels, which were at the four corners of the base, were joined one to another under the base: the height of a wheel was a
33 cubit and a half. | And they were such wheels as are used to be made in a chariot: and their axletrees, and spokes, and strakes,
34 and naves, were all cast. | And the four undersetters that were at every corner of each base were of the base itself cast and
35 joined together. | And in the top of the base there was a round compass of half a cubit, so wrought that the laver might be set thereon, having its gravings and divers sculptures of itself.
36 He engraved also in those plates, which were of brass, and in the corners, cherubim, and lions, and palm trees, in likeness of a man standing, so that they seemed not to be engraven, but
37 added round about. | After this manner he made ten bases: of
38 one casting and measure, and the like graving. | He made also ten lavers of brass: one laver contained four bases, and was of four cubits: and upon every base, in all ten, he put as many
39 lavers. | And he set the ten bases, five on the right side of the temple, and five on the left: and the sea he put on the right side of the temple over against the east southward.
40 And Hiram made caldrons, and shovels, and basins, and finished all the work of king Solomon in the temple of the
41 Lord. | The two pillars and the two cords of the chapiters, upon the chapiters of the pillars: and the two networks, to cover the
42 two cords, that were upon the top of the pillars. | And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks: two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the cords of the
43 chapiters, which were upon the tops of the pillars. | And the
44 ten bases, and the ten lavers on the bases. | And one sea, and
45 twelve oxen under the sea. | And the caldrons, and the shovels,

and the basins. All the vessels that Hiram made for king Solo-
46 mon for the house of the Lord were of fine brass. | In the plains
of the Jordan did the king cast them, in a clay ground, between
47 Socoth and Sartham. | And Solomon placed all the vessels: but
for exceeding great multitude the brass could not be weighed.
48 And Solomon made all the vessels for the house of the Lord:
the altar of gold: and the table of gold, upon which the loaves
49 of proposition should be set: | and the golden candlesticks, five
on the right hand, and five on the left, over against the oracle,
of pure gold: and the flowers like lilies: and the lamps over
50 them of gold: and golden snuffers. | And pots, and fleshbooks,
and bowls, and mortars, and censers, of most pure gold. And
the hinges for the doors of the inner house of the Holy of
Holies, and for the doors of the house of the temple were of
51 gold. | And Solomon finished all the work that he made in the
house of the Lord: and brought in the things that David his
father had dedicated, the silver and the gold, and the vessels;
and laid them up in the treasures of the house of the Lord.

8

1 ***The Ark Brought into the Temple*** Then all the an-
cients of Israel with the princes of the tribes, and the heads of
the families of the children of Israel were assembled to king
Solomon in Jerusalem: that they might carry the ark of the
covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, that is, out of
2 Sion. | And all Israel assembled themselves to king Solomon
on the festival day in the month of Ethanim: the same is the
3 seventh month. | And all the ancients of Israel came: and the
4 priests took up the ark, | and carried the ark of the Lord, and
the tabernacle of the covenant, and all the vessels of the sanc-
tuary, that were in the tabernacle: and the priests and the
5 Levites carried them. | And king Solomon, and all the mul-
titude of Israel, that were assembled unto him went with him
before the ark, and they sacrificed sheep and oxen that could
6 not be counted or numbered. | And the priests brought in the
ark of the covenant of the Lord into its place, into the oracle of
the temple into the Holy of Holies under the wings of the
7 cherubim. | For the cherubim spread forth their wings over
the place of the ark, and covered the ark, and the staves thereof
8 above, | and whereas the staves stood out, the ends of them
were seen without in the sanctuary before the oracle, but were

7, 46: At Ezion-Geber on the Gulf of Aqaba, Nelson Glueck excavated a huge copper smelter, dating back to Solomon's time. Scholars believe it casts some light on the enigmatic site mentioned in this verse.

not seen farther out: and there they have been unto this day. |
9 Now in the ark there was nothing else but the two tables of
stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a
covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of
the land of Egypt.

10 ***The Dedication of the Temple*** And it came to pass,
when the priests were coming out of the sanctuary, that a cloud
11 filled the house of the Lord, | and the priests could not stand to
minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had
12 filled the house of the Lord. | Then Solomon said: The Lord
13 said that he would dwell in a cloud. | Building I have built a
house for your dwelling, to be your most firm throne for ever. |
14 And the king turned his face, and blessed all the assembly of
15 Israel: for all the assembly of Israel stood. | And Solomon said:
Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who spoke with his
mouth to David my father, and with his own hands has ac-
16 complished it, saying: | Since the day that I brought my people
Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel,
for a house to be built, that my name might be there; but I
17 chose David to be over my people Israel. | And David my
father would have built a house to the name of the Lord the
18 God of Israel. | And the Lord said to David my father: Where-
as you have thought in your heart to build a house to my name,
you have done well in having this same thing in your mind. |
19 Nevertheless you shall not build me a house: but your son, that
shall come forth out of your loins, he shall build a house to my
20 name. | The Lord has performed his word which he spoke. And
I stand in the room of David my father: and sit upon the throne
of Israel, as the Lord promised: and have built a house to the
21 name of the Lord, the God of Israel. | And I have set there a
place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which he
made with our fathers when they came out of the land of Egypt.

22 ***Solomon's Prayer*** And Solomon stood before the altar of
the Lord in the sight of the assembly of Israel, and spread forth
his hands toward heaven.
23 And he said: Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in
heaven above, or on earth beneath: who keeps covenant and

8, 10-11: For the cloud as a sign of God's presence see Ex 13, 21-22 n.

8, 14-61: This beautiful prayer or "inaugural address" has been somewhat developed centuries after Solomon's time.

8, 17ff.: *Name:* a circumlocution for Yahweh.

mercy with your servants that have walked before you with all their heart.

24 Who has kept with your servant David my father what you have promised him. With your mouth you did speak, and with your hands you have performed, as this day proves.

25 Now therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with your servant David my father what you have spoken to him: saying: There shall not be taken away of you a man in my sight, to sit on the throne of Israel; yet so that your children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as you have walked in my sight.

26 And now, Lord God of Israel, let your words be established, which you have spoken to your servant David my father.

27 Is it then to be thought that God should indeed dwell upon earth? For if heaven, and the heavens of heavens cannot contain you, how much less this house which I have built?

28 But have regard to the prayer of your servant, and to his supplications, O Lord my God. Hear the hymn and the prayer, which your servant prays before you this day:

29 That your eyes may be open upon this house night and day; upon the house of which you have said: My name shall be there. That you may hearken to the prayer, which your servant prays in this place to you.

30 That you may hearken to the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel, whatsoever they shall pray for in this place: and hear them in the place of your dwelling in heaven: and when you hear, show them mercy.

31 If any man trespass against his neighbor, and have an oath upon him, wherewith he is bound, and come because of the oath before your altar to your house:

32 Then hear you in heaven: and do, and judge your servants, condemning the wicked, and bringing his way upon his own head; and justifying the just, and rewarding him according to his justice.

33 If your people Israel shall fly before their enemies (because they will sin against you), and doing penance, and confessing to your name, shall come, and pray, and make supplications to you in this house:

34 Then hear you in heaven, and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which you gave to their fathers.

35 If heaven shall be shut up, and there shall be no rain, because of their sins, and they, praying in this place, shall do penance to your name, and shall be converted from their sins, by occasion of their afflictions:

36 Then hear you them in heaven, and forgive the sins of your

servants, and of your people Israel; and show them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon your land, which you have given to your people in possession.

37 If a famine arise in the land, or a pestilence, or corrupt air, or blasting, or locust, or mildew, if their enemy afflict them besieging the gates, whatsoever plague, whatsoever infirmity,

38 Whatsoever curse or imprecation shall happen to any man of your people Israel: when a man shall know the wound of his own heart, and shall spread forth his hands in this house:

39 Then hear you in heaven, in the place of your dwelling, and forgive, and do so as to give to every one according to his ways, as you shall see his heart (for you only know the heart of all the children of men).

40 That they may fear you all the days that they live upon the face of the land, which you have given to our fathers.

41 ***Prayer for the Stranger*** Moreover also the stranger, who is not of your people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for your name's sake, (for they shall hear every where of your great name and your mighty hand,

42 And your stretched out arm,) so when he shall come, and shall pray in this place:

43 Then hear you in heaven, in the firmament of your dwelling place, and do all those things, for which that stranger shall call upon you. That all the people of the earth may learn to fear your name, as do your people Israel, and may prove that your name is called upon this house, which I have built.

44 ***Prayer for the People of Israel*** If your people go out to war against their enemies, by whatever way you shall send them, they shall pray to you toward the way of the city, which you have chosen, and toward the house, which I have built to your name.

45 And then hear you in heaven their prayers, and their supplications: and do judgment for them.

46 But if they sin against you (for there is no man who sins not) and you being angry deliver them up to their enemies, so that they be led away captives into the land of their enemies far or near:

47 Then if they do penance in their heart in the place of captivity, and being converted make supplication to you in their captivity,

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8, 38: The sense is: If a man feels he has sinned and prays by stretching his hands toward this temple, . . .

saying: We have sinned, we have done unjustly, we have committed wickedness:

48 And return to you with all their heart, and all their soul, in the land of their enemies, to which they had been led captives: and pray to you toward the way of their land, which you gave to their fathers, and of the city which you have chosen, and of the temple which I have built to your name:

49 Then hear you in heaven, in the firmament of your throne, their prayers, and their supplications, and do judgment for them.

50 And forgive your people, that have sinned against you, and all their iniquities by which they have transgressed against you. And give them mercy before them that have made them captives, that they may have compassion on them.

51 For they are your people, and your inheritance, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron.

52 That your eyes may be open to the supplication of your servant, and of your people Israel, to hear them in all things for which they shall call upon you.

53 For you have separated them to yourself for an inheritance from among all the people of the earth, as you have spoken through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

54 ***Solomon Blesses the People*** And it came to pass, when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, that he rose from before the altar of the Lord: for he had fixed both knees on the ground, and had spread
55 his hands toward heaven. | And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying:

56 Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. There has not failed so much as one word of all the good things that he promised through his
57 servant Moses. | The Lord our God be with us, as he was with
58 our fathers, and not leave us, nor cast us off. | But may he incline our hearts to himself, that we may walk in all his ways, and keep his commandments, and his ceremonies, and all his
59 judgments which he commanded our fathers. | And let these my words, wherewith I have prayed before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night: that he may do judgment
60 for his servant, and for his people Israel day by day: | that all the people of the earth may know, that the Lord he is God, and
61 there is no other besides him. | Let our hearts also be perfect

with the Lord our God, that we may walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments, as at this day.

62 *The Feast of Dedication* And the king, and all Israel
63 with him, offered victims before the Lord. | And Solomon slew victims of peace offerings, which he sacrificed to the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king, and the children of Israel dedicated the
64 temple of the Lord. | In that day the king sanctified the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord. For there he offered the holocaust and sacrifice and fat of the peace offerings: because the brazen altar that was before the Lord was too little to receive the holocaust and sacrifice and fat of
65 the peace offerings. | And Solomon made at the same time a solemn feast, and all Israel with him: a great multitude, from the entrance of Emath to the river of Egypt, before the Lord our God, seven days and seven days, that is, fourteen days.
66 And on the eighth day he sent away the people. And they blessed the king, and went to their dwellings rejoicing and glad in heart for all the good things that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

9

1 *The Lord Appears to Solomon* And it came to pass when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all that he desired, and was
2 pleased to do, | that the Lord appeared to him the second time,
3 as he had appeared to him in Gabaon. | And the Lord said to him: I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before me. I have sanctified this house, which you have built, to put my name there for ever: and my eyes
4 and my heart shall be there always. | And if you will walk before me, as your father walked, in simplicity of heart, and in uprightness: and will do all that I have commanded
5 you: and will keep my ordinances and my judgments, | I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel for ever, as I promised David your father, saying: There shall not fail a man
6 of your race upon the throne of Israel. | But if you and your children revolting shall turn away from following me, and will not keep my commandments, and my ceremonies, which I have set before you, but will go and worship strange gods, and adore

8, 63: The true numbers resemble more those expressed in a celebration like that in 2 Par 29, 32f.
9, 2: A reference to 3, 5ff.
9, 5: A reference to Nathan's prophecy in 2 Sm 7, 16.

7 them: | I will take away Israel from the face of the land which
I have given them; and the temple which I have sanctified to my
name, I will cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a prov-
8 erb, and a byword among all people. | And this house shall be
made an example of: every one that shall pass by it shall be
astonished, and shall hiss, and say: Why has the Lord done
9 thus to this land, and to this house? | And they shall answer:
Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their
fathers out of the land of Egypt, and followed strange gods,
and adored them, and worshiped them: therefore has the Lord
brought upon them all this evil.
10 And when twenty years were ended after Solomon had built
the two houses, that is, the house of the Lord, and the house of
11 the king, | (Hiram the king of Tyre furnishing Solomon with
cedar trees and fir trees and gold, according to all he had need
of), then Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of
12 Galilee. | And Hiram came out of Tyre to see the towns which
13 Solomon had given him, and they pleased him not. | And he
said: Are these the cities which you have given me, brother?
14 And he called them the land of Chabul, unto this day. | And
Hiram sent to king Solomon a hundred and twenty talents of
gold.
15 This is the sum of the expenses, which king Solomon offered
to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Mello,
and the wall of Jerusalem, and Heser, and Mageddo, and Gazer.
16 | Pharao the king of Egypt came up and took Gazer, and burned
it with fire: and slew the Chanaanite that dwelt in the city: and
gave it for a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

17 ***Cities Built by Solomon*** So Solomon built Gazer, and
18 Bethhoron the nether, | and Baalath, and Palmira in the land
19 of the wilderness. | And all the towns that belonged to himself
and were not walled, he fortified: the cities also of the chariots,
and the cities of the horsemen, and whatsoever he had a mind
to build in Jerusalem, and in Libanus, and in all the land of his
20 dominion. | All the people that were left of the Amorrites, and
Hethites, and Pherezites, and Hevites, and Jebusites, that are
21 not of the children of Israel: their children, that were left in

9, 19: *The cities also of the chariots:* archeologists hold it very probable that they have found royal stables for about three hundred horses at the city of Megiddo ("Mageddo") as one example of a chariot city. See 10, 26. However, the stables themselves were more probably built after Solomon's time. The charioteers formed the hard core of a standing army, an innovation in Israel. There were three horses to one chariot.

the land, to wit, such as the children of Israel had not been able
22 to destroy, Solomon made tributary unto this day. | But of the children of Israel Solomon made not any to be bondmen, but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and
23 captains, and overseers of the chariots and horses. | And there were five hundred and fifty chief officers set over all the works of Solomon: and they had people under them, and had charge
24 over the appointed works. | And the daughter of Pharao came up out of the city of David to her house, which Solomon had built for her. Then did he build Mello.
25 Solomon also offered three times every year holocausts, and victims of peace offerings upon the altar which he had built to the Lord: and he burned incense before the Lord: and the temple was finished.
26 And king Solomon made a fleet in Asiongaber, which is by
27 Ailath, on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. | And Hiram sent his servants in the fleet, sailors that had knowledge
28 of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. | And they came to Ophir: and they brought from thence to king Solomon four hundred and twenty talents of gold.

10

1 ***The Queen of Saba Visits Solomon*** And the queen of Saba, having heard of the fame of Solomon in the name of the
2 Lord, came to try him with hard questions. | And entering into Jerusalem with a great train, and riches, and camels that carried spices, and an immense quantity of gold, and precious stones, she came to king Solomon, and spoke to him all that she
3 had in her heart. | And Solomon informed her of all the things she proposed to him. There was not any word the king was
4 ignorant of, and which he could not answer her. | And when the queen of Saba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, and the

9, 24: *Mello:* one of several equally probable opinions on the meaning of this word, used at least six times, is the "fill" upon which Solomon's temple and palaces were built.

9, 26: *Asiongaber . . . Ailath:* see Ezion-Geber and Aqaba in 7, 46 n.

9, 28: *Ophir:* most probably it is on the western coast of Arabia opposite Somaliland.

10, 1-13: Sheba was a petty kingdom in southern Arabia. Arabia then had several kingdoms ruled by queens. The Queen of Sheba came to make a trade agreement. "Give" is characteristically oriental for "exchange." (Much of Handel's oratorio, *Solomon,* dwells on the Queen.) Jesus mentions this visit in Mt 12, 42. The paintings of the Queen of Sheba, adoring at Jerusalem the wood of the future cross of Christ, arise probably from a confusion with the sibyl.

5 house which he had built, | and the meat of his table, and the apartments of his servants, and the order of his ministers, and their apparel, and the cupbearers, and the holocausts, which he offered in the house of the Lord: she had no longer any spirit in
6 her. | And she said to the king: The report is true, which I
7 heard in my own country, | concerning your words, and concerning your wisdom. And I did not believe them that told me, till I came myself and saw with my own eyes, and have found that the half has not been told me. Your wisdom and your
8 works exceed the fame which I heard. | Blessed are your men, and blessed are your servants, who stand before you always,
9 and hear your wisdom. | Blessed be the Lord your God, whom you have pleased, and who has set you upon the throne of Israel: because the Lord has loved Israel for ever, and has appointed you king, to do judgment and justice.

10 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices a very great store, and precious stones. There was brought no more such abundance of spices as these which the
11 queen of Saba gave to king Solomon. | (The navy also of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir
12 great plenty of thyine trees and precious stones. | And the king made of the thyine trees the rails of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and citterns and harps for singers: there were no such thyine trees as these brought, nor seen unto this
13 day.) | And king Solomon gave the queen of Saba all that she desired, and asked of him: besides what he offered her of himself of his royal bounty. And she returned, and went to her own country with her servants.

14 And the weight of the gold that was brought to Solomon every
15 year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold: | besides that which the men brought him that were over the tributes, and the merchants, and they that sold by retail, and all the
16 kings of Arabia, and the governors of the country. | And Solomon made two hundred shields of the purest gold: he allowed
17 six hundred sicles of gold for the plates of one shield. | And three hundred targets of fine gold: three hundred pounds of gold covered one target: and the king put them in the house
18 of the forest of Libanus. | King Solomon also made a great
19 throne of ivory: and overlaid it with the finest gold. | It had six steps: and the top of the throne was round behind. And there were two hands on either side holding the seat: and two lions
20 stood, one at each hand. | And twelve little lions stood upon

10, 5: The eye for details is according to typical feminine psychology.
10, 9: According to oriental etiquette, one praises the god of the host. See Melchisedec, Gn 14, 18-24 n.

the six steps on the one side and on the other: there was no
21 such work made in any kingdom. | Moreover all the vessels out
of which king Solomon drank, were of gold: and all the furni-
ture of the house of the forest of Libanus was of most pure
gold: there was no silver, nor was any account made of it in
22 the days of Solomon: | for the king's navy, once in three years,
went with the navy of Hiram by sea to Tharsis, and brought
from thence gold, and silver, and elephants' teeth, and apes, and
peacocks.

23 ***Solomon's Riches and Wisdom*** And king Solomon ex-
24 ceeded all the kings of the earth in riches, and wisdom. | And
all the earth desired to see Solomon's face, to hear his wisdom,
25 which God had given in his heart. | And every one brought
him presents, vessels of silver and of gold, garments and armor,
26 and spices, and horses and mules every year. | And Solomon
gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thou-
sand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.
And he bestowed them in fenced cities, and with the king in
27 Jerusalem. | And he made silver to be as plentiful in Jerusalem
as stones: and cedars to be as common as sycamores which grow
28 in the plains. | And horses were brought for Solomon out of
Egypt, and Coa: for the king's merchants brought them out of
29 Coa, and bought them at a set price. | And a chariot of four
horses came out of Egypt, for six hundred sicles of silver, and a
horse, for a hundred and fifty. And after this manner did all the
kings of the Hethites and of Syria sell horses.

11

1 ***Solomon Falls into Idolatry*** And king Solomon loved
many strange women besides the daughter of Pharao, and
women of Moab, and of Ammon, and of Edom, and of Sidon,
2 and of the Hethites: | of the nations concerning which the
Lord said to the children of Israel: You shall not go in unto
them, neither shall any of them come in to yours; for they will
most certainly turn away your heart to follow their gods. And

10, 22: *Tharsis:* there were several places in the Mediterranean basin which the Phoenicians called Tharsis.

10, 28-29: Solomon bought horses from Cilicia ("Coa"), and traded them with Egypt for the manufacture of chariots which he would sell at a great profit to the Hittites in Syria.

11, 1-8: One measure of the wealth of an oriental potentate was the population of his harem. Wives from foreign countries solidified political alliances. V. 3 exaggerates, but Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia has had *250* wives.

3 to these was Solomon joined with a most ardent love. | And he had seven hundred wives as queens, and three hundred concu-
4 bines: and the women turned away his heart. | And when he was now old, his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his
5 God, as was the heart of David his father. | But Solomon worshiped Astarthe, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Moloch, the
6 idol of the Ammonites. | And Solomon did that which was not pleasing before the Lord: and did not fully follow the Lord, as
7 David his father. | Then Solomon built a temple for Chamos, the idol of Moab, on the hill that is over against Jerusalem, and
8 for Moloch, the idol of the children of Ammon. | And he did in this manner for all his wives that were strangers, who burned incense, and offered sacrifice to their gods.

9 And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his mind was turned away from the Lord the God of Israel, who had appeared
10 to him twice, | and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not follow strange gods. But he kept not the
11 things which the Lord commanded him. | The Lord therefore said to Solomon: Because you have done this, and have not kept my covenant, and my precepts, which I have commanded you, I will divide and rend your kingdom, and will give it to your
12 servant. | Nevertheless in your days I will not do it, for David your father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of your
13 son. | Neither will I take away the whole kingdom: but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of David my servant, and Jerusalem which I have chosen.

14 ***Solomon's Adversaries*** And the Lord raised up an adversary to Solomon, Adad the Edomite of the king's seed, in
15 Edom, | for when David was in Edom, and Joab the general of the army was gone up to bury them that were slain, and had
16 killed every male in Edom | (for Joab remained there six months with all Israel, till he had slain every male in Edom,) |
17 then Adad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt: and Adad was *then* a little boy. |
18 And they arose out of Madian, and came into Pharan, and they took men with them from Pharan, and went into Egypt to Pharao the king of Egypt: who gave him a house, and appointed
19 him victuals, and assigned him land. | And Adad found great favor before Pharao, insomuch that he gave him to wife the
20 own sister of his wife Taphnes the queen. | And the sister of Taphnes bore him his son Genubath, and Taphnes brought him

11, 14-40: Revolts by Adad of Edom, Razon of Syria and by Jeroboam.

up in the house of Pharao: and Genubath dwelt with Pharao among his children.

21 And when Adad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the general of the army was dead, he said to Pharao: Let me depart, that I may go to my own
22 country. | And Pharao said to him: Why, what is wanting to you with me, that you seek to go to your own country? But he
23 answered: Nothing: yet I beseech you to let me go. | God also raised up against him an adversary, Razon the son of Eliada,
24 who had fled from his master Adarezer the king of Soba. | And he gathered men against him, and he became a captain of robbers, when David slew them *of Soba:* and they went to Damascus, and dwelt there, and they made him king in Damascus.
25 | And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon: and this is the evil of Adad, and his hatred against Israel, and he reigned in Syria.

26 Jeroboam also the son of Nabat, an Ephrathite of Sareda, a servant of Solomon, whose mother was named Sarua, a widow
27 woman, lifted up his hand against the king. | And this is the cause of his rebellion against him, for Solomon built Mello, and
28 filled up the breach of the city of David his father. | And Jeroboam was a valiant and mighty man: and Solomon seeing him a young man ingenious and industrious, made him chief over
29 the tributes of all the house of Joseph. | So it came to pass at that time, that Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, and the prophet Ahĭas the Silonite, clad with a new garment, found him in the
30 way: and they two were alone in the field. | And Ahias taking his new garment, wherewith he was clad, divided it into twelve parts.

31 ***Ten Tribes Promised to Jeroboam*** And he said to Jeroboam: Take to yourself ten pieces. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand
32 of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes. | But one tribe shall remain to him for the sake of my servant David, and Jerusalem the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel: |
33 because he has forsaken me, and has adored Astarthe the goddess of the Sidonians, and Chamos the god of Moab, and Moloch the god of the children of Ammon: and has not walked in my ways, to do justice before me, and *to keep* my precepts, and
34 judgments as *did* David his father. | Yet I will not take away all the kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David my servant's sake, whom I chose,
35 who kept my commandments and my precepts. | But I will take away the kingdom out of his son's hand and will give you ten

36 tribes. | And to his son I will give one tribe, so that there may
remain a lamp for my servant David before me always in
Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen, that my name might
37 be there. | And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that
38 your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. | If then
you will hearken to all that I shall command you, and will walk
in my ways, and do what is right before me, keeping my com-
mandments and my precepts, as David my servant did: I will be
with you, and will build you up a faithful house, as I built a
39 house for David, and I will deliver Israel to you. | And I will
for this afflict the seed of David, but yet not for ever.

40 ***Death and Burial of Solomon*** Solomon therefore sought
to kill Jeroboam: but he arose, and fled into Egypt to Sesac the
king of Egypt, and was in Egypt till the death of Solomon. |
41 And the rest of the words of Solomon, and all that he did, and
his wisdom: behold they are all written in the book of the words
42 of the days of Solomon. | And the days that Solomon reigned
43 in Jerusalem over all Israel, were forty years. | And Solomon
slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his
father. And Roboam his son reigned in his stead.

12

1 ***The Division of Israel and Juda*** And Roboam went to
Sichem: for there all Israel had come together to make him
2 king. | But Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who was yet in Egypt,
a fugitive from the face of king Solomon, hearing of his death,
3 returned out of Egypt. | And they sent and called him, and
Jeroboam came, and all the multitude of Israel; and they spoke
4 to Roboam, saying: | Your father laid a grievous yoke upon us.
Now therefore do you take off a little of the grievous service of
your father, and of his most heavy yoke, which he put upon us,
5 and we will serve you. | And he said to them: Go till the third
day, and come to me again. And when the people were gone, |
6 king Roboam took counsel with the old men, that stood before
Solomon his father while he yet lived, and he said: What
7 counsel do you give me, that I may answer this people? | They
said to him: If you will yield to this people today, and con-
descend to them, and grant their petition, and speak gentle
8 words to them, they will be your servants always. | But he left

11, 43: The contemporaries of Solomon rebelled against his taxes, forced labor, and scores of administrators, even though he brought the nation to its highest point of wealth and international respect. The later generations, looking back at his prosperity, idealized him. Solomon's reign is often compared with that of France's Louis XIV.

the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men, that had been brought up with
9 him, and stood before him. | And he said to them: What counsel do you give me, that I may answer this people, who have said to me: Make the yoke which your father put upon us lighter? |
10 And the young men that had been brought up with him, said: Thus shall you speak to this people, who have spoken to you, saying, Your father made our yoke heavy, do you ease it for us. You shall say to them: My little finger is thicker than the back
11 of my father. | And now my father put a heavy yoke upon you, but I will add to your yoke; my father beat you with whips: but I will beat you with scorpions.
12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Roboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying: Come to me again the
13 third day. | And the king answered the people roughly, leaving
14 the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, | and he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying: My father made your yoke heavy; but I will add to your yoke; my father beat you with whips; but I will beat you with
15 scorpions. | And the king condescended not to the people: for the Lord had turned away from him, to make good his word, which he had spoken in the hand of Ahias the Silonite, to Jeroboam the
16 son of Nabat. | Then the people seeing that the king would not hearken to them, answered him, saying: What portion have we in David? Or what inheritance in the son of Isai? Go home to your dwelling, O Israel. Now, David, look to your own house.
17 So Israel departed to their dwellings. | But as for all the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Juda, Roboam reigned over them.
18 Then king Roboam sent Aduram, who was over the tribute: and all Israel stoned him, and he died. Wherefore king Roboam made haste to get him up into his chariot, and he fled to Jeru-
19 salem. | And Israel revolted from the house of David, unto
20 this day. | And it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come again, that they gathered an assembly, and sent and called him, and made him king over all Israel. And there was none that followed the house of David but the tribe
21 of Juda only. | And Roboam came to Jerusalem, and gathered together all the house of Juda, and the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred fourscore thousand chosen men for war, to fight against the house of Israel, and to bring the kingdom again under
22 Roboam the son of Solomon. | But the word of the Lord came
23 to Semeias, the man of God, saying: | Speak to Roboam the son of Solomon, the king of Juda, and to all the house of Juda,
24 and Benjamin, and the rest of the people, saying: | Thus says

the Lord: You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: let every man return to his house, for this thing is from me. They hearkened to the word of the Lord, and returned from their journey, as the Lord had commanded them.

25 ***Jeroboam's Reign in Israel*** And Jeroboam built Sichem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt there: and going out from thence
26 he built Phanuel. | And Jeroboam said in his heart: Now shall
27 the kingdom return to the house of David, | if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem: and the heart of this people will turn to their lord Roboam the king of
28 Juda, and they will kill me, and return to him. | And finding out a device he made two golden calves, and said to them: Go up no more to Jerusalem: Behold your gods, O Israel, who
29 brought you out of the land of Egypt. | And he set the one in
30 Bethel, and the other in Dan. | And this thing became an occasion of sin, for the people went to adore the calf as far as Dan.
31 | And he made temples in the high places, and priests of the
32 lowest of the people, who were not of the sons of Levi. | And he appointed a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, after the manner of the feast that was celebrated in Juda. And going up to the altar, he did in like manner in Bethel, to sacrifice to the calves, which he had made. And he placed in Bethel priests of the high places, which he had made.
33 And he went up to the altar, which he had built in Bethel, on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, which he had devised of his own heart. And he ordained a feast to the children of Israel; and went upon the altar to burn incense.

13

1 ***A Prophet Sent to Jeroboam*** And behold there came a man of God out of Juda, by the word of the Lord to Bethel, when Jeroboam was standing upon the altar, and burning in-
2 cense. | And he cried out against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said: O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: Behold a child shall be born to the house of David, Josias by name, and he shall immolate upon you the priests of the high places, who now burn incense upon you: and he shall burn men's bones upon
3 you. | And he gave a sign the same day, saying: This shall be the sign, that the Lord has spoken: Behold the altar shall be
4 rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. | And when the king had heard the word of the man of God, which he had cried out against the altar in Bethel, he stretched forth his hand from the altar, saying: Lay hold on him. And his hand

which he stretched forth against him withered: and he was not
5 able to draw it back again to him. | The altar also was rent,
and the ashes were poured out from the altar, according to the
sign which the man of God had given before in the word of the
6 Lord. | And the king said to the man of God: Entreat the face
of the Lord your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be
restored to me. And the man of God besought the face of the
Lord: and the king's hand was restored to him, and it became
7 as it was before. | And the king said to the man of God: Come
8 home with me to dine, and I will make you presents. | And the
man of God answered the king: If you would give me half your
house I will not go with you, nor eat bread, nor drink water in
9 this place: | for so it was enjoined me by the word of the Lord
commanding me: You shall not eat bread nor drink water, nor
10 return by the same way that you came. | So he departed by
another way, and returned not by the way that he came into
Bethel.

11 Now a certain old prophet dwelt in Bethel: and his sons came
to him and told him all the works that the man of God had
done that day in Bethel. And they told their father the words
12 which he had spoken to the king. | And their father said to
them: What way went he? His sons showed him the way by
13 which the man of God went, who came out of Juda. | And he
said to his sons: Saddle me the ass. And when they had saddled
14 him, he got up, | and went after the man of God, and found
him sitting under a turpentine tree. And he said to him: Are you
the man of God that came from Juda? He answered: I am. |
15.16 And he said to him: Come home with me, to eat bread. | But
he said: I must not return, nor go with you; neither will I eat
17 bread, nor drink water in this place: | Because the Lord spoke
to me in the word of the Lord, saying: You shall not eat bread,
and you shall not drink water there, nor return by the way you
18 went. | He said to him: I also am a prophet like unto you. And
an angel spoke to me in the word of the Lord, saying: Bring him
back with you into your house, that he may eat bread, and
19 drink water. He deceived him, | and brought him back with
him: so he ate bread and drank water in his house.

20 ***The Prophet's Disobedience*** And as they sat at table, the
word of the Lord came to the prophet that brought him back. |
21 And he cried out to the man of God who came out of Juda,

13, 21-22: The main thrust of this popular story is the absoluteness of God's commands. The Judean prophet should never have believed anyone, or at least he should have asked for a sign (v. 18) that God had reversed His order.

saying: Thus says the Lord: Because you have not been obedient to the Lord, and have not kept the commandment which the
22 Lord your God commanded you, | and have returned and eaten bread, and drunk water in the place wherein he commanded you that you should not eat bread, nor drink water, your dead body shall not be brought into the sepulcher of your fathers.
23 And when he had eaten and drunk, he saddled his ass for the
24 prophet, whom he had brought back. | And when he was gone, a lion found him in the way, and killed him. And his body was cast in the way; and the ass stood by him, and the lion stood
25 by the dead body. | And behold, men passing by saw the dead body cast in the way, and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city, wherein that old prophet dwelt.
26 | And when that prophet, who had brought him back out of the way, heard of it, he said: It is the man of God, that was disobedient to the mouth of the Lord; and the Lord has delivered him to the lion; and he has torn him, and killed him according
27 to the word of the Lord, which he spoke to him. | And he said to his sons: Saddle me an ass. And when they had saddled it, |
28 and he was gone, he found the dead body cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass. The lion had not
29 eaten of the dead body, nor hurt the ass. | And the prophet took up the body of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass: and going back brought it into the city of the old prophet, to
30 mourn for him. | And he laid his dead body in his own sepulcher: and they mourned over him, *saying:* Alas! alas! my
31 brother. | And when they had mourned over him, he said to his sons: When I am dead, bury me in the sepulcher wherein the
32 man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his bones. | For assuredly the word shall come to pass which he has foretold in the word of the Lord against the altar that is in Bethel: and against all the temples of the high places, that are in the cities of Samaria.
33 After these words Jeroboam came not back from his wicked way: but on the contrary he made of the meanest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he filled his hand,
34 and he was made a priest of the high places. | And for this cause did the house of Jeroboam sin: and was cut off and destroyed from the face of the earth.

14

1 ***Jeroboam Sends His Wife to Ahias*** At that time Abia
2 the son of Jeroboam fell sick. | And Jeroboam said to his wife: Arise, and change your dress, that you be not known to be the

wife of Jeroboam, and go to Silo, where Ahias the prophet is,
3 who told me, that I should reign over this people. | Take also
with you ten loaves, and cracknels, and a pot of honey, and go
to him: for he will tell you what shall become of this child. |
4 Jeroboam's wife did as he told her: and rising up went to Silo,
and came to the house of Ahias: but he could not see, for his
5 eyes were dim by reason of his age. | And the Lord said to
Ahias: Behold the wife of Jeroboam comes in, to consult you
concerning her son that is sick. Thus and thus shall you speak
to her. So when she was coming in, and made as if she were
6 another woman, | Ahias heard the sound of her feet coming in
at the door, and said: Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you
feign yourself to be another? But I am sent to you with heavy
tidings.

7 ***The Prophecy of Ahias*** Go, and tell Jeroboam: Thus says
the Lord the God of Israel: Forasmuch as I exalted you from
among the people, and made you prince over my people Israel:
8 | and rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and
gave it to you, and you have not been as my servant David, who
kept my commandments, and followed me with all his heart,
9 doing that which was well pleasing in my sight: | but have
done evil above all that were before you, and have made you
strange gods and molten gods, to provoke me to anger, and
10 have cast me behind your back: | therefore behold I will bring
evils upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jero-
boam every male descendant, and him that is shut up, and the
last in Israel. And I will sweep away the remnant of the house
11 of Jeroboam, as dung is swept away till all be clean. | Them
that shall die of Jeroboam in the city, the dogs shall eat: and
them that shall die in the field, the birds of the air shall devour:
12 for the Lord has spoken *it*. | Arise, therefore, and go to your
house. And when your feet shall be entering into the city, the
13 child shall die, | and all Israel shall mourn for him, and shall
bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall be laid in a sepulcher,
because in his regard there is found a good word from the Lord
14 the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam. | And the Lord has
appointed himself a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house
15 of Jeroboam in this day, and in this time. | And the Lord God
shall strike Israel as a reed is shaken in the water. And he shall
root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their
fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river: because they

14, 10: *And him that is shut up, and the last in Israel:* the slave and the freeman.

16 have made to themselves groves, to provoke the Lord. | And
the Lord shall give up Israel for the sins of Jeroboam, who has
sinned, and made Israel to sin.
17 And the wife of Jeroboam arose, and departed, and came to
Thersa; and when she was coming in to the threshold of the
18 house, the child died; | and they buried him. And all Israel
mourned for him according to the word of the Lord, which he
19 spoke by the hand of his servant Ahias the prophet. | And the
rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he fought, and how he
reigned, behold they are written in the book of the words of the
20 days of the kings of Israel. | And the days that Jeroboam
reigned, were two and twenty years. And he slept with his fa-
thers: and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

21 ***Roboam's Reign in Juda*** And Roboam the son of Solo-
mon reigned in Juda. Roboam was one and forty years old
when he began to reign: and he reigned seventeen years in
Jerusalem, the city which the Lord chose out of all the tribes of
Israel to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naama
22 an Ammonitess. | And Juda did evil in the sight of the Lord,
and provoked him above all that their fathers had done, in their
23 sins which they committed. | For they also built them altars,
and statues, and groves upon every high hill and under every
24 green tree. | There were also the effeminate in the land, and
they did according to all the abominations of the people whom
the Lord had destroyed before the face of the children of Israel.
25 | And in the fifth year of the reign of Roboam, Sesac king of
26 Egypt came up against Jerusalem. | And he took away the
treasures of the house of the Lord, and the king's treasures, and
carried all off: as also the shields of gold which Solomon had
27 made. | And Roboam made shields of brass instead of them,
and delivered them into the hand of the captains of the shield-
bearers, and of them that kept watch before the gate of the
28 king's house. | And when the king went into the house of the
Lord, they whose office it was to go before him, carried them:
and afterward they brought them back to the armory of the
29 shieldbearers. | Now the rest of the acts of Roboam, and all
that he did, behold they are written in the book of the words
30 of the days of the kings of Juda. | And there was war between
31 Roboam and Jeroboam always. | And Roboam slept with his
fathers, and was buried with them in the city of David: and his

14, 23: *Statues:* stone pillars. *Groves:* wooden posts.
14, 24: *The effeminate:* prostitutes of both sexes functioning in honor of the god of the temple.

mother's name was Naama an Ammonitess: and Abiam his son reigned in his stead.

15

1 *The Wicked Reign of Abiam* Now in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, Abiam reigned
2 over Juda. | He reigned three years in Jerusalem. The name of
3 his mother was Maacha the daughter of Abessalom. | And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as
4 was the heart of David his father. | But for David's sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son
5 after him, and to establish Jerusalem: | because David had done that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from any thing that he commanded him, all the
6 days of his life, except the matter of Urias the Hethite. | But there was war between Roboam and Jeroboam all the time of
7 his life. | And the rest of the words of Abiam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Juda? And there was war between Abiam and
8 Jeroboam. | And Abiam slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David. And Asa his son reigned in his stead.

9 *The Reign of Asa* So in the twentieth year of Jeroboam
10 king of Israel, reigned Asa king of Juda. | And he reigned one and forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacha,
11 the daughter of Abessalom. | And Asa did that which was
12 right in the sight of the Lord, as did David his father. | And he took away the effeminate out of the land: and he removed
13 all the filth of the idols, which his fathers had made. | Moreover he also removed his mother Maacha, from being the princess in the sacrifices of Priapus, and in the grove which she had consecrated to him: and he destroyed her den, and broke in
14 pieces the filthy idol, and burned it by the torrent Cedron. | But the high places he did not take away. Nevertheless the heart of
15 Asa was perfect with the Lord all his days: | and he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and he had vowed, into the house of the Lord, silver and gold, and vessels.
16 And there was war between Asa, and Baasa king of Israel all
17 their days. | And Baasa king of Israel went up against Juda, and built Rama, that no man might go out or come in, of the
18 side of Asa king of Juda. | Then Asa took all the silver and gold that remained in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and delivered it into the hands of his servants: and sent them to Benadad son of Tab-

remon the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damas-
19 cus, saying: | There is a league between me and you, and between my father and your father. Therefore I have sent you presents of silver and gold: and I desire you to come, and break your league with Baasa king of Israel, that he may depart from
20 me. | Benadad hearkening to king Asa, sent the captains of his army against the cities of Israel: and they smote Ahion, and Dan, and Abeldomum Maacha, and all Ceneroth, that is all the
21 land of Nephtali. | And when Baasa had heard this, he left off
22 building Rama, and returned into Thersa. | But king Asa sent word into all Juda, saying: Let no man be excused. And they took away the stones from Rama and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasa had been building, and with them king Asa built Gabaa of Benjamin, and Maspha.

23 But the rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his strength, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Juda? But
24 in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. And he slept with his fathers, and was buried with them in the city of David his father. And Josaphat his son reigned in his place.

25 *Reigns of Nadab and Baasa* But Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel the second year of Asa king of Juda:
26 and he reigned over Israel two years. | And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father, and in
27 his sins, wherewith he made Israel to sin. | And Baasa the son of Ahias of the house of Issachar, conspired against him, and slew him in Gebbethon, which is a city of the Philistines: for
28 Nadab and all Israel besieged Gebbethon. | So Baasa slew him in the third year of Asa king of Juda; and reigned in his place. |
29 And when he was king he cut off all the house of Jeroboam: he left not so much as one soul of his seed, till he had utterly destroyed him, according to the word of the Lord, which he had
30 spoken in the hand of Ahias the Silonite: | because of the sin of Jeroboam, which he had sinned, and wherewith he had made Israel to sin, and for the offense, wherewith he provoked the
31 Lord the God of Israel. | But the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel?

32 And there was war between Asa and Baasa, the king of Israel,
33 all their days. | In the third year of Asa, king of Juda, Baasa the son of Ahias reigned over all Israel, in Thersa, four and
34 twenty years. | And he did evil before the Lord, and walked in the ways of Jeroboam, and in his sins, wherewith he made Israel to sin.

16

1 ***Jehu's Prophecy against Baasa*** Then the word of the
Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasa, saying: |
2 Forasmuch as I have exalted you out of the dust, and made you
prince over my people Israel, and you have walked in the way
of Jeroboam, and have made my people Israel to sin, to provoke
3 me to anger with their sins: | behold, I will cut down the pos-
terity of Baasa, and the posterity of his house: and I will make
4 your house as the house of Jeroboam the son of Nabat. | Him
that dies of Baasa in the city, the dogs shall eat: and him that
dies of his in the country, the fowls of the air shall devour. |
5 But the rest of the acts of Baasa and all that he did, and his bat-
tles, are they not written in the book of the words of the days
6 of the kings of Israel? | So Baasa slept with his fathers, and
7 was buried in Thersa: and Ela his son reigned in his stead. | And
when the word of the Lord came in the hand of Jehu the son of
Hanani the prophet, against Baasa, and against his house, and
against all the evil that he had done before the Lord, to pro-
voke him to anger by the works of his hands, to become as the
house of Jeroboam: for this cause he slew him, that is to say,
Jehu the son of Hanani, the prophet.

8 ***Zambri Destroys the House of Baasa*** In the six and
twentieth year of Asa king of Juda, Ela the son of Baasa reigned
9 over Israel in Thersa two years. | And his servant Zambri, who
was captain of half the horsemen, rebelled against him. Now
Ela was drinking in Thersa, and drunk in the house of Arsa the
10 governor of Thersa. | And Zambri rushing in, struck him and
slew him in the seven and twentieth year of Asa king of Juda:
11 and he reigned in his stead. | And when he was king and sat
upon his throne, he slew all the house of Baasa, and all his kins-
12 folks and friends: and he left not one male. | And Zambri
destroyed all the house of Baasa, according to the word of the
Lord, that he had spoken to Baasa, in the hand of Jehu the
13 prophet: | for all the sins of Baasa, and the sins of Ela his son,
who sinned, and made Israel to sin, provoking the Lord, the
14 God of Israel, with their vanities. | But the rest of the acts of
Ela, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the
words of the days of the kings of Israel?

15 In the seven and twentieth year of Asa, king of Juda, Zambri
reigned seven days in Thersa: now the army was besieging Geb-
16 bethon, a city of the Philistines. | And when they heard that
Zambri had rebelled, and slain the king, all Israel made Amri
their king, who was general over Israel in the camp that day. |
17 And Amri went up, and all Israel with him from Gebbethon:

18 and they besieged Thersa. | And Zambri seeing that the city
was about to be taken, went into the palace and burned himself
19 with the king's house. And he died | in his sins, which he had
sinned, doing evil before the Lord, and walking in the way of
Jeroboam, and in his sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin. |
20 But the rest of the acts of Zambri, and of his conspiracy and
tyranny, are they not written in the book of the words of the
days of the kings of Israel?

21 ***Amri and Achab*** Then were the people of Israel divided
into two parts. One half of the people followed Thebni the son
of Gineth, to make him king: and one half followed Amri. |
22 But the people that were with Amri, prevailed over the people
that followed Thebni the son of Gineth: and Thebni died, and
23 Amri reigned. | In the one and thirtieth year of Asa, king of
Juda, Amri reigned over Israel twelve years. In Thersa he
24 reigned six years. | And he bought the hill of Samaria of Semer
for two talents of silver. And he built upon it, and he called the
city which he built Samaria, after the name of Semer, the owner
25 of the hill. | And Amri did evil in the sight of the Lord, and
26 acted wickedly above all that were before him. | And he walked
in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, and in his sins
wherewith he made Israel to sin: to provoke the Lord the God
27 of Israel to anger with their vanities. | Now the rest of the acts
of Amri, and the battles he fought, are they not written in the
28 book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel? | And
Amri slept with his fathers: and was buried in Samaria. And
Achab his son reigned in his stead.

29 Now Achab the son of Amri reigned over Israel in the eight
and thirtieth year of Asa king of Juda. And Achab the son of
Amri reigned over Israel in Samaria two and twenty years. |
30 And Achab the son of Amri did evil in the sight of the Lord
31 above all that were before him. | Nor was it enough for him to
walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat: but he also took
to wife Jezabel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians. And
32 he went, and served Baal, and adored him. | And he set up an
altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in
33 Samaria: | and he planted a grove: and Achab did more to
provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, than all the kings of Israel
that were before him.

34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho: in Abiram his first-
born he laid its foundations: and in his youngest *son* Segub he

16, 34: This is the fulfillment of the prophecy explained in Jos 6, 26 n.

set up the gates thereof: according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke in the hand of Josue the son of Nun.

17

1 ***The Great Prophet Elias*** And Elias the Thesbite of the inhabitants of Galaad said to Achab: As the Lord lives, the God of Israel, in whose sight I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain
2 these years, but according to the words of my mouth. | And the
3 word of the Lord came to him, saying: | Get yourself on the way and go toward the east, and hide yourself by the torrent
4 of Carith, which is over against the Jordan. | And there you shall drink of the torrent: and I have commanded the ravens
5 to feed you there. | So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord. And going, he dwelt by the torrent, Carith,
6 which is over against the Jordan. | And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the eve-
7 ning: and he drank of the torrent. | But after some time the torrent was dried up, for it had not rained upon the earth.
8.9 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying: | Arise, and go to Sarephta of the Sidonians, and dwell there: for I
10 have commanded a widow woman there to feed you. | He arose, and went to Sarephta. And when he came to the gate of the city, he saw the widow woman gathering sticks; and he called her, and said to her: Give me a little water in a vessel,
11 that I may drink. | And when she was going to fetch it he called after her, saying: Bring me also, I beseech you, a morsel of
12 bread in your hand. | And she answered: As the Lord your God lives, I have no bread, but only a handful of meal in a pot, and a little oil in a cruse; behold I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it, for me and my son, that we may eat it,
13 and die. | And Elias said to her: Fear not, but go, and do as you have said. But first make for me of the same meal a little hearth cake, and bring it to me; and after make for yourself
14 and your son. | For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The

17, 1-24: See the Introduction to 3, 4 Kgs on the cycle stories of Elias and Eliseus, which begin here and end at 4 Kgs 13.

17, 1: Elias appears suddenly on the scene before king Achab in Samaria, chief city of the northern kingdom to foretell a drought, also mentioned by the Jewish historian, Josephus. Christ uses this story to illustrate that no prophet is acceptable in his own country (see Lk 4, 24-26).

17, 6: Ravens pilfer eggs, chickens, young rabbits, etc. There have been many unsuccessful attempts to prune the "miraculous" from this story by reading "merchants" instead of ravens in the original text.

17, 9: *Sarephta:* in Phoenicia, modern Lebanon, about seven miles south of Sidon.

pot of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil be diminished,
until the day wherein the Lord will give rain upon the face of
15 the earth. | She went and did according to the word of Elias.
16 And he ate, and she, and her house: and from that day | the
pot of meal wasted not, and the cruse of oil was not diminished,
according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke in the hand
of Elias.

17 ***Elias Raises the Widow's Son to Life*** And it came to
pass after this that the son of the woman, the mistress of the
house, fell sick. And the sickness was very grievous, so that there
18 was no breath left in him. | And she said to Elias: What have
I to do with you, you man of God? Have you come to me that
my iniquities should be remembered, and that you should kill
19 my son? | And Elias said to her: Give me your son. And he
took him out of her bosom, and carried him into the upper
20 chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. | And
he cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord my God, have you
afflicted also the widow, with whom I am after a sort main-
21 tained, so as to kill her son? | And he stretched, and measured
himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, and
said: O Lord my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech you,
22 return into his body. | And the Lord heard the voice of Elias:
and the soul of the child returned into him; and he revived. |
23 And Elias took the child, and brought him down from the upper
chamber to the house below, and delivered him to his mother,
24 and said to her: Behold your son lives. | And the woman said
to Elias: Now, by this I know that you are a man of God; and
the word of the Lord in your mouth is true.

18

1 ***Elias Meets Achab*** After many days the word of the Lord
came to Elias, in the third year, saying: Go and show yourself
2 to Achab, that I may give rain upon the face of the earth. | And
Elias went to show himself to Achab: and there was a grievous
3 famine in Samaria. | And Achab called Abdias, the governor of
4 his house: now Abdias feared the Lord very much. | For when
Jezabel killed the prophets of the Lord, he took a hundred
prophets and hid them by fifty and fifty in caves, and fed them
5 with bread and water. | And Achab said to Abdias: Go into

17, 18: She believes that it is on the occasion of the prophet's visit that her past sins were remembered and, therefore, caused the death of her son.

18, 4: *The prophets of the Lord:* same type as in 1 Sm 10, 5-13 n.

the land unto all fountains of waters, and into all valleys, to see if we can find grass, and save the horses and mules, that the
6 beasts may not utterly perish. | And they divided the countries between them, that they might go round about them: Achab
7 went one way, and Abdias another way by himself. | And as Abdias was in the way Elias met him. And he knew him, and
8 fell on his face, and said: Are you my lord Elias? | And he answered: I am. Go, and tell your master: Elias is here.
9 And he said: What have I sinned, that you would deliver me your servant into the hand of Achab, that he should kill me? |
10 As the Lord my God lives, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my Lord has not sent to seek you. And when all answered: He is not here, he took an oath of every kingdom and
11 nation, because you were not found. | And now you say to me:
12 Go, and tell your master: Elias is here. | And when I will be gone from you, the spirits of the Lord will carry you into a place that I know not: and I shall go in and tell Achab, and he not finding you, will kill me. But your servant fears the Lord
13 from his infancy. | Has it not been told you, my lord, what I did when Jezabel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid a hundred men of the prophets of the Lord by fifty and fifty in
14 caves, and fed them with bread and water? | And now you say: Go, and tell your master: Elias is here; that he may kill me. |
15 And Elias said: As the Lord of hosts lives, before whose face I stand, this day I will show myself unto him.
16 Abdias therefore went to meet Achab, and told him: and
17 Achab came to meet Elias. | And when he had seen him, he
18 said: Are you he that troubles Israel? | And he said: I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house, who have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and have followed
19 Baalim. | Nevertheless send now, and gather unto me all Israel, unto mount Carmel: and the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty: and the prophets of the groves four hundred, who
20 eat at Jezabel's table. | Achab sent to all the children of Israel, and gathered together the prophets unto mount Carmel.

21 ***The False Prophets*** And Elias coming to all the people, said: How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be

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18, 18: *Baalim:* plural of the pagan god Baal.

18, 19: *Mount Carmel:* this picturesque site, 1800 feet above the Mediterranean, overlooks the modern seaport city of Haifa, Israel. The mount was a Baal sanctuary from about 1500 B.C. *Who eat at Jezabel's table:* Jezabel was a Phoenician (16, 31) and the four hundred fifty prophets were native Phoenicians because a god demanded its native born "clergy" even abroad.

God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people
22 did not answer him a word. | And Elias said again to the peo-
ple: I only remain a prophet of the Lord: but the prophets of
23 Baal are four hundred and fifty men. | Let two bullocks be
given us, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and
cut it in pieces and lay it upon wood, but put no fire under: and
I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no
24 fire under it. | Call on the names of your gods, and I will call
on the name of my Lord: and the God that shall answer by fire,
let him be God. And all the people answering said: A very good
proposal.
25 Then Elias said to the prophets of Baal: Choose you one
bullock, and dress it first, because you are many: and call on the
26 names of your gods, but put no fire under. | And they took the
bullock which he gave them, and dressed it: and they called on
the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying: O Baal,
hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered: and
27 they leaped over the altar that they had made. | And when it
was now noon, Elias jested at them, saying: Cry with a louder
voice; for he is a God, and perhaps he is talking, or is in an inn,
or on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep, and must be awakened.
28 | So they cried with a loud voice, and cut themselves after their
manner with knives and lancets, till they were all covered with
29 blood. | And after midday was past, and while they were
prophesying, the time had come of offering sacrifice, and there
was no voice heard, nor did any one answer, nor regard them
as they prayed.
30 Elias said to all the people: Come unto me. And the people
coming near unto him, he repaired the altar of the Lord, that
31 was broken down. | And he took twelve stones according to the
number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of
32 the Lord came, saying: Israel shall be your name. | And he
built with the stones an altar to the name of the Lord: and he
made a trench for water, of the breadth of two furrows round
33 about the altar. | And he laid the wood in order, and cut the

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18, 26: *And they leaped over . . . made:* they performed a leaping and bending dance with various bodily contortions around the altar. This sacred dance has been compared with the Moslems' dance, of dragging the feet as if in deep sand, around the Sacred Stone at Mecca.

18, 27: *He is talking, or is in an inn:* an alternate translation is: "He is busy," as a euphemism for easing nature.

Elias may be caustically alluding to him as patron of Tyre's ship merchants and seafarers. This is the most pungent satire in the Bible on idolatry and, perhaps, in all literature.

18, 29: *The time had come of offering sacrifice:* three o'clock, P.M.

18, 30: There must have been an altar to Yahweh on mount Carmel.

34 bullock in pieces, and laid it upon the wood. | And he said: Fill four buckets with water, and pour it upon the burnt offering, and upon the wood. And again he said: Do the same the second time. And when they had done it the second time, he said: Do the same also the third time. And they did so the third time. |
35 And the water ran round about the altar: and the trench was filled with water.

36 ***The Fire from Heaven*** And when it was now time to offer the holocaust, Elias the prophet came near and said: O Lord God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel, show this day that you are the God of Israel, and I your servant, and that according to your commandment I have done all these things. |
37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me: that this people may learn, that you are the Lord God, and that you have turned their heart again. |
38 Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the holocaust, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water
39 that was in the trench. | And when all the people saw this, they fell on their faces. And they said: The Lord he is God; the
40 Lord he is God. | And Elias said to them: Take the prophets of Baal, and let not one of them escape. And when they had taken them, Elias brought them down to the torrent Cison, and killed them there.
41 And Elias said to Achab: Go up, eat, and drink; for there is
42 a sound of abundance of rain. | Achab went up to eat and drink. And Elias went up to the top of Carmel, and casting himself
43 down upon the earth put his face between his knees. | And he said to his servant: Go up, and look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said: There is nothing. And again he
44 said to him: Return seven times. | And at the seventh time, behold, a little cloud arose out of the sea like a man's foot. And he said: Go up and say to Achab: Prepare your chariot and go
45 down, lest the rain prevent you. | And while he turned himself

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18, 34-35: The water was meant to intensify the miracle of fire.

18, 37: Commentators point out the calmness of Elias' preparations for sacrifice and his prayer in contrast with the sound and fury of the pagan prophets (vv. 26 and 28). This contrast is most eloquent in Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah.*

18, 38: Compare the fire consuming the sacrifice of Aaron, Lv 9, 24, and of Gedeon, Jgs 6, 21. The miracle may have been in the timing of the lightning of a thunder storm.

18, 40: Elias, with the tacit approval of the king, executed the prophets.

18, 44: *A man's foot:* "a man's palm" is more correct. The Carmelite tradition likens the "little cloud" to the Blessed Virgin. Just as the cloud increased in size, so Mary increased in grace.

this way and that way, behold the heavens grew dark, with clouds, and wind, and there fell a great rain. And Achab getting
46 up went away to Jezrahel. | And the hand of the Lord was upon Elias, and he girded up his loins and ran before Achab, till he came to Jezrahel.

19

1 ***Elias Fed by an Angel*** And Achab told Jezabel all that Elias had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the
2 sword. | And Jezabel sent a messenger to Elias, saying: Such and such things may the gods do to me, and add still more if by this hour tomorrow I make not your life as the life of one of
3 them. | Then Elias was afraid, and rising up he went wherever he had a mind to go. And he came to Bersabee of Juda, and
4 left his servant there. | And he went forward, one day's journey into the desert. And when he was there, and sat under a juniper tree, he requested for his soul that he might die, and said: It is enough for me. Lord, take away my soul; for I am no better than
5 my fathers. | And he cast himself down, and slept in the shadow of the juniper tree. And behold an angel of the Lord
6 touched him, and said to him: Arise and eat. | He looked, and behold there was at his head a hearth cake, and a vessel of
7 water. And he ate and drank; and he fell asleep again. | And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said to him: Arise, eat; for you have yet a great way
8 to go. | And he arose, and ate, and drank, and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb.

9 ***The Vision*** And when he arrived there, he abode in a cave. And behold the word of the Lord *came* unto him, and he said
10 to him: What are you doing here, Elias? | And he answered: With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant. They have thrown down your altars, they have slain your prophets with the sword, and I alone am left: and they seek my life to take
11 it away. | And he said to him: Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord: and behold the Lord passes, and a

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19, 4-8: Elias is discouraged because, in spite of his spectacular ordeal on mount Carmel, the people were not converted. He seeks a retreat at Mount Sinai ("Horeb") where he will receive his threefold commission, similar to the manner in which Moses received the Law there.

19, 10-14: V. 9b to v. 10 are awkwardly repeated in vv. 13b-14. Moreover, v. 9 has Elias already in the cave and v. 13 has him entering.

19, 11-12: One of several proposed meanings of this theophany says

great and strong wind before the Lord overthrowing the mountains, and breaking the rocks in pieces: the Lord is not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake: the Lord is not in the
12 earthquake. | And after the earthquake a fire: the Lord is not
13 in the fire, and after the fire a whistling of a gentle air. | And when Elias heard it, he covered his face with his mantle, and coming forth stood in the entering inside the cave, and behold a voice came unto him, saying: What are you doing here, Elias?
14 And he answered: | With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant. They have destroyed your altars; they have slain your prophets with the sword, and I alone am left, and they seek my life to take it away.
15 And the Lord said to him: Go, and return on your way through the desert to Damascus: and when you have come
16 there, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. | And you shall anoint Jehu the son of Namsi to be king over Israel. And Eliseus the son of Saphat, of Abelmeula, you shall anoint to be
17 prophet in your room. | And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall escape the sword of Hazael, shall be slain by Jehu: and whosoever shall escape the sword of Jehu shall be slain by
18 Eliseus. | And I will leave me seven thousand men in Israel, whose knees have not been bowed before Baal, and every mouth that has not worshiped him kissing the hands.

19 ***Eliseus Follows Elias*** And Elias departing from thence, found Eliseus the son of Saphat, ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen: and he was one of them that were ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. And when Elias came up to him, he cast his
20 mantle upon him. | And he forthwith left the oxen and ran after Elias, and said: Let me, I pray you, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you. And he said to him: Go, and return back; for that which was my part, I have done to you. |
21 And returning back from him, he took a yoke of oxen, and killed them, and boiled the flesh with the plough of the oxen, and gave to the people, and they ate: and rising up, he went away, and followed Elias, and ministered to him.

20

1 ***The Syrians Besiege Samaria*** And Benadad, king of Syria, gathered together all his host, and there were two and thirty kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and going up,

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that God is much more spiritual ("whistling") than the works of nature indicate.

he fought against Samaria, and besieged it. | And, sending
messengers to Achab king of Israel into the city, | he said: Thus
says Benadad: Your silver, and your gold is mine: and your
wives and your goodliest children are mine. | And the king of
Israel answered: According to your word, my lord, O king, I
am yours, and all that I have. | And the messengers came again,
and said: Thus says Benadad, who sent us unto you: Your
silver, and your gold, and your wives, and your children, you
shall deliver up to me. | Tomorrow therefore at this same hour
I will send my servants to you: and they shall search your house,
and the houses of your servants: and all that pleases them, they
shall put in their hands, and take away.

And the king of Israel called all the ancients of the land,
and said: Mark, and see that he lays snares for us. For he sent
to me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver and
gold: and I said not nay. | And all the ancients, and all the
people said to him: Hearken not to him, nor consent to him. |
Wherefore he answered the messengers of Benadad: Tell my
lord the king: All that you did send for to me your servant at
first, I will do: but this thing I cannot do. | And the messengers
returning brought him word. And he sent again and said: Such
and such things may the gods do to me, and more may they
add, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the
people that follow me. | And the king of Israel answering, said:
Tell him: Let not the girded boast himself as the ungirded. |
And it came to pass, when Benadad heard this word, that he and
the kings were drinking in pavilions, and he said to his servants:
Beset the city. And they beset it.

Achab Defeats the Syrians And behold a prophet coming
to Achab king of Israel, said to him: Thus says the Lord: Have
you seen all this exceeding great multitude? Behold I will de-
liver them into your hand this day: that you may know that
I am the Lord. | And Achab said: By whom? And he said to
him: Thus says the Lord: By the servants of the princes of the
provinces. And he said: Who shall begin to fight? And he said:
You. | So he mustered the servants of the princes of the prov-
inces: and he found the number of two hundred and thirty-two:
and he mustered after them the people, all the children of Is-
rael, seven thousand. | And they went out at noon. But Bena-
dad was drinking himself drunk in his pavilion, and the two and

20, 2-9: Achab agreed to a tribute but not to a wholesale looting.
20, 11: A soldier who dons his armor should not boast as if he is unvesting after a victory.

17 thirty kings with him, who had come to help him. | And the servants of the princes of the provinces went out first. And Benadad sent. And they told him, saying: There are men who
18 have come out of Samaria. | And he said: Whether they come for peace, take them alive: or whether *they come* to fight, take
19 them alive. | So the servants of the princes of the provinces
20 went out, and the rest of the army followed. | And every one slew the man that came against him. And the Syrians fled: and Israel pursued after them. And Benadad king of Syria fled away
21 on horseback with his horsemen. | But the king of Israel going out overthrew the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with
22 a great slaughter. | (And a prophet coming to the king of Israel said to him: Go, and strengthen yourself, and know, and see what you do: for the next year the king of Syria will come up against you.)

23 But the servants of the king of Syria said to him: Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they have overcome us. But it is better that we should fight against them in the plains, and we
24 shall overcome them. | Do you therefore this thing: Remove all the kings from your army, and put captains in their stead: |
25 and make up the number of soldiers that have been slain, and horses according to the former horses, and chariots according to the chariots which you had before: and we will fight against them in the plains, and you shall see that we shall overcome
26 them. He believed their counsel and did so. | Wherefore, at the return of the year, Benadad mustered the Syrians, and went up
27 to Aphec, to fight against Israel. | And the children of Israel were mustered, and taking victuals went out on the other side, and camped over against them, like two little flocks of goats: but the Syrians filled the land.

28 ***The Syrians again Overthrown*** (And a man of God coming, said to the king of Israel: Thus says the Lord: Because the Syrians have said: The Lord is God of the hills, but is not God of the valleys: I will deliver all this great multitude into
29 your hand; and you shall know that I am the Lord.) | And both sides set their armies in array one against the other, seven days, and on the seventh day the battle was fought: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians a hundred thousand
30 footmen in one day. | And they that remained fled to Aphec, into the city: and the wall fell upon seven and twenty thousand men that were left. And Benadad fleeing went into the city,
31 into a chamber that was within a chamber. | And his servants said to him: Behold, we have heard that the kings of the house

of Israel are merciful: so let us put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes on our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: per-
32 haps he will save our lives. | So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said to him: Your servant Benadad says: I beseech you let me have my life. And he said: If he be yet alive he is my
33 brother. | The men took this for a sign: and in haste caught the word out of his mouth, and said: Your brother Benadad. And he said to them: Go, and bring him to me. Then Benadad came
34 out to him, and he lifted him up into his chariot. | And he said to him: The cities which my father took from your father, I will restore. And do you make yourself streets in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria: and having made a league, I will depart from you. So he made a league with him, and let him go.

35 ***Achab Reproved by a Prophet*** Then a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his companion in the word of
36 the Lord: Strike me. But he would not strike. | Then he said to him: Because you would not hearken to the word of the Lord, behold you shall depart from me, and a lion shall slay you. And when he had gone a little from him, a lion found
37 him, and slew him. | Then he found another man, and said to
38 him: Strike me. And he struck him, and wounded him. | So the prophet went, and met the king in the way, and disguised him-
39 self by sprinkling dust on his face and his eyes. | And as the king passed by, he cried to the king, and said: Your servant went out to fight hand to hand. And when a certain man had run away, one brought him to me, and said: Keep this man; and if he shall slip away, your life shall be for his life, or you shall
40 pay a talent of silver. | And while I in a hurry turned this way and that, all of a sudden he was not to be seen. And the king of Israel said to him: This is your judgment, which you yourself
41 have decreed. | But he forthwith wiped off the dust from his face: and the king of Israel knew him, that he was one of the
42 prophets. | And he said to him: Thus says the Lord: Because you have let go out of your hand a man worthy of death, your
43 life shall be for his life, and your people for his people. | And the king of Israel returned to his house, slighting to hear: and raging came into Samaria.

20, 35-43: God rewarded Achab for obeying Him by twice defeating the Syrian princes, but He punished him for sparing Benadad for political reasons. Achab wanted a trade treaty (v. 34) or he wanted Syria as a buffer state against Assyria.

21

1 ***The Vineyard of Naboth*** And after these things, Naboth
the Jezrahelite, who was in Jezrahel, had at that time a vineyard
2 near the palace of Achab king of Samaria. | And Achab spoke
to Naboth, saying: Give me your vineyard, that I may make
me a garden of herbs, because it is nigh, and adjoining to my
house, and I will give you for it a better vineyard. Or if you
think it more convenient for you, I will give you the worth of it
3 in money. Naboth answered him: The Lord be merciful to
me, and not let me give you the inheritance of my fathers. |
4 And Achab came into his house angry and fretting, because of
the word that Naboth the Jezrahelite had spoken to him, say-
ing: I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers. And
casting himself upon his bed, he turned away his face to the
5 wall, and would eat no bread. | And Jezabel his wife went in to
him, and said to him: What is the matter that your soul is so
6 grieved? And why do you eat no bread? | And he answered
her: I spoke to Naboth the Jezrahelite, and said to him: Give
me your vineyard, and take money for it; or if it please you, I
will give you a better vineyard for it. And he said: I will not
7 give you my vineyard. | Then Jezabel his wife said to him:
You are of great authority indeed, and govern well the kingdom
of Israel. Arise, and eat bread, and be of good cheer. I will give
you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezrahelite.
8 So she wrote letters in Achab's name, and sealed them with
his ring, and sent them to the ancients, and the chief men that
9 were in his city, and that dwelt with Naboth. | And this was
the tenor of the letter: Proclaim a fast, and make Naboth sit
10 among the chief of the people. | And suborn two men, sons of
Belial, against him, and let them bear false witness that he has
blasphemed God and the king: and then carry him out, and
stone him and so let him die.

11 ***Naboth Stoned to Death*** And the men of his city, the
ancients and nobles that dwelt with him in the city, did as
Jezabel had commanded them, and as it was written in the
12 letters which she had sent to them. | They proclaimed a fast,
13 and made Naboth sit among the chief of the people. | And
bringing two men, sons of the devil, they made them sit against
him: and they, like men of the devil, bore witness against
him before the people, saying: Naboth has blasphemed God
and the king: wherefore they brought him forth outside the

21, 1-29: The king was not above the moral law any more than David in his adultery and murder.

14 city, and stoned him to death. | And they sent to Jezebel, say-
15 ing: Naboth is stoned, and is dead. | And it came to pass when
Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned and dead, that she said
to Achab: Arise and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth
the Jezrahelite, who would not agree with you, and give it to
16 you for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. | And when
Achab heard this, to wit, that Naboth was dead, he arose and
went down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezrahelite, to take
possession of it.

17 ***Prophecy against Achab and Jezebel*** And the word of
18 the Lord came to Elias the Thesbite, saying: | Arise, and go
down to meet Achab king of Israel, who is in Samaria: behold
he is going down to the vineyard of Naboth, to take possession
19 of it. | And you shall speak to him, saying: Thus says the Lord:
You have slain. Moreover also you have taken possession. And
after these words you shall add: Thus says the Lord: In this
place, wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth, they
shall lick your blood also.
20 And Achab said to Elias: Have you found me your enemy? He
said: I have found you, because you are sold, to do evil in the
21 sight of the Lord. | Behold I will bring evil upon you, and I will
cut down your posterity, and I will kill of Achab every male
descendant, and him that is shut up, and the last in Israel. |
22 And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son
of Nabat, and like the house of Baasa the son of Ahias: for
what you have done to provoke me to anger, and for making
23 Israel to sin. | And to Jezabel also the Lord spoke, saying: The
24 dogs shall eat Jezabel in the field of Jezrahel. | If Achab die in
the city, the dogs shall eat him: but if he die in the field, the
birds of the air shall eat him.
25 Now there was not such another as Achab, who was sold to
do evil in the sight of the Lord: for his wife Jezabel set him on.
26 | And he became abominable, insomuch that he followed the
idols which the Amorrites had made, whom the Lord destroyed
27 before the face of the children of Israel. | And when Achab
had heard these words, he rent his garments, and put haircloth
upon his flesh, and fasted and slept in sackcloth, and walked
28 with his head cast down. | And the word of the Lord came to
29 Elias the Thesbite, saying: | Have you not seen Achab humbled
before me? Therefore, because he has humbled himself for my

21, 21: *And him that is shut up . . . Israel:* the slave and the free-man. See 2 Sm 12, 24 n.

sake, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

22

1 ***Achab Consults False Prophets*** And there passed three
2 years without war between Syria and Israel. | And in the third
year, Josaphat king of Juda came down to the king of Israel. |
3 (And the king of Israel said to his servants: Do you not know
that Ramoth Galaad is ours, and we neglect to take it out of the
4 hand of the king of Syria?) | And he said to Josaphat: Will you
5 come with me to battle to Ramoth Galaad? | And Josaphat
said to the king of Israel: As I am, so are you: my people and
your people are one: and my horsemen are your horsemen. And
Josaphat said to the king of Israel: Inquire, I beseech you, this
6 day, the word of the Lord. | Then the king of Israel assembled
the prophets, about four hundred men, and he said to them:
Shall I go to Ramoth Galaad to fight, or shall I forbear? They
answered: Go up, and the Lord will deliver it into the hand of
7 the king. | And Josaphat said: Is there not here some prophet
8 of the Lord, that we may inquire by him? | And the king of
Israel said to Josaphat: There is one man left, by whom we
may inquire of the Lord, Micheas the son of Jemla; but I hate
him, for he does not prophesy good to me, but evil. And Josa-
9 phat said: Speak not so, O king. | Then the king of Israel
called an eunuch, and said to him: Make haste, and bring hither
Micheas the son of Jemla.

10 Then the king of Israel, and Josaphat king of Juda, sat each
on his throne clothed with royal robes, in a court by the entrance
of the gate of Samaria: and all the prophets prophesied before
11 them. | And Sedecias the son of Chanaana made himself horns
of iron, and said: Thus says the Lord: With these shall you
12 push Syria, till you destroy it. | And all the prophets prophesied
in like manner, saying: Go up to Ramoth Galaad, and prosper;
13 for the Lord will deliver it into the king's hands. | And the
messenger, that went to call Micheas, spoke to him, saying:
Behold the words of the prophets with one mouth declare good
things to the king. Let your word therefore be like to theirs, and
speak that which is good.

14 ***The Prophecy of Micheas*** But Micheas said to him: As
the Lord lives, whatsoever the Lord shall say to me, that will I
15 speak. | So he came to the king, and the king said to him:
Micheas, shall we go to Ramoth Galaad to battle, or shall we

22, 15: Micheas sarcastically repeats the decision of the false prophets.

forbear? He answered: Go up, and prosper, and the Lord shall
16 deliver it into the king's hands. | But the king said to him: I
adjure you again and again, that you tell me nothing but that
17 which is true in the name of the Lord. | And he said: I saw all
Israel scattered upon the hills, like sheep that have no shepherd.
And the Lord said: These have no master: let every man of
18 them return to his house in peace. | (Then the king of Israel said
to Josaphat: Did I not tell you, that he prophesies no good to
19 me, but always evil?) | And he added and said: Hear therefore
the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and
all the army of heaven standing by him on the right hand and
20 on the left. | And the Lord said: Who shall deceive Achab
king of Israel, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Galaad?
And one spoke words of this manner, and another otherwise. |
21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and
said: I will deceive him. And the Lord said to him: By what
22 means? | And he said: I will go forth, and be a lying spirit in
the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said: You shall
23 deceive *him,* and shall prevail. Go forth, and do so. | Now
therefore behold the Lord has given a lying spirit in the mouth
of all your prophets that are here: and the Lord has spoken evil
24 against you. | And Sedecias the son of Chanaana came, and
struck Micheas on the cheek, and said: Has then the spirit of the
25 Lord left me and spoken to you? | And Micheas said: You shall
see in the day when you shall go into a chamber within a cham-
ber to hide yourself.

26 ***Micheas Imprisoned*** And the king of Israel said: Take
Micheas, and let him abide with Ammon the governor of the
27 city, and with Joas the son of Amalech. | And tell them: Thus
says the king: Put this man in prison, and feed him with bread
28 of affliction, and water of distress, till I return in peace. And
Micheas said: If you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken to
me. And he said: Hear, all you people.
29 So the king of Israel, and Josaphat king of Juda went up to
30 Ramoth Galaad. | And the king of Israel said to Josaphat: Take
armor, and go into the battle, and put on your own garments.
But the king of Israel changed his dress, and went into the
31 battle. | And the king of Syria had commanded the two and
thirty captains of the chariots, saying: You shall not fight against

22, 22-23: Since everything is attributed to God, without distinguishing what He wants and what He allows, Micheas says that God is the cause of the false prophets' lies.

22, 28: Micheas predicts Achab's death.

22, 30: Achab disguised himself to ward off the prediction of Micheas.

32 any, small or great, but against the king of Israel only. | So
when the captains of the chariots saw Josaphat, they suspected
that he was the king of Israel, and making a violent assault they
33 fought against him: and Josaphat cried out. | And the captains
of the chariots perceived that he was not the king of Israel, and
they turned away from him.

34 ***Achab Is Wounded and Dies*** And a certain man bent
his bow, shooting at a venture, and chanced to strike the king of
Israel between the lungs and the stomach. But he said to the
driver of his chariot: Turn your hand, and carry me out of the
35 army, for I am grievously wounded. | And the battle was
fought that day, and the king of Israel stood in his chariot
against the Syrians. And he died in the evening: and the blood
36 ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. | And the
herald proclaimed through all the army before the sun set,
saying: Let every man return to his own city, and to his own
37 country. | And the king died, and was carried into Samaria:
38 and they buried the king in Samaria. | And they washed his
chariot in the pool of Samaria: and the dogs licked up his blood.
And they washed the reins, according to the word of the Lord
which he had spoken.
39 But the rest of the acts of Achab, and all that he did, and the
house of ivory that he made, and all the cities that he built, are
they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings
40 of Israel? | So Achab slept with his fathers, and Ochozias his
son reigned in his stead.

41 ***The Reign of Josaphat*** But Josaphat the son of Asa be-
gan to reign over Juda in the fourth year of Achab king of
42 Israel. | He was five and thirty years old when he began to
reign, and he reigned five and twenty years in Jerusalem. The
43 name of his mother was Azuba the daughter of Salai. | And
he walked in all the way of Asa his father, and he declined not
from it: and he did that which was right in the sight of the
44 Lord. | Nevertheless he took not away the high places: for as
yet the people offered sacrifices and burned incense in the high
45 places. | And Josaphat had peace with the king of Israel. |
46 But the rest of the acts of Josaphat, and his works which he
did, and his battles, are they not written in the book of the

22, 38: This should not be considered the fulfillment of the prophecy in 21, 19, for one reason, because it was transferred to Achab's son in 21, 29.

22, 39: *House of ivory:* in the city of Samaria archeologists have found an abundance of furniture decorated with ivory.

47 words of the days of the kings of Juda? | And the remnant also
of the effeminate, who remained in the days of Asa his father,
48 he took out of the land. And there was then no king appointed
49 in Edom. | But king Josaphat made navies on the sea, to sail
into Ophir for gold: but they could not go, for the ships were
50 broken in Asiongaber. | Then Ochozias the son of Achab said
to Josaphat: Let my servants go with your servants in the ships.
51 And Josaphat would not. | And Josaphat slept with his fathers,
and was buried with them in the city of David his father. And
Joram his son reigned in his stead.
52 And Ochozias the son of Achab began to reign over Israel in
Samaria, in the seventeenth year of Josaphat king of Juda. And
53 he reigned over Israel two years. | And he did evil in the sight
of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and his mother,
and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel
54 to sin. | He served also Baal, and worshiped him, and provoked
the Lord the God of Israel according to all that his father had
done.

22, 49-50: See the maritime enterprise of Solomon and Hiram in 9, 26-28, and 7, 46 n.

22, 5: See 2 Par 17—19, for Josaphat as an able administrator.

1

1 ***Elias Foretells Ochozias' Death*** And Moab rebelled against Israel, after the death of Achab.

2 And Ochozias fell through the lattices of his upper chamber which he had in Samaria, and was sick. And he sent messengers, saying to them: Go, consult Beelzebub, the god of Accaron,
3 whether I shall recover of this my illness. | And an angel of the Lord spoke to Elias the Thesbite, saying: Arise, and go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them: Is there not a God in Israel, that you go to consult Beelzebub the
4 god of Accaron? | Wherefore thus says the Lord: From the bed, on which you have gone up, you shall not come down; but you
5 shall surely die. And Elias went away. | And the messengers turned back to Ochozias. And he said to them: Why did you
6 come back? | But they answered him: A man met us, and said to us: Go, and return to the king who sent you, and you shall say to him: Thus says the Lord: Is it because there was no God in Israel that you sent to Beelzebub the god of Accaron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed, on which you have
7 gone up; but you shall surely die. | And he said to them: What manner of man was he who met you, and spoke these words? |
8 But they said: A hairy man with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said: It is Elias the Thesbite.

9 And he sent to him a captain of fifty, and the fifty men that were under him. And he went up to him, and as he was sitting on the top of a hill, said to him: Man of God, the king has commanded that you come down.

10 ***Elias Brings Fire from Heaven*** And Elias answering, said to the captain of fifty: If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume you, and your fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him, and the fifty
11 that were with him. | And again he sent to him another captain of fifty men, and his fifty with him. And he said to him: Man
12 of God, thus says the king: Make haste and come down. | Elias answering, said: If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume you and your fifty. And fire came down
13 from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. | Again he sent a third captain of fifty men, and the fifty that were with him. And

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1, 2: *Beelzebub:* "god of the flies." It recurs in Mt 10, 25. *Accaron:* a town in northern Philistine territory.

1, 8: This was the distinctive garb of the prophets.

when he came, he fell upon his knees before Elias, and besought him, and said: Man of God, despise not my life, and the lives of
14 your servants that are with me. | Behold fire came down from heaven, and consumed the two first captains of fifty men, and the fifties that were with them: but now I beseech you to spare my life.
15 And the angel of the Lord spoke to Elias, saying: Go down with him. Fear not. He arose therefore, and went down with
16 him to the king. | And he said to him: Thus says the Lord: Because you have sent messengers to consult Beelzebub the god of Accaron, as though there were not a God in Israel, of whom you might inquire the word; therefore from the bed on which you have gone up, you shall not come down, but you shall
17 surely die. | So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elias spoke. And Joram his brother reigned in his stead, in the second year of Joram the son of Josaphat king of Juda: because
18 he had no son. | But the rest of the acts of Ochozias which he did, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel?

2

1 ***Eliseus Refuses to Leave Elias*** And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elias into heaven by a whirlwind, that
2 Elias and Eliseus were going from Galgal. | And Elias said to Eliseus: Stay here, because the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel. And Eliseus said to him: As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you. And when they had come down to
3 Bethel, | the sons of the prophets, that were at Bethel, came forth to Eliseus, and said to him: Do you know that this day the Lord will take away your master from you? And he an-
4 swered: I also know it. Hold your peace. | And Elias said to Eliseus: Stay here because the Lord has sent me to Jericho. And he said: As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not
5 leave you. And when they had come to Jericho, the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho, came to Eliseus, and said to him: Do you know that this day the Lord will take away your master
6 from you? And he said: I also know it. Hold your peace. | And Elias said to him: Stay here, because the Lord has sent me as far as the Jordan. And he said: As the Lord lives, and as your soul

1, 14: The purpose of the story is to underscore the respect due to the prophets.

2, 1-12: Elias, knowing of his imminent death, makes a farewell visit to his disciples in various places.

lives, I will not leave you. And they two went on together, |
7 and fifty men of the sons of the prophets followed them, and
stood in sight at a distance; but they two stood by the Jordan.
8 And Elias took his mantle, and folded it together, and struck
the waters: and they were divided hither and thither. And they
9 both passed over on dry ground. | And when they had gone
over, Elias said to Eliseus: Ask what you will have me to do for
you, before I be taken away from you. And Eliseus said: I
10 beseech you that in me may be your double spirit. | And he
answered: You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless if you
see me when I am taken from you, you shall have what you
have asked: but if you see me not, you shall not have it.

11 ***Elias Taken up to Heaven*** And as they went on, walking
and talking together, behold a fiery chariot, and fiery horses
parted them both asunder: and Elias went up by a whirlwind
12 into heaven. | And Eliseus saw him, and cried: My father, my
father, the chariot of Israel, and the driver thereof. And he saw
him no more. And he took hold of his own garments, and rent
13 them in two pieces. | And he took up the mantle of Elias, that
fell from him: and going back, he stood upon the bank of the
14 Jordan, | and he struck the waters with the mantle of Elias,
that had fallen from him, and they were not divided. And he
said: Where is now the God of Elias? And he struck the waters,
and they were divided, hither and thither, and Eliseus passed
over.
15 And the sons of the prophets at Jericho, who were over against
him, seeing it said: The spirit of Elias has rested upon Eliseus.
And coming to meet him, they worshiped him, falling to the
16 ground, | and they said to him: Behold, there are with your

2, 9: *Double spirit:* Eliseus wants to succeed Elias as leader of the prophets, and desires the power to perform wonders.

2, 10: *Hard thing:* because the prophetic spirit was not inherited automatically.

2, 11: Neither this text nor v. 18 say explicitly that Elias went to heaven without dying, but Jewish tradition interpreted it thus, and added that he will return in Messianic times. See Mal 3, 23; Sir 48, 9-12. Mk 9, 10 interprets Elias' return in the person of John the Baptist. In the present-day Jewish celebrations an empty chair awaits Elias.

2, 12: *The chariot of Israel, and the driver thereof:* alluding to the chariotry as the backbone of the army, Eliseus eulogizes Elias by calling him the strongest part of Israel's true religion in its war on pagan baals. This verse is frequently used in the Roman liturgy. Elias is popular with Christians, Jews and Moslems.

2, 16: Elias, the solitary prophet, was wont to disappear. See 3 Kgs 18, 9-16.

servants fifty strong men, that can go, and seek your master; lest perhaps the spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley. And he said: Do
17 not send. | But they pressed him, till he consented, and said: Send. And they sent fifty men: and they sought three days but
18 found him not. | And they came back to him: for he abode at Jericho. And he said to them: Did I not say to you: Do not send?

19 ***Eliseus Heals the Waters*** And the men of the city said to Eliseus: Behold the situation of this city is very good, as you, my lord, see; but the waters are very bad, and the ground barren. |
20 And he said: Bring me a new vessel, and put salt into it. And
21 when they had brought it, | he went out to the spring of the waters, and cast the salt into it, and said: Thus says the Lord: I have healed these waters, and there shall be no more in them
22 death or barrenness. | And the waters were healed unto this day, according to the word of Eliseus, which he spoke.
23 And he went up from thence to Bethel. And as he was going up by the way, little boys came out of the city and mocked him, saying: Go up, you bald head; go up, you bald head. |
24 And looking back, he saw them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord: and there came forth two bears out of the forest, and
25 tore of them two and forty boys. | And from thence he went to mount Carmel: and from thence he returned to Samaria.

3

1 ***War against the King of Moab*** And Joram the son of Achab reigned over Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of
2 Josaphat king of Juda. And he reigned twelve years. | And he did evil before the Lord, but not like his father and his mother: for he took away the statues of Baal, which his father had made.
3 | Nevertheless he stuck to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel to sin, nor did he depart from them.
4 Now Mesa, king of Moab, nourished many sheep: and he paid to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and a
5 hundred thousand rams with their fleeces. | And when Achab was dead, he broke the league which he had made with the king
6 of Israel. | And king Joram went out that day from Samaria,

2, 19-22: Perhaps the point of the story is Eliseus' power to heal.
2, 23-24: The point here may be Eliseus' power to punish those who do not respect the prophets as shown in 1, 14. Eliseus may have been bald or his tonsure formed part of his hallmark as a prophet. The Greeks and Romans also regarded baldness as undesirable.
3, 4-5: Moab refused to continue to pay tribute to Israel.

7 and mustered all Israel. | And he sent to Josaphat king of Juda,
saying: The king of Moab is revolted from me; come with me
against him to battle. And he answered: I will come up. He that
is mine, is yours: my people are your people: and my horses
8 are your horses. | And he said: Which way shall we go up? But
9 he answered: By the desert of Edom. | So the king of Israel,
and the king of Juda, and the king of Edom went: and they
fetched a compass of seven days' journey. And there was no
water for the army, and for the beasts that followed them. |
10 And the king of Israel said: Alas, alas, alas, the Lord has gath-
ered us three kings together, to deliver us into the hands of
Moab!
11 And Josaphat said: Is there not here a prophet of the Lord,
that we may beseech the Lord by him? And one of the servants
of the king of Israel answered: Here is Eliseus the son of Saphat,
12 who poured water on the hands of Elias. | And Josaphat said:
The word of the Lord is with him. And the king of Israel, and
Josaphat king of Juda, and the king of Edom went down to him.
13 | And Eliseus said to the king of Israel: What have I to do with
you? Go to the prophets of your father, and your mother. And
the king of Israel said to him: Why has the Lord gathered
together these three kings, to deliver them into the hands of
14 Moab? | And Eliseus said to him: As the Lord of hosts lives, in
whose sight I stand, if I did not reverence the face of Josaphat
king of Juda, I would not have hearkened to you, nor looked on
you.

15 ***Eliseus Procures Water and Prophesies Victory*** But
now bring me hither a minstrel. And when the minstrel played,
16 the hand of the Lord came upon him, and he said: | Thus says
17 the Lord: Make the channel of this torrent full of ditches. | For
thus says the Lord: You shall not see wind, nor rain: and yet
this channel shall be filled with waters. And you shall drink,
18 you and your families, and your beasts. | And this is a small
thing in the sight of the Lord. Moreover he will deliver also
19 Moab into your hands. | And you shall destroy every fenced
city, and every choice city, and shall cut down every fruitful
tree, and shall stop up all the springs of waters: and every
goodly field you shall cover with stones.

3, 11: The Oriental was accustomed to a servant or disciple pouring water on his hands rather than dipping them in a basin.

3, 15: The minstrel's music may have served to calm Eliseus after his heated words with the king of Israel. Music was part of the ritual as indicated in 1 Sm 10, 5.

20 And it came to pass in the morning, when the sacrifices used to be offered, that, behold, water came by the way of Edom,
21 and the country was filled with water. | And all the Moabites hearing that the kings had come up to fight against them, gathered together all that were girded with a belt upon them, and
22 stood in the borders. | And they rose early in the morning, and the sun being now up, and shining upon the waters, the Moabites saw the waters over against them red, like blood, |
23 and they said: It is the blood of the sword: the kings have fought among themselves, and they have killed one another. Go
24 now, Moab, to the spoils. | And they went into the camp of Israel: but Israel rising up defeated Moab, who fled before
25 them. And they being conquerors, went and smote Moab. | And they destroyed the cities: and they filled every goodly field, every man casting his stone: and they stopped up all the springs of waters: and cut down all the trees that bore fruit, so that brick walls only remained: and the city was beset by the slingers, and a great part thereof destroyed.
26 And when the king of Moab saw this, to wit, that the enemies had prevailed, he took with him seven hundred men that drew the sword, to break in upon the king of Edom; but they could
27 not. | Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burned offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation in Israel; and presently they departed from him, and returned into their own country.

4

1 ***Miracles of Eliseus*** Now a certain woman of the wives of the prophets cried to Eliseus, saying: Your servant my husband is dead. And you know that your servant was one that feared God, and behold the creditor has come to take away my two
2 sons to serve him. | And Eliseus said to her: What will you have me to do for you? Tell me, what have you in your house?

3, 20: A sudden desert storm sent water from the plateau, where they were, down into the valley and filled the trenches (vv. 16-17).

3, 22: The mirage of red water in the trenches was due probably to the red sandstone in the area.

3, 27: *Indignation in Israel:* one of several disputed interpretations is that the sacrifice of the crown prince on the city wall to petition a victory from the Moabite god Chemosh encouraged the Moabites to repel the attackers. The Moabite Stone, inscribed by king Mesha, discovered in 1869, and now in the Louvre, Paris, omits the odious biblical scene. This stone contains the earliest mention of Yahweh outside the Bible.

4, 1-7: The wonder story of the multiplication of oil. For a similar miracle of Elias see 3 Kgs 17, 8-15.

And she answered: I your handmaid have nothing in my house
3 but a little oil, to anoint me. | And he said to her: Go, borrow
4 of all your neighbors empty vessels not a few. | And go in, and shut your door, when you are within, and your sons; and pour out thereof into all those vessels; and when they are full
5 take them away. | So the woman went, and shut the door upon her, and upon her sons. They brought her the vessels, and she
6 poured in. | And when the vessels were full, she said to her son: Bring me yet a vessel. And he answered: I have no more.
7 And the oil stood. | And she came, and told the man of God. And he said: Go, sell the oil, and pay your creditor; and you and your sons live of the rest.
8 And there was a day when Eliseus passed by Sunam. Now there was a great woman there, who detained him to eat bread; and as he passed often that way, he turned
9 into her house to eat bread. | And she said to her husband: I perceive that this is a holy man of God, who often
10 passes by us. | Let us therefore make him a little chamber, and put a little bed in it for him, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, that when he comes to us, he may abide there. |
11 Now there was a certain day when he came and turned in to the
12 chamber and rested there. | And he said to Giezi his servant: Call this Sunamitess. And when he had called her, and she
13 stood before him, | he said to his servant: Say to her: Behold you have diligently served us in all things, what will you have me do for you? Have you any business, and will you that I speak to the king, or to the general of the army? And she answered: I
14 dwell in the midst of my own people. | And he said: What will she then that I do for her? And Giezi said: Do not ask, for she
15 has no son, and her husband is old. | Then he bid him call her.
16 And when she was called, and stood before the door, | he said to her: At this time, and this same hour, if life accompany, you shall have a son in your womb. But she answered: Do not, I beseech you, my lord, you man of God, do not lie to your hand-
17 maid. | And the woman conceived, and brought forth a son in the time, and at the same hour, that Eliseus had said.
18 And the child grew. And on a certain day, when he went out
19 to his father to the reapers, | he said to his father: My head aches, my head aches. But he said to his servant: Take him, and
20 carry him to his mother. | And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, she set him on her knees until noon:
21 and then he died. | And she went up and laid him upon the bed

4, 13: *I dwell in the midst of my own people:* my clan will provide for me.

22 of the man of God, and shut the door; and going out, | she
called her husband, and said: Send with me, I beseech you, one
of your servants, and an ass that I may run to the man of God,
23 and come again. | And he said to her: Why do you go to him?
Today is neither new moon nor sabbath. She answered: I will
24 go. | And she saddled an ass, and commanded her servant:
Drive, and make haste, make no stay in going. And do that
which I bid you.
25 So she went forward, and came to the man of God to mount
Carmel. And when the man of God saw her coming toward
him, he said to Giezi his servant: Behold that Sunamitess. |
26 Go therefore to meet her, and say to her: Is it well with you, and
with your husband, and with your son? And she answered:
27 Well. | And when she came to the man of God to the mount,
she caught hold on his feet: and Giezi came to remove her. And
the man of God said: Let her alone for her soul is in anguish,
and the Lord has hidden it from me, and has not told me. |
28 And she said to him: Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say
to you: Do not deceive me?

29 ***Eliseus Raises the Dead Child to Life*** Then he said to
Giezi: Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and
go. If any man meet you, salute him not: and if any man
salute you, answer him not: and lay my staff upon the face of
30 the child. | But the mother of the child said: As the Lord lives,
and as your soul lives, I will not leave you. He arose, therefore,
and followed her.
31 But Giezi was gone before them and laid the staff upon the
face of the child, and there was no voice nor sense; and he re-
turned to meet him, and told him, saying: The child has not
32 risen. | Eliseus therefore went into the house: and behold the
33 child lay dead on his bed. | And going in he shut the door upon
34 him, and upon the child, and prayed to the Lord. | And he
went up, and lay upon the child: and he put his mouth upon his
mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his
hands: and he bowed himself upon him, and the child's flesh
35 grew warm. | Then he returned and walked in the house, once
to and fro; and he went up, and lay upon him: and the child
36 gaped seven times, and opened his eyes. | And he called Giezi,
and said to him: Call this Sunamitess. And she being called,
37 went in to him. And he said: Take up your son. | She came

4, 23: Holy persons were ordinarily visited on feast days.
4, 29: Oriental greetings are protracted affairs.
4, 29-35: The point seems to be that personal prayer is important, and not a magic staff. See 3 Kgs 17, 21 for similar gestures of Elias.

and fell at his feet, and worshiped upon the ground: and took up her son, and went out.

38 ***Eliseus Feeds the Famished People*** And Eliseus returned to Galgal. And there was a famine in the land, and the sons of the prophets dwelt before him. And he said to one of his servants: Set on the great pot, and boil pottage for the sons of
39 the prophets. | And one went out into the field to gather wild herbs: and he found something like a wild vine, and gathered of it wild gourds of the field, and filled his mantle. And coming back, he shred them into the pot of pottage, for he knew not
40 what it was. | And they poured it out for their companions to eat: and when they had tasted of the pottage, they cried out, saying: Death is in the pot, O man of God. And they could
41 not eat thereof. | But he said: Bring some meal. And when they had brought it, he cast it into the pot, and said: Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was now no bitterness in the pot.

42 And a certain man came from Baalsalisa bringing to the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and new corn in his scrip. And he said: Give to the people, that they
43 may eat. ¶ And his servant answered him: How much is this, that I should set it before a hundred men? He said again: Give to the people, that they may eat. For thus says the Lord: They
44 shall eat, and there shall be left. | So he set it before them: and they ate. And there was left according to the word of the Lord.

5

1 ***Cure of Naaman, the Syrian*** Naaman, general of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable: for by him the Lord gave deliverance to Syria.
2 And he was a valiant man and rich, but a leper. | Now there had gone out robbers from Syria, and had led away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid, and she waited upon Naaman's
3 wife. | And she said to her mistress: I wish my master had been with the prophet that is in Samaria. He would certainly
4 have healed him of the leprosy which he has. | Then Naaman went in to his lord, and told him, saying: Thus and thus said
5 the girl from the land of Israel. | And the king of Syria said to

4, 38: *Sons of the prophets:* see 1 Sm 10, 5 ff.

5, 1: *Leper:* since he remained at court, it could not have been true leprosy.

5, 5: A rough estimate of the money mentioned is $80,000.

him: Go, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thou-
6 sand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. | And brought the letter to the king of Israel, in these words: When you shall receive this letter, know that I have sent to you Naaman my serv-
7 ant, that you may heal him of his leprosy. | And when the king of Israel had read the letter, he rent his garments, and said: Am I God, to be able to kill and give life, that this man has sent to me to heal a man of his leprosy? Mark, and see how he seeks occasions against me.
8 And when Eliseus the man of God had heard this, to wit, that the king of Israel had rent his garments, he sent to him, saying: Why have you rent your garments? Let him come to me; and
9 let him know that there is a prophet in Israel. | So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and stood at the door of the
10 house of Eliseus. | And Eliseus sent a messenger to him, saying: Go, and wash seven times in the Jordan; and your flesh
11 shall recover health, and you shall be clean. | Naaman was angry and went away, saying: I thought he would have come out to me, and standing would have invoked the name of the Lord his God, and touched with his hand the place of the
12 leprosy, and healed me. | Are not the Abana, and the Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel, that I may wash in them, and be made clean? So as he turned and was
13 going away with indignation, | his servants came to him, and said to him: Father, if the prophet had bid you do some great thing, surely you should have done it. How much rather what
14 he now has said to you: Wash, and you shall be clean? | Then he went down, and washed in the Jordan seven times: according to the word of the man of God. And his flesh was restored, like
15 the flesh of a little child, and he was made clean. | And returning to the man of God with all his train, he came and stood before him, and said: In truth, I know there is no other God in all the earth, but only in Israel. I beseech you therefore take a
16 blessing of your servant. | But he answered: As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And when he pressed
17 him, he still refused. | And Naaman said: As you will; but I beseech you, grant to me your servant, to take from hence two mules' burden of earth. For your servant will not henceforth
18 offer holocaust, or victim, to other gods, but to the Lord. | But there is only this, for which you shall entreat the Lord for your servant. When my master goes into the temple of Remmon, to

5, 13: *Father:* the title of an important officer in the kingdom.
5, 17: A declaration of belief in Yahweh.

and he cried out, and said: Alas, alas, alas, my lord, for this
6 same was borrowed. | And the man of God said: Where did it
fall? And he showed him the place. Then he cut off a piece of
7 wood, and cast it in the water: and the iron swam. | And he
said: Take it up. And he put out his hand and took it.
8 And the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel
with his servants, saying: In such and such a place let us lay
9 ambushes. | And the man of God sent to the king of Israel,
saying: Beware that you pass not to such a place; for the Syrians
10 are there in ambush. | And the king of Israel sent to the place
which the man of God had told him, and prevented him, and
11 looked well to himself there, not once nor twice. | And the heart
of the king of Syria was troubled for this thing. And calling
together his servants, he said: Why do you not tell me who it is
12 that betrays me to the king of Israel? | And one of his servants
said: No one, my lord O king. But Eliseus the prophet that is
in Israel, tells the king of Israel all the words, that you speak in
13 your privy chamber. | And he said to them: Go, and see where
he is: that I may send, and take him. And they told him, saying:
14 Behold he is in Dothan. | Therefore he sent there horses and
chariots, and the strength of an army: and they came by night,
and beset the city.
15 · And the servant of the man of God rising early, went out,
and saw an army round about the city, and horses and chariots.
And he told him, saying: Alas, alas, alas, my lord, what shall
16 we do? | But he answered: Fear not; for there are more with us
17 than with them. | And Eliseus prayed, and said: Lord, open
his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the
servant, and he saw: and behold the mountain *was* full of horses,
18 and chariots of fire round about Eliseus. | And the enemies
came down to him, but Eliseus prayed to the Lord, saying:
Strike, I beseech you, this people with blindness. And the Lord
struck them with blindness, according to the word of Eliseus. |
19 And Eliseus said to them: This is not the way, neither is this the
city. Follow me; and I will show you the man whom you seek.
20 So he led them into Samaria. | And when they had come into
Samaria, Eliseus said: Lord, open the eyes of these men, that
they may see. And the Lord opened their eyes: and they saw
21 themselves to be in the midst of Samaria. | And the king of
Israel said to Eliseus, when he saw them: My father, shall I kill
22 them? | And he said: You shall not kill them; for you did not
take them with your sword, or your bow, that you may kill
them. But set bread and water before them, that they may eat

6, 18: *Blindness:* temporary dim-sightedness.

worship, and he leans upon my hand: if I bow down in the temple of Remmon, when he bows down in the same place, that
19 the Lord pardon me your servant for this thing. | And he said to him: Go in peace. So he departed from him in the springtime of the earth.

20 ***Giezi Punished for Taking Naaman's Gifts*** But Giezi the servant of the man of God said: My master has spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving of him that which he brought. As the Lord lives, I will run after him, and take some
21 thing of him. | And Giezi followed after Naaman: and when he saw him running after him, he leaped down from his chariot to
22 meet him, and said: Is all well? | And he said: Well: my master has sent me to you, saying: Just now there have come to me from mount Ephraim, two young men of the sons of the prophets. Give them a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. |
23 And Naaman said: It is better that you take two talents. And he forced him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, and two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his serv-
24 ants; and they carried them before him. | And when he had come, and now it was the evening, he took them from their hands, and laid them up in the house, and sent the men away.
25 And they departed. | But he went in, and stood before his master. And Eliseus said: From where do you come, Giezi? He
26 answered: Your servant went nowhere. | But he said: Was not my heart present, when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? So now you have received money, and received garments, to buy oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen,
27 and menservants, and maidservants. | But the leprosy of Naaman shall also stick to you, and to your seed for ever. And he went out from him a leper as white as snow.

6

1 ***Other Miracles of Eliseus*** And the sons of the prophets said to Eliseus: Behold the place where we dwell with you is too
2 strait for us. | Let us go as far as the Jordan and take out of the wood every man a piece of timber, that we may build us
3 there a place to dwell in. And he said: Go. | And one of them said: But come you also with your servants. He answered: I will
4 come. | So he went with them. And when they had come to
5 the Jordan they cut down wood. | And it happened, as one was felling some timber, that the head of the axe fell into the water,

5, 27: *Leper:* not true leprosy since it was like that of Naaman in v. 1 above.

23 and drink, and go to their master. | And a great provision of
meats was set before them, and they ate and drank. And he let
them go: and they went away to their master. And the robbers
of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

24 ***The Syrians Besiege Samaria*** And it came to pass after
these things, that Benadad king of Syria gathered together all
25 his army, and went up, and besieged Samaria. | And there was
a great famine in Samaria: and so long did the siege continue,
till the head of an ass was sold for fourscore pieces of silver,
and the fourth part of a cabe of pigeons' dung, for five pieces of
26 silver. | And as the king of Israel was passing by the wall, a
certain woman cried out to him, saying: Save me, my lord O
27 king. | And he said: If the Lord does not save you, how can I
save you? Out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And
the king said to her: What ails you? And she answered: |
28 This woman said to me: Give your son, that we may eat him
29 today, and we will eat my son tomorrow. | So we boiled my
son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day: Give your
30 son that we may eat him. And she has hidden her son. | When
the king heard this, he rent his garments, and passed by upon
the wall. And all the people saw the haircloth which he wore
31 within next to his flesh. | And the king said: May God do so
and so to me, and may he add more, if the head of Eliseus the
son of Saphat shall stand on him this day.
32 But Eliseus sat in his house, and the ancients sat with him.
So he sent a man before; and before that messenger came, he
said to the ancients: Do you know that this son of a murderer
has sent to cut off my head? Look then, when the messenger
shall come, shut the door, and suffer him not to come in: for
33 behold the sound of his master's feet is behind him. | While
he was yet speaking to them, the messenger appeared who was
coming to him. And he said: Behold, so great an evil is from the
Lord. What shall I look for more from the Lord?

7

1 ***Eliseus Prophesies Great Plenty*** And Eliseus said: Hear
the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord: Tomorrow about

6, 25: *Cabe of pigeons' dung:* one scholarly guess of this notoriously difficult expression is, "a pint of sparrow dung." There are many parallels in ancient and modern times of the exhorbitant price of worthless edibles during famines.

6, 31: Eliseus must have advocated resistance.

6, 33: *What shall I look for more from the Lord?:* Why confide in the Lord any more?

this time a bushel of fine flour shall be sold for a stater, and two
2 bushels of barley for a stater, in the gate of Samaria. | Then one of the lords, upon whose hand the king leaned, answering the man of God, said: If the Lord should make flood-gates in heaven, can that possibly be which you say? And he said: You shall see it with your eyes, but shall not eat thereof.
3 Now there were four lepers, at the entering in of the gate; and they said one to another: What mean we to stay here till
4 we die? | If we will enter into the city, we shall die with the famine: and if we will remain here, we must also die. Come, therefore, and let us run over to the camp of the Syrians. If they spare us, we shall live: but if they kill us, we shall but
5 die. | So they arose in the evening, to go to the Syrian camp. And when they had come to the first part of the camp of the
6 Syrians, they found no man there. | For the Lord had made them hear in the camp of Syria the noise of chariots, and of horses, and of a very great army, and they said one to another: Behold the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Bethites, and of the Egyptians, and they have come upon us.
7 | Wherefore they arose, and fled away in the dark, and left their tents, and their horses and asses in the camp, and fled, desiring
8 to save their lives. | So when these lepers arrived at the edge of the camp, they went into one tent, and ate and drank. And they took from thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went, and hid it: and they came again, and went into another tent,
9 and carried from thence in like manner, and hid it. | Then they said one to another: We do not well; for this is a day of good tidings. If we hold our peace, and do not tell it till the morning, we shall be charged with a crime. Come, let us go and tell it in the king's court.
10 So they came to the gate of the city, and told them, saying: We went to the camp of the Syrians, and we found no man
11 there, but horses, and asses, tied, and the tents standing. | Then the guards of the gate went, and told it within the king's palace.
12 | And he arose in the night and said to his servants: I tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we suffer great famine, and therefore they have gone out of the camp, and lie hidden in the fields, saying: When they come out of the city we shall take them alive, and then we may get into the city.
13 | And one of his servants answered: Let us take the five horses that are remaining in the city (because there are no more in the whole multitude of Israel, for the rest are consumed), and let
14 us send and see. | They brought therefore two horses; and the king sent into the camp of the Syrians, saying: Go, and see. |
15 And they went after them as far as the Jordan; and behold all

the way was full of garments, and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their fright. And the messengers returned and told the king.

16 ***The Unbelieving Lord Put to Death*** And the people going out pillaged the camp of the Syrians: and a bushel of fine flour was sold for a stater, and two bushels of barley for a stater,
17 according to the word of the Lord. | And the king appointed that lord on whose hand he leaned, to stand at the gate. And the people trod upon him in the entrance of the gate; and he died, as the man of God had said, when the king came down to him.
18 | And it came to pass according to the word of the man of God, which he spoke to the king, when he said: Two bushels of barley shall be for a stater, and a bushel of fine flour for a stater, at this very time tomorrow in the gate of Samaria. |
19 When that lord answered the man of God, and said: Although the Lord should make flood-gates in heaven, could this come to pass which you say? And he said to him: You shall see with
20 your eyes, and shall not eat thereof. | And so it fell out to him as it was foretold: and the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died.

8

1 ***Hazael Consults Eliseus*** And Eliseus spoke to the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying: Arise and go, you and your household, and sojourn wheresoever you can dwell. For the Lord has called a famine, and it shall come upon the land
2 seven years. | And she arose, and did according to the word of the man of God. And going with her household, she so-
3 journed in the land of the Philistines many days. | And when the seven years were ended, the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines and she went forth to speak to the king
4 for her house, and for her lands. | And the king talked with Giezi, the servant of the man of God, saying: Tell me all the
5 great things that Eliseus has done. | And when he was telling the king how he had raised one dead to life, the woman appeared, whose son he had restored to life, crying to the king for her house, and her lands. And Giezi said: My lord O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Eliseus raised to life.
6 | And the king asked the woman: and she told him. And the king appointed her an eunuch, saying: Restore her all that is hers, and all the revenues of the lands, from the day that she left the land, to this present.

8, 1-6: Reference to 4, 1-37.

7 Eliseus also came to Damascus; and Benadad king of Syria was sick: and they told him, saying: The man of God has come
8 hither. | And the king said to Hazael: Take with you presents, and go to meet the man of God, and consult the Lord by him,
9 saying: Can I recover of this my illness? | And Hazael went to meet him, taking with him presents, and all the good things of Damascus, the burdens of forty camels. And when he stood before him, he said: Your son Benadad the king of Syria has
10 sent me to you, saying: Can I recover of this my illness? | And Eliseus said to him: Go tell him: You shall recover. But the
11 Lord has shown me that he shall surely die. | And he stood with him, and was troubled so far as to blush: and the man of
12 God wept. | And Hazael said to him: Why does my lord weep? And he said: Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel. Their strong cities you will burn with fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword, and you will
13 dash their children, and rip up their pregnant women. | And Hazael said: But what am I your servant a dog that I should do this great thing? And Eliseus said: The Lord has shown me that
14 you shall be king of Syria. | And when he had departed from Eliseus, he came to his master, who said to him: What said Eliseus to you? And he answered: He told me: You shall re-
15 cover. | And on the next day he took a blanket, and poured water on it, and spread it upon his face. And he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

16 ***The Revolt of Edom*** In the fifth year of Joram son of Achab king of Israel, and of Josaphat king of Juda, reigned
17 Joram son of Josaphat king of Juda. | He was two and thirty years old when he began to reign: and he reigned eight years in
18 Jerusalem. | And he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Achab had walked (for the daughter of Achab was his wife): and he did that which was evil in the sight of
19 the Lord. | But the Lord would not destroy Juda, for David his servant's sake: as he had promised him, to give him a light, and
20 to his children always. | In his days Edom revolted, from being
21 under Juda, and made themselves a king. | And Joram came to Seira, and all the chariots with him: and he arose in the night, and defeated the Edomites that had surrounded him, and the captains of the chariots, but the people fled into their tents. |
22 So Edom revolted from being under Juda, unto this day. Then
23 Lobna also revolted at the same time. | But the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book
24 of the words of the days of the kings of Juda? | And Joram

slept with his fathers, and was buried with them in the city of David: and Ochozias his son reigned in his stead.

25 ***The Reign of Ochozias*** In the twelfth year of Joram son of Achab king of Israel, reigned Ochozias son of Joram king of
26 Juda. | Ochozias was two and twenty years old when he began to reign: and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. The name of his
27 mother was Athalia the daughter of Amri king of Israel. | And he walked in the ways of the house of Achab: and he did evil before the Lord, as did the house of Achab; for he was the son
28 in-law of the house of Achab. | He went also with Joram son of Achab, to fight against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth
29 Galaad: and the Syrians wounded Joram. | And he went back to be healed, in Jezrahel: because the Syrians had wounded him in Ramoth when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ochozias the son of Joram king of Juda, went down to visit Joram the son of Achab in Jezrahel: because he was sick there

9

1 ***Jehu Anointed King of Israel*** And Eliseus the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him: Gird up your loins, and take this little bottle of oil in your hand, and go
2 to Ramoth Galaad. | And when you have come there, you shall see Jehu the son of Josaphat the son of Namsi. And going in you shall make him rise up from among his brethren, and
3 carry him into an inner chamber. | Then taking the little bottle of oil, you shall pour it on his head, and shall say: Thus says the Lord: I have anointed you king over Israel. And you shall
4 open the door and flee, and shall not stay there. | So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went away to Ramoth Galaad
5 | and went in there: and behold the captains of the army were sitting, and he said: I have a word to you, O prince. And Jehu said: Unto whom of us all? And he said: To you, O prince.
6 And he arose, and went into the chamber. And he poured the oil upon his head, and said: Thus says the Lord God of Israel I have anointed you king over Israel, the people of the Lord.
7 And you shall cut off the house of Achab your master: and I will revenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezabel;
8 and I will destroy all the house of Achab, and I will cut off from Achab every male descendant, and him that is shut up, and

9, 1ff.: God inspires Eliseus to have the popular general, Jehu, anointed king.

9, 8: *And him that is shut up . . . Israel:* the slave and the freeman.

9 the meanest in Israel. | And I will make the house of Achab
like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, and like the house
10 of Baasa the son of Ahias. | And the dogs shall eat Jezabel in
the field of Jezrahel: and there shall be no one to bury her. And
he opened the door and fled.
11 Then Jehu went forth to the servants of his lord. And they
said to him: Are all things well? Why came this mad man to
you? And he said to them: You know the man, and what he
12 said. | But they answered: It is false; but rather do you tell
us. And he said to them: Thus and thus did he speak to me.
And he said: Thus says the Lord: I have anointed you king
13 over Israel. | Then they made haste and taking every man his
garment laid it under his feet, after the manner of a judgment
seat. And they sounded the trumpet, and said: Jehu is king.
14 So Jehu the son of Josaphat the son of Namsi conspired
against Joram. Now Joram had besieged Ramoth Galaad, he
15 and all Israel, fighting with Hazael king of Syria: | and had
returned to be healed in Jezrahel of his wounds, for the Syrians
had wounded him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.
And Jehu said: If it please you, let no man go forth or flee out
16 of the city, lest he go, and tell in Jezrahel. | And he got up,
and went into Jezrahel: for Joram was sick there, and Ochozias
17 king of Juda had come down to visit Joram. | The watchmen
therefore, that stood upon the tower of Jezrahel, saw the troop
of Jehu coming, and said: I see a troop. And Joram said: Take a
chariot, and send to meet them, and let him that goes say: Is all
18 well? | So there went one in a chariot to meet him, and said:
Thus says the king: Are all things peaceable? And Jehu said:
What have you to do with peace? Go behind and follow me.
And the watchman told, saying: The messenger came to them;
19 but he returns not. | And he sent a second chariot of horses.
And he came to them, and said: Thus says the king: Is there
peace? And Jehu said: What have you to do with peace? Pass,
20 and follow me. | And the watchman told, saying: He came
even to them, but returns not. And the driving is like the driving
21 of Jehu the son of Namsi, for he drives furiously. | And Joram
said: Make ready the chariot. And they made ready his chariot.
And Joram king of Israel, and Ochozias king of Juda went out,
each in his own chariot, and they went out to meet Jehu, and
22 met him in the field of Naboth the Jezrahelite. | And when
Joram saw Jehu, he said: Is there peace, Jehu? And he an-
swered: What peace can there be, so long as the fornications of
Jezabel your mother, and her many sorceries are in their vigor?
23 And Joram turned his hand, and fleeing said to Ochozias:
There is treachery, Ochozias.

24 ***Jehu Kills Joram and Ochozias*** But Jehu bent his bow with his hand, and shot Joram between the shoulders. And the arrow went out through his heart: and immediately he fell in
25 his chariot. | And Jehu said to Badacer his captain: Take him, and cast him into the field of Naboth the Jezrahelite: for I remember when I and you sitting in a chariot followed Achab this man's father, that the Lord laid this burden upon him,
26 saying: | If I do not requite you in this field, says the Lord, for the blood of Naboth, and for the blood of his children, which I saw yesterday, says the Lord. So now take him, and cast him into the field, according to the word of the Lord.
27 But Ochozias king of Juda seeing this, fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu pursued him, and said: Strike him also in his chariot. And they struck him in the going up to Gaver, which is by Jeblaam. And he fled into Mageddo, and
28 died there. | And his servants laid him upon his chariot, and carried him to Jerusalem: and they buried him in his sepulcher
29 with his fathers in the city of David. | In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Achab, Ochozias reigned over Juda.

30 ***Death of Jezabel*** And Jehu came into Jezrahel; but Jezabel hearing of his coming in, painted her face with stibic stone, and
31 adorned her head, and looked out of a window | at Jehu coming in at the gate, and said: Can there be peace for Zambri, that
32 has killed his master? | And Jehu lifted up his face to the window, and said: Who is this? And two or three eunuchs bowed
33 down to him. | And he said to them: Throw her down headlong. And they threw her down, and the wall was sprinkled with her blood, and the hoofs of the horses trod upon her. |
34 And when he had come in, to eat, and to drink, he said: Go, and see after that cursed woman, and bury her: because she is a
35 king's daughter. | And when they went to bury her, they found nothing but the skull, and the feet, and the extremities of her
36 hands. | And coming back they told him. And Jehu said: It is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Elias the

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9, 24-26: Jehu fulfills substantially the prophecy (3 Kgs 21, 19-29) which was transferred to Joram, son of Achab, who, with the aid of his wife Jezabel, murdered Naboth.

9, 30: Jezabel's attitude has been compared to "Show me, my women, like a queen; go fetch my best attires" *(Anthony and Cleopatra,* V, 2).

9, 31: Jezabel mockingly compares Jehu to Captain Zambri (or "Zimri") who took the throne through regicide (3 Kgs 16, 9ff). See John Dryden's *Satire on Zimri.*

9, 34: Jezabel was the daughter of the king of Tyre.

9, 36: See the substantial fulfillment of Elias' prophecy in 3 Kgs 21, 23.

Thesbite, saying: In the field of Jezrahel the dogs shall eat the
37 flesh of Jezabel, | and the flesh of Jezabel shall be as dung upon
the face of the earth in the field of Jezrahel, so that they who
pass by shall say: Is this that same Jezabel?

10

1 ***Jehu Destroys the House of Achab*** And Achab had seventy sons in Samaria; so Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria,
to the chief men of the city, and to the ancients, and to them
2 that brought up Achab's children, saying: | As soon as you receive these letters, you that have your master's sons, and char-
3 iots, and horses, and fenced cities, and armor, | choose the best,
and him that shall please you most of your master's sons, and
set him on his father's throne, and fight for the house of your
master.
4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said: Behold two kings
could not stand before him, and how shall we be able to resist?
5 | Therefore the overseers of the house, and the rulers of the
city, and the ancients, and the tutors sent to Jehu, saying: We
are your servants, whatsoever you shall command us we will
do; neither will we make us a king: do you all that pleases you.
6 | And he wrote letters the second time to them, saying: If you
be mine and will obey me, take the heads of the sons of your
master, and come to me to Jezrahel by tomorrow this time. Now
the king's sons, being seventy men, were brought up with the
7 chief men of the city. | And when the letters came to them,
they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put
8 their heads in baskets, and sent them to him to Jezrahel. | And
a messenger came, and told him, saying: They have brought the
heads of the king's sons. And he said: Lay them in two heaps
9 by the entering in of the gate until the morning. | And when it
was light, he went out, and standing said to all the people: You
are just: if I conspired against my master, and slew him, who
10 has slain all these? | See therefore now that there has not fallen
to the ground any of the words of the Lord, which the Lord
spoke concerning the house of Achab, and the Lord has done
11 that which he spoke in the hand of his servant Elias. | So Jehu
slew all that were left of the house of Achab in Jezrahel, and all
his chief men, and his friends, and his priests, till there were no
remains left of him.

12 ***Jehu Abolishes the Worship of Baal*** And he arose, and
went to Samaria. And when he came to the shepherds' cabin
13 in the way, | he met with the brethren of Ochozias king of
Juda, and he said to them: Who are you? And they answered:

We are the brethren of Ochozias, and have come down to salute
14 the sons of the king, and the sons of the queen. | And he said:
Take them alive. And they took them alive, and killed them at
the pit by the cabin, two and forty men, and he left not any of
15 them. And when he departed from there, he found Jonadab
the son of Rechab coming to meet him, and he blessed him.
And he said to him: Is your heart right as my heart *is* with your
heart? And Jonadab said: It is. If it be, said he, give me your
hand. He gave him his hand. And he lifted him up to him into
16 the chariot, | and he said to him: Come with me, and see my
17 zeal for the Lord. So he made him ride in his chariot, | and
brought him into Samaria. And he slew all that were left of
Achab in Samaria, to a man, according to the word of the Lord,
which he spoke by Elias.

18 And Jehu gathered together all the people, and said to them:
Achab worshiped Baal a little; but I will worship him more. |
19 Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, and all his
servants, and all his priests: let none be wanting, for I have a
great sacrifice to offer to Baal. Whosoever shall be wanting shall
not live. Now Jehu did this craftily, that he might destroy the
20 worshipers of Baal. | And he said: Proclaim a festival for Baal.
21 And he called, | and he sent into all the borders of Israel, and
all the servants of Baal came: there was not one left that did not
come. And they went into the temple of Baal: and the house of
22 Baal was filled, from one end to the other. | And he said to
them that were over the wardrobe: Bring forth garments for all
the servants of Baal. And they brought them forth garments. |
23 And Jehu and Jonadab the son of Rechab went to the temple of
Baal, and said to the worshipers of Baal: Search, and see that
there be not any with you of the servants of the Lord, but that
24 there be the servants of Baal only. | And they went in to offer
sacrifices and burnt offerings. But Jehu had prepared fourscore
men without, and said to them: If any of the men escape, whom
I have brought into your hands, he that lets him go shall answer
25 life for life. | And it came to pass, when the burnt offering was
ended, that Jehu commanded his soldiers and captains, saying:
Go in, and kill them. Let none escape. And the soldiers and
captains slew them with the edge of the sword, and cast them
26 out. And they went into the city of the temple of Baal, | and
27 brought the statue out of Baal's temple, and burned it, | and
broke it in pieces. They destroyed also the temple of Baal, and
made a jakes in its place unto this day.

28.29 So Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel: | But yet he departed
not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made
Israel to sin, nor did he forsake the golden calves that were in

30 Bethel and Dan. | And the Lord said to Jehu: Because you have diligently executed that which was right and pleasing in my eyes, and have done to the house of Achab according to all that was in my heart, your children shall sit upon the throne of
31 Israel to the fourth generation. | But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord the God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel to sin.
32 In those days the Lord began to be weary of Israel: and
33 Hazael ravaged them in all the coasts of Israel. | From the Jordan eastward, all the land of Galaad, and Gad, and Ruben, and Manasses, from Aroer, which is upon the torrent Arnon,
34 and Galaad, and Basan. | But the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and his strength, are they not written in the
35 book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel? | And Jehu slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria: and
36 Joachaz his son reigned in his stead. | And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel, in Samaria, was eight and twenty years.

11

1 ***Athalia's Usurpation and Tyranny*** And Athalia, the mother of Ochozias, seeing that her son was dead, arose, and
2 slew all the royal seed. | But Josaba the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ochozias, took Joas the son of Ochozias: and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, out of the bedchamber with his nurse: and hid him from the face of Athalia,
3 so that he was not slain. | And he was with her six years, hidden in the house of the Lord, and Athalia reigned over the land. |
4 And in the seventh year Joiada sent, and taking the centurions and the soldiers, brought them in to him into the temple of the Lord, and made a covenant with them. And taking an oath of them in the house of the Lord, he showed them the king's son. |
5 And he commanded them, saying: This is the thing that you
6 must do: | Let a third part of you go in on the sabbath, and keep the watch of the king's house. And let a third part be at the gate of Sur. And let a third part be at the gate behind the dwelling of the shieldbearers: and you all shall keep the watch
7 of the house of Messa. | But let two parts of you, all that go forth on the sabbath, keep the watch of the house of the Lord
8 about the king. | And you shall compass him round about, having weapons in your hands. And if any man shall enter the

11, 1: Athalia was the daughter of Jezabel. See 3 Kgs 2, 19 n. Racine's *Athalie* borrows only the essential facts from ch. 11 and 2 Par 23, its parallel passage.

precinct of the temple, let him be slain: and you shall be with the king, coming in and going out.
9 And the centurions did according to all things that Joiada the priest had commanded them: and taking every one their men, that went in on the sabbath, with them that went out on
10 the sabbath, came to Joiada the priest. | And he gave them the spears, and the arms of king David, which were in the house of
11 the Lord. | And they stood, having every one their weapons in their hands, from the right side of the temple unto the left side of the altar, and of the temple, about the king.

12 ***Joas Is Made King*** And he brought forth the king's son, and put the diadem upon him, and the testimony: and they made him king, and anointed him. And clapping their hands,
13 they said: God save the king. | And Athalia heard the noise of the people running: and going in to the people into the temple
14 of the Lord, | she saw the king standing upon a tribunal, as the manner was, and the singers, and the trumpets near him, and all the people of the land rejoicing, and sounding the trumpets: and she rent her garments, and cried: A conspiracy, a con-
15 spiracy. | But Joiada commanded the centurions that were over the army, and said to them: Have her forth without the precinct of the temple, and whosoever shall follow her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest had said: Let her not be
16 slain in the temple of the Lord. | And they laid hands on her, and thrust her out by the way by which the horses go in, by the palace, and she was slain there.
17 And Joiada made a covenant between the Lord, and the king, and the people, that they should be the people of the Lord, and
18 between the king and the people. | And all the people of the land went into the temple of Baal, and broke down his altars, and his images they broke in pieces thoroughly. They slew also Mathan the priest of Baal before the altar. And the priest set
19 guards in the house of the Lord. | And he took the centurions, and the bands of the Cerethi and the Phelethi, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king from the house of the Lord: and they came by the way of the gate of the shieldbearers
20 into the palace, and he sat on the throne of the kings. | And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet: but
21 Athalia was slain with the sword in the king's house. | Now Joas was seven years old, when he began to reign.

12

1 ***The Temple Is Repaired under Joas' Reign*** In the seventh year of Jehu, Joas began to reign: and he reigned forty

years in Jerusalem. The name of his mother was Sebia of
2 Bersabee. | And Joas did that which was right before the Lord
3 all the days that Joiada the priest taught him. | But yet he took not away the high places: for the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places.

4 And Joas said to the priests: All the money of the sanctified things, which is brought into the temple of the Lord by those that pass, which is offered for the price of a soul, and which of their own accord, and of their own free heart they bring into
5 the temple of the Lord: | let the priests take it according to their order, and repair the house, wheresoever they shall see any
6 thing that needs repairing. | Now till the three and twentieth year of king Joas, the priests did not make the repairs of the
7 temple. | And king Joas called Joiada the high priest and the priests, saying to them: Why do you not repair the temple? Take you therefore money no more according to your order; but
8 restore it for the repairing of the temple. | And the priests were forbidden to take any more money of the people, and to make
9 the repairs of the house. | And Joiada the high priest took a chest and bored a hole in the top, and set it by the altar at the right hand of them that came into the house of the Lord: and the priests that kept the doors put therein all the money that was brought to the temple of the Lord.

10 And when they saw that there was very much money in the chest, the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and poured it out, and counted the money that was found in the house of
11 the Lord. | And they gave it out by number and measure into the hands of them that were over the builders of the house of the Lord. And they laid it out to the carpenters and the
12 masons that wrought in the house of the Lord, | and made the repairs: and to them that cut stones, and to buy timber, and stones, to be hewed, that the repairs of the house of the Lord might be completely finished, and wheresoever there was need
13 of expenses to uphold the house. | But there were not made of the same money for the temple of the Lord, bowls, or flesh-hooks, or censers, or trumpets, or any vessel of gold and silver,
14 of the money that was brought into the temple of the Lord. | For it was given to them that did the work, that the temple of the
15 Lord might be repaired. | And they reckoned not with the men that received the money to distribute it to the workmen: but
16 they bestowed it faithfully. | But the money for trespass, and the money for sins, they brought not into the temple of the Lord, because it was for the priests.

17 *Joas Prevents an Attack on Jerusalem* Then Hazael, king

of Syria went up and fought against Geth, and took it and set
18 his face to go up to Jerusalem. | Wherefore Joas king of Juda took all the sanctified things, which Josaphat, and Joram, and Ochozias, his fathers the kings of Juda had dedicated to holy uses, and which he himself had offered: and all the silver that could be found in the treasures of the temple of the Lord, and in the king's palace: and sent it to Hazael king of Syria. And he went off from Jerusalem.

19 ***Joas Slain by His Servants*** And the rest of the acts of Joas, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of
20 the words of the days of the kings of Juda? | And his servants arose, and conspired among themselves, and slew Joas, in the
21 house of Mello in the descent of Sella. | For Josachar the son of Semaath, and Jozabad the son of Somer his servant struck him; and he died. And they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Amasias his son reigned in his stead.

13

1 ***The Reign of Joachaz*** In the three and twentieth year of Joas son of Ochozias king of Juda, Joachaz the son of Jehu
2 reigned over Israel in Samaria, seventeen years. | And he did evil before the Lord, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel to sin: and he departed not
3 from them. | And the wrath of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael the king of Syria, and into the hand of Benadad the son of Hazael, all
4 days. | But Joachaz besought the face of the Lord; and the Lord heard him, for he saw the distress of Israel, because the
5 king of Syria had oppressed them. And the Lord gave Israel a savior: and they were delivered out of the hand of the king of Syria. And the children of Israel dwelt in their pavilions as
6 yesterday and the day before. | But yet they departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, but walked in
7 them: and there still remained a grove also in Samaria. | And Joachaz had no more left of the people than fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen: for the king of Syria had slain them, and had brought them low as dust by
8 thrashing in the barnfloor. | But the rest of the acts of Joachaz, and all that he did, and his valor, are they not written in the
9 book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel? | And Joachaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria: and Joas his son reigned in his stead.

10 In the seven and thirtieth year of Joas king of Juda, Joas the

son of Joachaz reigned over Israel in Samaria sixteen years. |
11 And he did that which is evil in the sight of the Lord. He
departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat,
12 who made Israel to sin, but he walked in them. | But the rest
of the acts of Joas, and all that he did, and his valor wherewith
he fought against Amasias king of Juda, are they not written in
13 the book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel? | And
Joas slept with his fathers: and Jeroboam sat upon his throne.
But Joas was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

14 *Eliseus Dies* Now Eliseus was sick of the illness whereof he
died. And Joas king of Israel went down to him, and wept be-
fore him, and said: O my father, my father, the chariot of
15 Israel and the guider thereof. | And Eliseus said to him: Bring
a bow and arrows. And when he had brought him a bow, and
16 arrows, | he said to the king of Israel: Put your hand upon the
bow. And when he had put his hand, Eliseus put his hands over
17 the king's hands, | and said: Open the window to the east.
And when he had opened it, Eliseus said: Shoot an arrow. And
he shot. And Eliseus said: The arrow of the Lord's deliverance,
and the arrow of the deliverance from Syria. And you shall
18 strike the Syrians in Aphec, till you consume them. | And he
said: Take the arrows. And when he had taken them, he said to
him: Strike with an arrow upon the ground. And he struck
19 three times and stood still. | And the man of God was angry
with him, and said: If you had smitten five or six or seven times,
you would have smitten Syria even to utter destruction; but
20 now three times shall you smite it. | And Eliseus died, and they
buried him. And the rovers from Moab came into the land the
21 same year. | And some that were burying a man, saw the rovers,
and cast the body into the sepulcher of Eliseus. And when it had
touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life, and stood
upon his feet.
22 Now Hazael king of Syria afflicted Israel all the days of

13, 14: *Chariot of Israel and the guider thereof:* see its explanation in 2, 12 n.

13, 16: *Eliseus put his hands over the king's hands:* to transfer his spirit.

13, 19: Since he merely struck three times, only a small amount of his spirit was transferred to the king.

13, 21: The graves were ordinarily scooped out of the side of hills and a stone rolled over the entrance. A dead body happened to be hurriedly thrown in the grave of Eliseus. The story has some connection with the primitive belief that dead bones retain for a while the supernatural power which the dead person had when alive. This may serve as a biblical foundation for the veneration of the relics of the saints.

23 Joachaz. | And the Lord had mercy on them, and returned to them because of his covenant, which he had made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And he would not destroy them, nor
24 utterly cast them away, unto this present time. | And Hazael king of Syria died, and Benadad his son reigned in his stead. |
25 Now Joas the son of Joachaz, took the cities out of the hand of Benadad, the son of Hazael, which he had taken out of the hand of Joachaz his father by war. Three times did Joas beat him, and he restored the cities to Israel.

14

1 ***Amasias Reigns in Juda*** In the second year of Joas son of Joachaz, king of Israel, reigned Amasias son of Joas king of
2 Juda. | He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign: and nine and twenty years he reigned in Jerusalem. The
3 name of his mother was Joadan of Jerusalem. | And he did that which was right before the Lord, but yet not like David his father. He did according to all things that Joas his father did. |
4 But this only, that he took not away the high places: for yet the people sacrificed and burned incense in the high places. |
5 And when he had possession of the kingdom, he put his serv-
6 ants to death that had slain the king his father. | But the children of the murderers he did not put to death, according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying: The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for
7 the fathers: but every man shall die for his own sins. | He slew of Edom in the valley of the Saltpits ten thousand men, and took the rock by war, and called the name thereof Jectehel, unto this day.

8 Then Amasias sent messengers to Joas son of Joachaz, son of Jehu king of Israel, saying: Come let us see one another. |
9 And Joas king of Israel sent again to Amasias king of Juda, saying: A thistle of Libanus sent to a cedar tree, which is in Libanus, saying: Give your daughter to my son to wife. And the beasts of the forest, that are in Libanus, passed and trod down
10 the thistle. | You have beaten and prevailed over Edom, and your heart has lifted you up: be content with the glory, and sit at home. Why do you provoke evil, that you should fall, and
11 Juda with you? | But Amasias did not rest satisfied. So Joas

14, 8-14: Amasias of Juda is so elated about his victory over Edom that he challenges Joachaz of Israel (v. 8). The latter answers in a fable bristling with tranquil haughtiness. Amasias is the weak and pretentious thistle; Joachaz is the fearless cedar (v. 9) who defeats Amasias (vv. 10-14). The only other fable in the Bible is Jgs 9, 8-15.

king of Israel went up; and he and Amasias king of Juda saw one another in Bethsames a town in Juda.

12 ***Amasias Is Defeated*** And Juda was put to the worst be-
13 fore Israel: and they fled every man to their dwellings. | But Joas king of Israel took Amasias, king of Juda, the son of Joas, the son of Ochozias, in Bethsames; and brought him into Jerusalem. And he broke down the wall of Jerusalem, from the gate of Ephraim to the gate of the corner, four hundred
14 cubits. | And he took all the gold, and silver, and all the vessels, that were found in the house of the Lord, and in the king's treasures, and hostages: and returned to Samaria.

15 But the rest of the acts of Joas, which he did, and his valor, wherewith he fought against Amasias king of Juda, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings
16 of Israel? | And Joas slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria, with the kings of Israel. And Jeroboam his son reigned
17 in his stead. | And Amasias the son of Joas king of Juda lived, after the death of Joas son of Joachaz king of Israel fifteen
18 years. | And the rest of the acts of Amasias, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Juda? |
19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachis. And they sent after him to Lachis; and killed him
20 there. | And they brought him away upon horses: and he was buried in Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. |
21 And all the people of Juda took Azarias, who was sixteen years
22 old, and made him king instead of his father Amasias. | He built Elath, and restored it to Juda, after that the king slept with his fathers.

23 ***Reign of the Second Jeroboam*** In the fifteenth year of Amasias son of Joas king of Juda, reigned Jeroboam the son of
24 Joas king of Israel in Samaria, one and forty years. | And he did that which was evil before the Lord. He departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel to sin. |
25 He restored the borders of Israel from the entrance of Emath, unto the sea of the wilderness, according to the word of the Lord the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant Jonas the son of Amathi, the prophet, who was of Geth, which is in
26 Opher. | For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel that it was exceeding bitter, and that they were consumed even to them that were shut up in prison, and the lowest persons, and that

14, 23-29: Jeroboam II was one of Israel's greatest kings whose kingdom rivaled Solomon's in its northern and eastern extensions.

27 there was no one to help Israel. | And the Lord did not say that
he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but
28 he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joas. | But
the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and
his valor, wherewith he fought, and how he restored Damascus,
and Emath to Juda in Israel, are they not written in the book
29 of the words of the days of the kings of Israel? | And Jeroboam
slept with his fathers the kings of Israel, and Zacharias his son
reigned in his stead.

15

1 ***Azarias and Joatham Kings of Juda*** In the seven and
twentieth year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, reigned Azarias son
2 of Amasias, king of Juda. | He was sixteen years old when he
began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem.
3 The name of his mother was Jechelia of Jerusalem. | And he
did that which was pleasing before the Lord, according to all
4 that his father Amasias had done. | But the high places he did
not destroy: for the people sacrificed and burned incense in the
5 high places. | And the Lord struck the king, so that he was a
leper unto the day of his death, and he dwelt in a free house
apart: but Joatham the king's son governed the palace, and
6 judged the people of the land. | And the rest of the acts of
Azarias, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of
7 the words of the days of the kings of Juda? | And Azarias slept
with his fathers: and they buried him with his ancestors in the
city of David. And Joatham his son reigned in his stead.

8 ***Zacharias Reigns in Israel*** In the eight and thirtieth year
of Azarias king of Juda, reigned Zacharias son of Jeroboam
9 over Israel in Samaria six months. | And he did that which is
evil before the Lord, as his fathers had done: he departed not
from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel
10 to sin. | And Sellum the son of Jabes conspired against him;
and struck him publicly; and killed him; and reigned in his
11 place. | Now the rest of the acts of Zacharias, are they not
written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of
12 Israel? | This was the word of the Lord, which he spoke to
Jehu, saying: Your children to the fourth generation shall sit
upon the throne of Israel. And so it came to pass.

13 ***Sellum Succeeds Zacharias*** Sellum the son of Jabes began

15, 5: According to 2 Par 26, 16-21, he was struck with real leprosy while offering sacrifice.

to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Azarias king of Juda:
14 and reigned one month in Samaria. | And Manahem the son of
Gadi went up from Thersa. And he came into Samaria; and
struck Sellum the son of Jabes in Samaria; and slew him; and
15 reigned in his stead. | And the rest of the acts of Sellum, and
his conspiracy, which he made, are they not written in the book
16 of the words of the days of the kings of Israel? | Then Mana-
hem destroyed Thapsa and all that were in it, and the borders
thereof from Thersa, because they would not open to him. And
he slew all the women thereof that were with child, and ripped
them up.

17 ***Manahem, Phaceia and Phacee*** In the nine and thirtieth
year of Azarias king of Juda, reigned Manahem son of Gadi
18 over Israel ten years in Samaria. | And he did that which was
evil before the Lord: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam
19 the son of Nabat, who made Israel to sin, all his days. | And
Phul king of the Assyrians came into the land: and Manahem
gave Phul a thousand talents of silver, to aid him and to
20 establish him in the kingdom. | And Manahem laid a tax upon
Israel, on all that were mighty and rich, to give the king of the
Assyrians, each man fifty sicles of silver. So the king of the
21 Assyrians turned back, and did not stay in the land. | And the
rest of the acts of Manahem, and all that he did, are they not
written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of
22 Israel? | And Manahem slept with his fathers: and Phaceia his
son reigned in his stead.
23 In the fiftieth year of Azarias king of Juda reigned Phaceia
24 the son of Manahem over Israel in Samaria two years. | And
he did that which was evil before the Lord: he departed not
from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel
25 to sin. | And Phacee the son of Romelia, his captain, conspired
against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the tower of the
king's house, near Argob, and near Arie: and with him fifty
men of the sons of the Galaaditæ, and he slew him and reigned
26 in his stead. | And the rest of the acts of Phaceia, and all that
he did, are they not written in the book of the words of the days
of the kings of Israel?
27 In the two and fiftieth year of Azarias king of Juda reigned
Phacee the son of Romelia over Israel in Samaria twenty years. |
28 And he did that which was evil before the Lord: he departed not

15, 19-22: *Phul:* or Pul, the personal name of the Assyrian monarch Tiglath Pileser III (his throne name), made the northern kingdom of Israel pay tribute.

from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel
29 to sin. | In the days of Phacee king of Israel came Theglath-
phalasar king of Assyria, and took Aion, and Abel Domum
Maacha, and Janoe, and Cedes, and Asor, and Galaad, and
Galilee, and all the land of Nephtali: and carried them captives
30 into Assyria. | Now Osee son of Ela conspired, and formed a
plot against Phacee the son of Romelia; and struck him; and
slew him; and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of
31 Joatham the son of Ozias. | But the rest of the acts of Phacee
and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the words
of the days of the kings of Israel?

32 ***Reign of Joatham*** In the second year of Phacee the son of
Romelia king of Israel reigned Joatham son of Ozias king of
33 Juda. | He was five and twenty years old when he began to
reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. The name of
34 his mother was Jerusa, the daughter of Sadoc. | And he did
that which was right before the Lord: according to all that
35 his father Ozias had done, so did he. | But the high places he
took not away: the people still sacrificed and burned incense
in the high places. He built the highest gate of the house of the
36 Lord. | But the rest of the acts of Joatham, and all that he did,
are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the
37 kings of Juda? | In those days, the Lord began to send into
Juda Rasin king of Syria and Phacee the son of Romelia. |
38 And Joatham slept with his fathers, and was buried with
them in the city of David his father: and Achaz his son reigned
in his stead.

16

1 ***Achaz' Wicked Reign*** In the seventeenth year of Phacee
the son of Romelia, reigned Achaz the son of Joatham king of
2 Juda. | Achaz was twenty years old when he began to reign,
and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not that which
was pleasing in the sight of the Lord his God, as David his
3 father. | But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel. More-
over he consecrated also his son, making him pass through the
fire according to the idols of the nations: which the Lord de-
4 stroyed before the children of Israel. | He sacrificed also and

15, 29: *Theglathphalasar:* the inscription of Tiglath Pileser III fills in much of the background history of chs. 15—16.

15, 35: Joatham, known as a great builder (2 Par 27, 4), constructed the third entrance to the temple.

16, 3: According to the parallel passage, 2 Par 28, 3, king Achaz resorted to the pagan practice of sacrificing his first-born son.

burned incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 Then Rasin king of Syria, and Phacee son of Romelia king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to fight. And they besieged
6 Achaz; but were not able to overcome him. | At that time Rasin king of Syria restored Aila to Syria, and drove the men of Juda out of Aila: and the Edomites came into Aila, and dwelt there
7 unto this day. | And Achaz sent messengers to Theglathphalasar king of the Assyrians, saying: I am your servant, and your son. Come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who are risen up together
8 against me. | And when he had gathered together the silver and gold that could be found in the house of the Lord, and in the king's treasures, he sent it for a present to the king of the
9 Assyrians. | And he agreed to his desire: for the king of the Assyrians went up against Damascus, and laid it waste. And he carried away the inhabitants thereof to Cyrene: but Rasin he slew.

10 ***Achaz Sacrifices on a New Altar*** And king Achaz went to Damascus to meet Theglathphalasar king of the Assyrians. And when he had seen the altar of Damascus, king Achaz sent to Urias the priest a pattern of it, and its likeness according to
11 all the work thereof. | And Urias the priest built an altar according to all that king Achaz had commanded from Damascus. So did Urias the priest, until king Achaz came from
12 Damascus. | And when the king came from Damascus, he saw the altar and worshiped it: and went up and offered holocausts,
13 and his own sacrifice. | And offered libations, and poured the blood of the peace offerings, which he had offered upon the
14 altar. | But the altar of brass that was before the Lord, he removed from the face of the temple, and from the place of the altar, and from the place of the temple of the Lord: and he
15 set it at the side of the altar toward the north. | And king Achaz commanded Urias the priest, saying: Upon the great altar offer the morning holocaust, and the evening sacrifice, and the king's holocaust, and his sacrifice, and the holocaust of the whole people of the land, and their sacrifices, and their libations. And all the blood of the holocaust, and all the blood of the victim you shall pour out upon it: but the altar of brass
16 shall be ready at my pleasure. | So Urias the priest did according to all that king Achaz had commanded him.

16, 10: *The altar of Damascus:* scholars generally believe that it was an Assyrian altar. See 2 Par 28, 23.

17 And king Achaz took away the graven bases, and the laver
that was upon them: and he took down the sea from the brazen
oxen that held it up, and put it upon a pavement of stone. |
18 The Musach also for the sabbath, which he had built in the
temple: and the king's entry from without he turned into the
temple of the Lord, because of the king of the Assyrians.
19 Now the rest of the acts of Achaz, which he did, are they not
written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of
20 Juda? | And Achaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with
them in the city of David. And Ezechias his son reigned in his
stead.

17

1 ***The Reign of Osee*** In the twelfth year of Achaz king of
Juda, Osee the son of Ela reigned in Samaria over Israel nine
2 years. | And he did evil before the Lord: but not as the kings
3 of Israel that had been before him. | Against him came up
Salmanasar king of the Assyrians: and Osee became his servant,
4 and paid him tribute. | And when the king of the Assyrians
found that Osee endeavoring to rebel had sent messengers to
Sua the king of Egypt, that he might not pay tribute to the king
of the Assyrians, as he had done every year, he besieged him,
5 bound him, and cast him into prison. | And he went through
all the land: and going up to Samaria, he besieged it three years.

6 ***Israel Is Taken Captive*** And in the ninth year of Osee,
the king of the Assyrians took Samaria, and carried Israel away
to Assyria. And he placed them in Hala and Habor by the river
7 of Gozan, in the cities of the Medes. | For so it was that the
children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who
brought them out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of
Pharao king of Egypt, and they worshiped strange gods. |
8 And they walked according to the way of the nations which the
Lord had destroyed in the sight of the children of Israel and

16, 18: *The Musach:* a disputed word.

17, 6: Shalmaneser IV died before the fall of Samaria. His successor, Sargon II, writes: "Samaria I besieged and took. . . . Twenty-seven thousand I carried away. . . . People from lands which I had taken I settled there. . . ."

About one out of every twenty were transplanted to northern Mesopotamia and Media. The ten tribes of the northern kingdom vanished from history.

17, 7-23: The Deuteronomic editor attributed the fall to the "sin of Jeroboam," which was against one God and His one sanctuary, Jerusalem. This sin haunted his whole account of the kingdom of Israel.

of the kings of Israel because they had done in like manner. |
9 And the children of Israel offended the Lord their God with
things that were not right: and built them high places in all
their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. |
10 And they made them statues and groves on every high hill, and
11 under every shady tree. | And they burned incense there upon
altars after the manner of the nations which the Lord had re-
moved from their face: and they did wicked things, provoking
12 the Lord. | And they worshiped abominations concerning which
the Lord had commanded them that they should not do this
thing.
13 And the Lord testified to them in Israel and in Juda by the
hand of all the prophets and seers, saying: Return from your
wicked ways, and keep my precepts, and ceremonies, according
to all the law which I commanded your fathers; and as I have
14 sent to you in the hand of my servants the prophets. | And they
hearkened not, but hardened their necks like to the neck of their
15 fathers who would not obey the Lord their God. | And they
rejected his ordinances and the covenant that he made with
their fathers, and the testimonies which he testified against them:
and they followed vanities, and acted vainly: and they followed
the nations that were round about them, concerning which the
Lord had commanded them that they should not do as they did.
16 And they forsook all the precepts of the Lord their God: and
they made to themselves two molten calves, and groves, and
17 adored all the host of heaven: and they served Baal. | And
they consecrated their sons and their daughters through fire.
And they gave themselves to divinations, and soothsayers. And
they delivered themselves up to do evil before the Lord, to
18 provoke him. | And the Lord was very angry with Israel, and
removed them from his sight: and there remained only the
19 tribe of Juda. | But neither did Juda itself keep the com-
mandments of the Lord their God: but they walked in the
20 errors of Israel, which they had wrought. | And the Lord cast
off all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them
into the hand of spoilers, till he cast them away from his face: |
21 even from that time when Israel was rent from the house of
David, and made Jeroboam son of Nabat their king. For Jero-
boam separated Israel from the Lord, and made them commit
22 a great sin. | And the children of Israel walked in all the sins
of Jeroboam, which he had done. And they departed not from
23 them. | Till the Lord removed Israel from his face, as he had
spoken in the hand of all his servants the prophets. And Israel
was carried away out of their land to Assyria, unto this day.

24 ***Strange People Brought to Samaria*** And the king of the Assyrians brought people from Babylon, and from Cutha, and from Avah, and from Emath, and from Sepharvaim: and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. |
25 And when they began to dwell there, they feared not the Lord: and the Lord sent lions among them, which killed them. |
26 And it was told the king of the Assyrians and it was said: The nations which you have removed, and made to dwell in the cities of Samaria know not the ordinances of the God of the land. And the Lord has sent lions among them: and behold they kill them, because they know not the manner of the God
27 of the land. | And the king of the Assyrians commanded, saying: Carry there one of the priests whom you took captive from Samaria. And let him go, and dwell with them: and let him
28 teach them the ordinances of the God of the land. | So one of the priests who had been carried away captive from Samaria, came and dwelt in Bethel; and taught them how they should worship the Lord.

29 ***A Mixture of Religions*** And every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the temples of the high places, which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities where they
30 dwelt. | For the men of Babylon made Sochothbenoth: and the Cuthites made Nergel: and the men of Emath made Asima, |
31 and the Hevites made Nebahaz and Tharthac. And they that were of Sepharvaim burned their children in fire, to Adramelech and Anamelech the gods of Sepharvaim.
32 And nevertheless they worshiped the Lord. And they made to themselves, of the lowest of the people, priests of the high places, and they placed them in the temples of the high places. |
33 And when they worshiped the Lord, they served also their own gods according to the custom of the nations out of which
34 they were brought to Samaria. | Unto this day they followed the old manner: they fear not the Lord, neither do they keep his ceremonies, and judgments, and law and the commandment, which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he sur-
35 named Israel: | with whom he made a covenant, and charged them, saying: You shall not fear strange gods, nor shall you
36 adore them, nor worship them, nor sacrifice to them. | But the

17, 24-41: Sargon transplanted peoples from Babylonia and Syria (v. 24) to form a new Samaria.
17, 25-28: The new settlers imputed the plague of lions to their ignorance on how to worship the local god (v. 26).

Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power, and a stretched out arm, him shall you fear, and
37 him shall you adore, and to him shall you sacrifice. | And the ceremonies, and judgments, and law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, you shall observe to do them always:
38 and you shall not fear strange gods. | And the covenant that he made with you, you shall not forget: neither shall you wor-
39 ship strange gods, | but fear the Lord your God: and he shall
40 deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. | But they did
41 not hearken, but did according to their old custom. | So these nations feared the Lord, but nevertheless served also their idols: their children also and grandchildren, as their fathers did, so do they unto this day.

18

1 ***Ezechias' Religious Reform*** In the third year of Osee the son of Ela, king of Israel, reigned Ezechias the son of Achaz,
2 king of Juda. | He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign: and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. The name of his mother was Abi the daughter of Zach-
3 arias. | And he did that which was good before the Lord, ac-
4 cording to all that David his father had done. | He destroyed the high places, and broke the statues in pieces, and cut down the groves, and broke the brazen serpent, which Moses had made: for till that time the children of Israel burned incense to it; and
5 be called its name Nohestan. | He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel: so that after him there was none like him among all
6 the kings of Juda, nor any of them that were before him. | And he stuck to the Lord, and departed not from his steps; but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. |
7 Wherefore the Lord also was with him: and in all things, to which he went forth, he behaved himself wisely. And he rebelled
8 against the king of the Assyrians, and served him not. | He smote the Philistines as far as Gaza, and all their borders, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.
9 In the fourth year of king Ezechias, which was the seventh year of Osee the son of Ela, king of Israel, Salmanasar king of
10 the Assyrians came up to Samaria, and besieged it, | and took it. For after three years, in the sixth year of Ezechias, that is, in the ninth year of Osee king of Israel, Samaria was taken. |

18, 4: In his religious reform, Ezechias not only demolished pagan shrines, but even one idolatrous shrine where there was a bronze image of a serpent, allegedly the one which Moses used in the desert (Nm 21, 8-9).

11 And the king of the Assyrians carried away Israel into Assyria,
and placed them in Hala and in Habor by the rivers of Gozan
12 in the cities of the Medes: | because they hearkened not to the
voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant. All
that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, they would
not hear nor do.

13 ***Juda Invaded by Sennacherib*** In the fourteenth year of
king Ezechias, Sennacherib king of the Assyrians came up
14 against the fenced cities of Juda: and took them. | Then
Ezechias king of Juda sent messengers to the king of the As-
syrians to Lachis, saying: I have offended, depart from me;
and all that you shall put upon me, I will bear. And the king
of the Assyrians put a tax upon Ezechias king of Juda, of three
15 hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold. | And
Ezechias gave all the silver that was found in the house of
16 the Lord, and in the king's treasures. | At that time Ezechias
broke the doors of the temple of the Lord, and the plates of
gold which he had fastened on them, and gave them to the king
of the Assyrians.
17 And the king of the Assyrians sent Tharthan and Rabsaris,
and Rabsaces from Lachis to king Ezechias with a strong army
to Jerusalem: and they went up and came to Jerusalem, and
they stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the way
18 of the fuller's field. | And they called for the king: and there
went out to them Eliacim the son of Helcias, who was over the
house, and Sobna the scribe, and Joahe the son of Asaph, the
recorder.

19 ***Rabsaces Speaks against Ezechias*** And Rabsaces said to
them: Speak to Ezechias: Thus says the great king, the king of
the Assyrians: What is this confidence, in which you trust? |
20 Perhaps you have yourself taken counsel, to prepare yourself
21 for battle. In whom do you trust that you dare to rebel? | Do
you trust in Egypt, a staff of a broken reed, which, if a man
leans upon it, will break and go into his hand, and pierce it?
22 So is Pharao king of Egypt, to all that trust in him. | But if
you say to me: We trust in the Lord our God: is it not he, whose
high places and altars Ezechias has taken away, and has com-
manded Juda and Jerusalem: You shall worship before this
23 altar in Jerusalem? | Now therefore come over to my master
the king of the Assyrians: and I will give you two thousand

18, 14: Sennacherib's capture of Lachis, a city southwest of Jerusalem, may be seen on a bas-relief in the British Museum.

horses, and see whether you be able to have riders for them. |
24 And how can you stand against one lord of the least of my
master's servants? Do you trust in Egypt for chariots and for
25 horsemen? | Is it without the will of the Lord that I have come
up to this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me: Go up to
this land and destroy it.
26 Then Eliacim the son of Helcias, and Sobna, and Joahe said
to Rabsaces: We pray you speak to us your servants in Syriac:
for we understand that tongue. And speak not to us in the Jews'
language, in the hearing of the people that are upon the wall. |
27 And Rabsaces answered them, saying: Has my master sent me
to your master and to you, to speak these words, and not rather
to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own
28 dung, and drink their urine with you? | Then Rabsaces stood,
and cried out with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said:
Hear the words of the great king, the king of the Assyrians. |
29 Thus says the king: Let not Ezechias deceive you: for he shall
not be able to deliver you out of my hand.

30 ***Rabsaces' Blasphemy*** Neither let him make you trust in
the Lord, saying: The Lord will surely deliver us; and this city
shall not be given into the hand of the king of the Assyrians. |
31 Do not hearken to Ezechias. For thus says the king of the As-
syrians: Do with me that which is for your advantage, and
come out to me. And every man of you shall eat of his own
vineyard, and of his own fig tree: and you shall drink water of
32 your own cisterns, | till I come, and take you away to a land,
like to your own land, a fruitful land, and plentiful in wine, a
land of bread and vineyards, a land of olives and oil and honey;
and you shall live and not die. Hearken not to Ezechias, who de-
33 ceives you, saying: The Lord will deliver us. | Have any of the
gods of the nations delivered their land from the hand of the
34 king of Assyria? | Where is the god of Emath, and of Arphad?
Where is the god of Sepharvaim, of Ana, and of Ava?
35 Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? | Who are they
among all the gods of the nations, that have delivered their
country out of my hand, that the Lord may deliver Jerusalem
out of my hand?
36 But the people held their peace, and answered him not a
word: for they had received commandment from the king that

18, 26: *Syriac:* the correct word here is Aramaic—the international language of diplomacy and commerce. The Jerusalem leaders did not want the people to hear lest they lose courage, but Rabsaces insisted on speaking Hebrew for that very reason (vv. 27-28).

37 they should not answer him. | And Eliacim the son of Helcias, who was over the house, and Sobna the scribe, and Joahe the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Ezechias, with their garments rent, and told him the words of Rabsaces.

19

1 ***Isaias the Prophet Reassures Ezechias*** And when king Ezechias heard these words, he rent his garments, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. |
2 And he sent Eliacim, who was over the house, and Sobna the scribe, and the ancients of the priests covered with sackcloths,
3 to Isaias, the prophet, the son of Amos. | And they said to him: Thus says Ezechias: This day is a day of tribulation, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy. The children are coming to the birth,
4 and the woman in travail has not strength. | It may be the Lord your God will hear all the words of Rabsaces whom the king of the Assyrians his master has sent to reproach the living God and to reprove with words which the Lord your God has heard: and do you offer prayer for the remnants that are found.
5.6 So the servants of king Ezechias came to Isaias. | And Isaias said to them: Thus shall you say to your master: Thus says the Lord: Be not afraid for the words which you have heard with which the servants of the king of the Assyrians have
7 blasphemed me. | Behold I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a message, and shall return into his own country, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own country.
8 And Rabsaces returned, and found the king of the Assyrians besieging Lobna: for he had heard that he had departed from
9 Lachis. | And when he heard of Theraca, king of Ethiopia: Behold, he comes to fight with you: he went out against him,
10 and sent messengers to Ezechias, saying: | Thus shall you say to Ezechias king of Juda: Let not your God deceive you, in whom you trust. And do not say: Jerusalem shall not be delivered
11 into the hands of the king of the Assyrians. | Behold you have heard what the kings of the Assyrians have done to all countries: how they have laid them waste. And can you alone be
12 delivered? | Have the gods of the nations delivered any of them, whom my fathers have destroyed, to wit, Gozan, and Haran, and Reseph, and the children of Eden that were in
13 Thelassar? | Where is the king of Emath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Ana and of Ava?

19, 10-13: A second call to surrender.

14 ***The Prayer of Ezechias*** And when Ezechias had received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and had read it, he went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.
15 | And he prayed in his sight, saying: O Lord God of Israel, who is sitting upon the cherubim, you alone are the God of all the
16 kings of the earth. You made heaven and earth. | Incline your ear, and hear: open, O Lord, your eyes, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, who has sent to upbraid unto us the
17 living God. | Of a truth, O Lord, the kings of the Assyrians
18 have destroyed nations, and the lands of them all. | And they have cast their gods into the fire: for they were not gods, but the works of men's hands of wood and stone, and they destroyed
19 them. | Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that you are the Lord the only God.

20 ***Isaias' Answer*** And Isaias the son of Amos sent to Ezechias, saying: Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: I have heard the prayer you have made to me concerning Sennacherib king of the
21 Assyrians. | This is the word, that the Lord has spoken of him: The virgin daughter of Sion has despised you, and laughed you to scorn: the daughter of Jerusalem has wagged her head
22 behind your back. | Whom have you reproached, and whom have you blasphemed? Against whom have you exalted your voice, and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the holy one of
23 Israel. | By the hand of your servants you have reproached the Lord, and have said: With the multitude of my chariots I have gone up to the height of the mountains, to the top of Libanus, and have cut down its tall cedars, and its choice fir trees. And I have entered into the furthest parts thereof, and the
24 forest of its Carmel. | I have cut down, and I have drunk strange waters: and have dried up with the soles of my feet all the shut up waters.
25 Have you not heard what I have done from the beginning? From the days of old I have formed it, and now I have brought it to effect: that fenced cities of fighting men should be turned
26 to heaps of ruin. | And the inhabitants of them were weak of hand, they trembled and were confounded, they became like the grass of the field, and the green herb on the tops of houses,
27 which withered before it came to maturity. | Your dwelling

19, 21-28: Isaias' taunting song with its halting rhythm is effectively adapted to satire.
19, 21: *The virgin daughter of Sion:* Jerusalem was not invaded by an enemy. Cities are often called daughters in the Bible.

and your going out, and your coming in, and your way I knew
28 before, and your rage against me. | You have been mad against me, and your pride has come up to my ears. Therefore I will put a ring in your nose, and a bit between your lips: and I will turn you back by the way, by which you came.
29 And to you, O Ezechias, this shall be a sign: Eat this year what you shall find: and in the second year, such things as spring of themselves: but in the third year sow and reap: plant
30 vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. | And whatsoever shall be left of the house of Juda, shall take root downward, and bear
31 fruit upward. | For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and that which shall be saved out of mount Sion: the zeal of
32 the Lord of hosts shall do this. | Wherefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of the Assyrians: He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow into it, nor come before it with
33 shield, nor cast a trench about it. | By the way that he came, he shall return: and into this city he shall not come, says the
34 Lord. | And I will protect this city, and will save it for my own sake, and for David my servant's sake.
35 And it came to pass that night, that an angel of the Lord came, and slew in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand. And when he arose early in the morning,
36 he saw all the bodies of the dead. | And Sennacherib king of the Assyrians departing went away: and he returned and abode
37 in Ninive. | And as he was worshiping in the temple of Nesroch his god, Adramelech and Sarasar his sons slew him with the sword. And they fled into the land of the Armenians, and Asarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

20

1 ***Ezechias' Life Lengthened*** In those days Ezechias was sick unto death. And Isaias the son of Amos the prophet came and said to him: Thus says the Lord God: Give charge con-
2 cerning your house, for you shall die, and not live. | And he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying: |
3 I beseech you, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is pleasing before you. And Ezechias wept with much weeping.
4 | And before Isaias had gone out of the middle of the court, the

19, 29-31: Only in the third year will there be a harvest.

19, 35: From extra biblical sources it appears that Sennacherib's army, poised on Egypt's frontier, was struck by a plague of mice, "the angel of the Lord," or as Byron says, "the glance of the Lord" in *The Destruction of Sennacherib.*

19, 37: About twenty years intervened before Sennacherib died.

5 word of the Lord came to him, saying: | Go back, and tell
Ezechias the captain of my people: Thus says the Lord the God
of David your father: I have heard your prayer, and I have
seen your tears: and behold I have healed you. On the third
6 day you shall go up to the temple of the Lord. | And I will add
to your days fifteen years: and I will deliver you and this city
out of the hand of the king of the Assyrians: and I will pro-
tect this city for my own sake, and for David my servant's sake.
7 | And Isaias said: Bring me a lump of figs. And when they had
8 brought it, and laid it upon his boil, he was healed. | And
Ezechias had said to Isaias: What shall be the sign that the
Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the temple of the
9 Lord the third day? | And Isaias said to him: This shall be the
sign from the Lord, that the Lord will do the word which he
has spoken: Will you that the shadow go forward ten lines, or
10 that it go back so many degrees? | And Ezechias said: It is an
easy matter for the shadow to go forward ten lines; and I do
not desire that this be done: but let it return back ten degrees.
11 | And Isaias the prophet called upon the Lord, and he brought
the shadow ten degrees backward by the lines, by which it had
already gone down in the dial of Achaz.

12 At that time, Berodach Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of
the Babylonians, sent letters and presents to Ezechias: for he
13 had heard that Ezechias had been sick. | And Ezechias rejoiced
at their coming: and he showed them the house of his aromatical
spices, and the gold and the silver, and divers precious odors,
and ointments, and the house of his vessels, and all that he had
in his treasures. There was nothing in his house, nor in all his
dominions that Ezechias showed them not.

14 ***Isaias Foretells the Babylonian Captivity*** And Isaias the
prophet came to king Ezechias, and said to him: What said
these men? Or from where did they come to you? And Ezechias
said to him: From a far country they came to me out of Baby-
15 lon. | And he said. What did they see in your house? Ezechias
said: They saw all the things that are in my house; there is
nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them. |
16 And Isaias said to Ezechias: Hear the word of the Lord. |
17 Behold the days shall come, that all that is in your house; and
that your fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be
carried into Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. |

20, 11: *The dial of Achaz.* Achaz had built a sundial made of steps.
20, 12-15: Berodach Baladan was a petty king on the Persian Gulf who most likely sought Ezechias as an ally.

18 And of your sons also that shall issue from you, whom you shall beget, they shall take away: and they shall be eunuchs in the
19 palace of the king of Babylon. | Ezechias said to Isaias: The word of the Lord, which you have spoken, is good. Let peace and truth be in my days.
20 And the rest of the acts of Ezechias and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought waters into the city, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Juda?
21 And Ezechias slept with his fathers: and Manasses his son reigned in his stead.

21

1 ***Wickedness and Idolatry of Manasses*** Manasses was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned five and fifty years in Jerusalem: the name of his mother was
2 Haphsiba. | And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the idols of the nations, which the Lord destroyed from
3 before the face of the children of Israel. | And he turned, and built up the high places which Ezechias his father had destroyed. And he set up altars to Baal, and made groves, as Achab the king of Israel had done. And he adored all the hosts of heaven,
4 and served them. | And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said: In Jerusalem I will put my name. |
5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts
6 of the temple of the Lord. | And he made his son pass through fire. And he used divination, and observed omens, and appointed pythons, and multiplied soothsayers to do evil before the Lord,
7 and to provoke him. | He set also an idol of the grove, which he had made, in the temple of the Lord; concerning which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son: In this temple, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel,
8 I will put my name for ever. | And I will no more make the feet of Israel to be moved out of the land which I gave to their fathers: only if they will observe to do all that I have commanded them according to the law which my servant Moses
9 commanded them. | But they hearkened not: but were seduced by Manasses, to do evil more than the nations which the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.

20, 19: This is the biblical "après moi, le déluge."
20, 20: One of Ezechias' greatest achievements was this strategic tunnel over seventeen hundred feet long.
21, 6: *Son pass through fire:* see 16, 3 n. *Pythons:* sorcerers.

10 ***God's Threat Told by His Prophets*** And the Lord spoke
11 in the hand of his servants, the prophets, saying: | Because
Manasses king of Juda has done these most wicked abomina-
tions, beyond all that the Amorrites did before him, and has
12 made Juda also to sin with his filthy doings, | therefore thus
says the Lord the God of Israel: Behold I will bring on evils
upon Jerusalem and Juda; that whosoever shall hear of them,
13 both his ears shall tingle. | And I will stretch over Jerusalem
the line of Samaria, and the weight of the house of Achab: and
I will efface Jerusalem, as tables are wont to be effaced, and I
will erase and turn it, and draw the pencil often over the face
14 thereof. | And I will leave the remnants of my inheritance, and
will deliver them into the hands of their enemies: and they shall
15 become a prey, and a spoil to all their enemies. | Because they
have done evil before me, and have continued to provoke me,
from the day that their fathers came out of Egypt, even unto
this day.
16 Moreover Manasses shed also very much innocent blood, till
he filled Jerusalem up to the mouth: besides his sins, wherewith
17 he made Juda to sin, to do evil before the Lord. | Now the rest
of the acts of Manasses, and all that he did, and his sin which
he sinned, are they not written in the book of the words of the
18 days of the kings of Juda? | And Manasses slept with his fa-
thers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the
garden of Oza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.
19 Two and twenty years old was Amon when he began to reign,
and he reigned two years in Jerusalem: the name of his mother
20 was Messalemeth the daughter of Harus of Jeteba. | And he
did evil in the sight of the Lord, as Manasses his father had
21 done. | And he walked in all the way in which his father had
walked. And he served the abominations which his father had
22 served, and he adored them: | And forsook the Lord the God
23 of his fathers: and walked not in the way of the Lord. | And
his servants plotted against him, and slew the king in his own
24 house. | But the people of the land slew all them that had con-
spired against king Amon: and made Josias his son their king
25 in his stead. | But the rest of the acts of Amon which he did,
are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the
26 kings of Juda? | And they buried him in his sepulcher in the
garden of Oza: and his son Josias reigned in his stead.

22

1 ***The Saintly King Josias*** Josias was eight years old when
he began to reign: he reigned one and thirty years in Jerusalem:
the name of his mother was Idida, the daughter of Hadaia of

2 Besecath. | And he did that which was right in the sight of the
Lord, and walked in all the ways of David his father: he turned
not aside to the right hand, or to the left.
3 And in the eighteenth year of king Josias, the king sent
Saphan the son of Assia, the son of Messulam, the scribe of the
4 temple of the Lord, saying to him: | Go to Helcias the high
priest, that the money may be put together which is brought
into the temple of the Lord, which the doorkeepers of the temple
5 have gathered of the people. | And let it be given to the work-
men by the overseers of the house of the Lord: and let them
distribute it to those that work in the temple of the Lord, to
6 repair the temple: | That is, to carpenters and masons, and to
such as mend breaches: and that timber may be bought, and
stones out of the quarries, to repair the temple of the Lord. |
7 But let there be no reckoning made with them of the money
which they receive: but let them have it in their power, and in
their trust.

8 ***Helcias Finds the Book of the Law*** And Helcias the
high priest said to Saphan the scribe: I have found the book of
the law in the house of the Lord. And Helcias gave the book to
9 Saphan, and he read it. | And Saphan the scribe came to the
king, and brought him word again concerning that which he had
commanded, and said: Your servants have gathered together
the money that was found in the house of the Lord, and they
have given it to be distributed to the workmen, by the overseers
10 of the works of the temple of the Lord. | And Saphan the
scribe told the king, saying: Helcias the priest has delivered to
me a book. And when Saphan had read it before the king, |
11 and the king had heard the words of the law of the Lord: he rent
12 his garments. | And he commanded Helcias the priest, and
Ahicam the son of Saphan, and Achobor the son of Micha, and
13 Saphan the scribe, and Asaia the king's servant, saying: | Go
and consult the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all
Juda, concerning the words of this book which has been found:
for the great wrath of the Lord is kindled against us, because
our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this book, to do
all that is written for us.
14 So Helcias the priest, and Ahicam, and Achobor, and Saphan,
and Asaia went to Holda the prophetess the wife of Sellum the
son of Thecua, the son of Araas keeper of the wardrobe, who
15 dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second: and they spoke to her. | And

22, 8: *The book of the law:* was part of the book of Deuteronomy.
22, 14: *In the Second:* the western part of the city.

she said to them: Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: Tell
16 the man that sent you to me: | Thus says the Lord: Behold, I
will bring evils upon this place, and upon the inhabitants there-
of, all the words of the law which the king of Juda has read: |
17 Because they have forsaken me, and have sacrificed to strange
gods, provoking me by all the works of their hands: therefore
my indignation shall be kindled against this place, and shall
18 not be quenched. | But to the king of Juda, who sent you to
consult the Lord, thus shall you say: Thus says the Lord the
God of Israel: Forasmuch as you have heard the words of the
19 book, | and your heart has been moved to fear, and you have
humbled yourself, before the Lord, hearing the words against
this place, and the inhabitants thereof, to wit, that they should
become a wonder and a curse, and you have rent your garments,
and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord: |
20 Therefore I will gather you to your fathers: and you shall be
gathered to your sepulcher in peace, that your eyes may not
see all the evils which I will bring upon this place.

23

1 ***Josias Abolishes Idolatry*** And they brought the king word
again what she had said. And he sent; and all the ancients of
2 Juda and Jerusalem were assembled to him. | And the king
went up to the temple of the Lord, and all the men of Juda, and
all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, the priests and the
prophets, and all the people, both little and great: and in the
hearing of them all he read all the words of the book of the
3 covenant, which was found in the house of the Lord. | And the
king stood upon the step: and made a covenant with the Lord,
to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and
his testimonies, and his ceremonies, with all their heart, and
with all their soul, and to perform the words of this covenant,
which were written in that book: and the people agreed to the
covenant.

4 And the king commanded Helcias the high priest, and the
priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to cast out of
the temple of the Lord all the vessels that had been made for
Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven. And he
burned them outside Jerusalem in the valley of Cedron, and
5 he carried the ashes of them to Bethel. | And he destroyed the
soothsayers, whom the kings of Juda had appointed to sacrifice
in the high places in the cities of Juda, and round about Jeru-
salem: them also that burned incense to Baal, and to the sun,
and to the moon, and to the twelve signs, and to all the host of

6 heaven. | And he caused the grove to be carried out from the house of the Lord outside Jerusalem to the valley of Cedron. And he burned it there, and reduced it to dust, and cast the 7 dust upon the graves of the common people. | He destroyed also the pavilions of the effeminate, which were in the house of the Lord, for which the women wove as it were little dwellings 8 for the grove. | And he gathered together all the priests out of the cities of Juda: and he defiled the high places, where the priests offered sacrifice, from Gabaa to Bersabee: and he broke down the altars of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Josue governor of the city, which was on the left hand 9 of the gate of the city. | However the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem: but only ate 10 of the unleavened bread among their brethren. | And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Ennom: that no man should consecrate there his son or his daughter through 11 fire to Moloch. | And he took away the horses which the kings of Juda had given to the sun, at the entering of the temple of the Lord, near the chamber of Nathanmelech the eunuch, who was in Pharurim: and he burned the chariots of the sun with 12 fire. | And the altars that were upon the top of the upper chamber of Achaz, which the kings of Juda had made, and the altars which Manasses had made in the two courts of the temple of the Lord, the king broke down. And he ran from there, and cast the 13 ashes of them into the torrent Cedron. | The high places also that were at Jerusalem on the right side of the Mount of Offense, which Solomon king of Israel had built to Astaroth the idol of the Sidonians, and to Chamos the scandal of Moab, and to Melchom the abomination of the children of Ammon, the king 14 defiled. | And he broke in pieces the statues, and cut down the groves: and he filled their places with the bones of dead men. 15 Moreover the altar also that was at Bethel, and the high place, which Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel to sin, had made: both the altar and the high place he broke down and burned, and reduced to powder, and burned the grove. | 16 And as Josias turned himself, he saw there the sepulchers that were in the mount: and he sent and took the bones out of the sepulchers, and burned them upon the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God spoke, 17 who had foretold these things. | And he said: What is that monument which I see? And the men of that city answered: It

23, 6: *Grove:* wooden post.
23, 7: *Wove:* vestments.
23, 11: *Pharurim:* obscure word. Quarters?

is the sepulcher of the man of God, who came from Juda, and foretold these things which you have done upon the altar of
18 Bethel. | And he said: Let him alone, let no man move his bones. So his bones were left untouched with the bones of the
19 prophet that came out of Samaria. | Moreover all the temples of the high places, which were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord, Josias took away. And he did to them according to all the acts that he had
20 done in Bethel. | And he slew all the priests of the high places, that were there, upon the altars: and he burned men's bones upon them: and returned to Jerusalem.

21 ***The Phase Is Celebrated*** And he commanded all the people, saying: Keep the phase to the Lord your God, according
22 as it is written in the book of this covenant. | Now there was no such a phase kept from the days of the judges, who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, and of the kings
23 of Juda, | as was this phase that was kept to the Lord in Jeru-
24 salem, in the eighteenth year of king Josias. | Moreover the diviners by spirits, and soothsayers, and the figures of idols, and the uncleannesses, and the abominations, that had been in the land of Juda and Jerusalem, Josias took away: that he might perform the words of the law, that were written in the book which Helcias the priest had found in the temple of the Lord. |
25 There was no king before him like unto him, that returned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, according to all the law of Moses: neither after
26 him did there arise any like him. | But yet the Lord turned not away from the wrath of his great indignation by which his anger was kindled against Juda: because of the provocations, where-
27 with Manasses had provoked him. | And the Lord said: I will remove Juda also from before my face, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I chose, and the house, of which I said: My name shall be there.

28 ***Josias Is Slain*** Now the rest of the acts of Josias, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the words of the
29 days of the kings of Juda? | In his days Pharao Nechao king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josias went to meet him, and was slain at

23, 21: *Phase:* the Pasch. For a full account of the celebration, see 2 Par 35, 1-19.

23, 29: Josias tried to prevent the Egyptians from aiding the Assyrians against the neo-Babylonians.

30 Mageddo, when he had seen him. | And his servants carried
him dead from Mageddo. And they brought him to Jerusalem,
and buried him in his own sepulcher. And the people of the
land took Joachaz the son of Josias: and they anointed him,
and made him king in his father's stead.
31 Joachaz was three and twenty years old when he began to
reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem: the name of
his mother was Amital, the daughter of Jeremias of Lobna. |
32 And he did evil before the Lord, according to all that his fathers
33 had done. | And Pharao Nechao bound him at Rebla, which
is in the land of Emath, that he should not reign in Jerusalem.
And he set a fine upon the land, of a hundred talents of silver,
34 and a talent of gold. | And Pharao Nechao made Eliacim the
son of Josias king in the room of Josias his father: and turned
his name to Joakim. And he took Joachaz away and carried
35 him into Egypt, and he died there. | And Joakim gave the sil-
ver and the gold to Pharao, after he had taxed the land for
every man, to contribute according to the commandment of
Pharao: and he exacted both the silver and the gold of the
people of the land, of every man according to his ability: to give
36 to Pharao Nechao. | Joakim was five and twenty years old
when he began to reign: and he reigned eleven years in Jeru-
salem: the name of his mother was Zebida the daughter of
37 Phadaia of Ruma. | And he did evil before the Lord according
to all that his fathers had done.

24

1 ***Joakim's Reign*** In his days, Nabuchodonosor king of Baby-
lon came up, and Joakim became his servant three years: then
2 again he rebelled against him. | And the Lord sent against him
the rovers of the Chaldees, and the rovers of Syria, and the
rovers of Moab, and the rovers of the children of Ammon: and
he sent them against Juda, to destroy it, according to the word
of the Lord, which he had spoken by his servants the prophets. |
3 And this came by the word of the Lord against Juda, to remove
them from before him, for all the sins of Manasses which he
4 did: | and for the innocent blood that he shed, filling Jeru-
salem with innocent blood: and therefore the Lord would not
5 be appeased. | But the rest of the acts of Joakim, and all that
he did, are they not written in the book of the words of the
days of the kings of Juda? And Joakim slept with his fathers. |

24, 1-20: In 598 B.C. Nabuchodonosor deports the upper classes. Excavations have shown evidence of the two Babylonian invasions of Jerusalem.

6.7 And Joachin his son reigned in his stead. | And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his own country: for the king of Babylon had taken all that had belonged to the king of Egypt, from the river of Egypt, unto the river Euphrates.

8 ***Joachin and Sedecias*** Joachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem: the name of his mother was Nohesta the daughter of
9 Elnathan of Jerusalem. | And he did evil before the Lord, ac-
10 cording to all that his father had done. | At that time the servants of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon came up against Jeru-
11 salem: and the city was surrounded with their forts. | And Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon came to the city with his serv-
12 ants to assault it. | And Joachin king of Juda went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his nobles, and his eunuchs: and the king of Babylon received him
13 in the eighth year of his reign. | And he brought out from there all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house: and he cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of
14 the Lord, according to the word of the Lord. | And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the valiant men of the army, to the number of ten thousand into captivity: and every artificer and smith: and none were left, but the poor sort
15 of the people of the land. | And he carried away Joachin into Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his eunuchs: and the judges of the land he carried into captivity
16 from Jerusalem into Babylon. | And all the strong men, seven thousand, and the artificers, and the smiths, a thousand, all that were valiant men and fit for war: and the king of Babylon led
17 them captives into Babylon. | And he appointed Matthanias his uncle in his stead: and called his name Sedecias.

18 Sedecias was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: the name of his mother was Amital, the daughter of Jeremias of Lobna. |
19 And he did evil before the Lord, according to all that Joakim
20 had done. | For the Lord was angry against Jerusalem and against Juda, till he cast them out from his face. And Sedecias revolted from the king of Babylon.

25

1 ***Jerusalem Besieged and Taken*** And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, the tenth day of the month, that Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon came, he

and all his army against Jerusalem. And they surrounded it;
2 and raised works round about it. | And the city was shut up and
3 besieged till the eleventh year of king Sedecias, | the ninth day
of the month: and a famine prevailed in the city, and there was
4 no bread for the people of the land. | And a breach was made
into the city: and all the men of war fled in the night between
the two walls by the king's garden (now the Chaldees besieged
the city round about), and Sedecias fled by the way that leads to
5 the plains of the wilderness. | And the army of the Chaldees
pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jeri-
cho: and all the warriors that were with him were scattered,
6 and left him. | So they took the king, and brought him to the
king of Babylon to Reblatha, and he gave judgment upon him.
7 | And he slew the sons of Sedecias before his face, and he put
out his eyes, and bound him with chains, and brought him to
Babylon.

8 In the fifth month, the eleventh day of the month, that is,
the nineteenth year of the king of Babylon, came Nabuzardan
commander of the army, a servant of the king of Babylon, into
9 Jerusalem. | And he burned the house of the Lord, and the
king's house, and the houses of Jerusalem: and every house he
10 burned with fire. | And all the army of the Chaldees, which
was with the commander of the troops, broke down the walls
of Jerusalem round about.

11 ***Juda Taken into Captivity*** And Nabuzardan the com-
mander of the army, carried away the rest of the people that
remained in the city, and the fugitives that had gone over to
the king of Babylon, and the remnant of the common people. |
12 But of the poor of the land he left some dressers of vines and
13 husbandmen. | And the pillars of brass that were in the temple
of the Lord, and the bases, and the sea of brass which was in
the house of the Lord, the Chaldees broke in pieces: and carried
14 all the brass of them to Babylon. | They took away also the
pots of brass, and the mazers, and the forks, and the cups, and
the mortars, and all the vessels of brass with which they min-
15 istered. | Moreover also the censers, and the bowls, such as
were of gold in gold, and such as were of silver in silver, the
16 general of the army took away. | That is, two pillars, one sea,
and the bases which Solomon had made in the temple of the
17 Lord. The brass of all these vessels was without weight. | One
pillar was eighteen cubits high, and the chapiter of brass which
was upon it was three cubits high. And the network, and the

25, 4: *The Chaldees:* the Chaldeans or neo-Babylonians.

pomegranates that were upon the chapiter of the pillar, were all of brass: and the second pillar had the like adorning.

18 And the general of the army took Seraias the chief priest, and
19 Sophonias the second priest, and three doorkeepers; | and out of the city one eunuch, who was captain over the men of war: and five men of them that had stood before the king, whom he found in the city, and Sopher the captain of the army who exercised the young soldiers of the people of the land: and threescore men of the common people, who were found in the
20 city. | These Nabuzardan the general of the army took away,
21 and carried them to the king of Babylon to Reblatha. | And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Reblatha in the land of Emath. So Juda was carried away out of their land.

22 ***Godolias Made Governor of Juda*** But over the people that remained in the land of Juda, which Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had left, he gave the government to Godolias the
23 son of Ahicam the son of Saphan. | And when all the captains of the soldiers had heard this, they and the men that were with them, to wit, that the king of Babylon had made Godolias governor, they came to Godolias to Maspha: Ismael the son of Nathanias, and Johanan the son of Caree, and Saraia the son of Thanehumeth the Netophathite, and Jezonias the son of
24 Maachathi, they and their men. | And Godolias swore to them and to their men, saying: Be not afraid to serve the Chaldees. Stay in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be
25 well with you. | But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ismael the son of Nathanias the son of Elisama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him: and smote Godolias so that he died. And also the Jews and the Chaldees that were with
26 him in Maspha. | And all the people both little and great, and the captains of the soldiers, rising up went to Egypt, fearing the Chaldees.

27 ***Kindness toward Joachin*** And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Joachin king of Juda, in the twelfth month, the seven and twentieth day of the month: Evilmerodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, lifted up the head of Joachin king of Juda out

25, 21: The southern kingdom of Juda fell with Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The second deportation into the Babylonian exile began. Only a small number of foreigners were transplanted into Juda.

25, 27: In 562 B.C. the successor of Nabuchodonosor, Evilmerodach, honored king Joachin.

28 of prison. | And he spoke kindly to him: and he set his throne
above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon. |
29 And he changed his garments which he had in prison, and he
30 ate bread always before him, all the days of his life. | And he
appointed him a continual allowance, which was also given
him by the king day by day, all the days of his life.

THE FIRST BOOK OF PARALIPOMENON

INTRODUCTION

The Greek word Paralipomenon means "omitted things." It applies here to events supposedly omitted in the books of Samuel and Kings. The alternate title by which the two books of Paralipomenon are known, Chronicles, compresses the longer Hebrew title "events of the days."

Originally, both books of Paralipomenon were united to the two books of Esdras and Nehemias to form one large book. Modern scholars package all four books under the denomination "The History of the Chronicler." That there was only one author of these four books, which treat of one historical unit, is borne out by the similarity of style and vocabulary; and, furthermore, the special interest in the temple, its liturgy, and the singers point to an unknown Levite as author.

The Chronicler of 1, 2 Par is much more interested in Levites than in priests. Whereas the books of Samuel and Kings mention Levites but three times, they are mentioned thirty-five times in 1 Par and sixty-four times in 2 Par. Some scholars, however, believe that Esdras was the author. The contents of 1, 2 Par fall into an easy division. 1 Par 1—9 are a history from Adam to Saul via genealogical trees. Chs. 10—29 extend from king Saul's death to the reign of David. 2 Par 1—9 dwell on Solomon's reign; chs. 10—36 narrate the history of Juda's kings from the schism in 922 B.C. to the Edict of Cyrus in 538 B.C. The Edict allowed the Jewish exiles to return to Juda from Babylon.

The genealogies used for 1 Par 1—9 are taken from Genesis to Ruth. The remainder of 1 Par and all of 2 Par use the books of Samuel and Kings as their principal source. The Chronicler often quotes verbatim large sections from the books of Samuel and Kings, or rewrites them in a different way. At times, he summarizes them, at other times he elaborates on an account. Often he adds details.

It can be said that about one-half of 1, 2 Par come from previously written biblical books. The most perplexing literary question of 1, 2 Par is: Where did the author get the material which cannot be traced to other biblical books? We shall refer to these unknown works as minor sources. An outstanding example of a minor source is that used about king Asa in 2 Par 16, 1-6.

The Chronicler of 1, 2 Par refers to these six historical books: The Book of the Kings of Israel and Juda; The Book of the Kings of Juda and Israel; The Royal Book of Juda and Israel; The Book of the Kings of Israel; The Acts of the Kings of Israel; The Teaching ("midrash") of The Book of Kings. None of these six refers to Samuel-Kings. The first five may well be one book mentioned under five different titles. The Chronicler refers to eleven writings of non-biblical prophets and about four other miscellaneous works. There is a variety of approaches to the problems of the identity of the minor sources.

It is crystal clear from the contents of 1, 2 Par that these books expose

a panoramic view of David's kingdom. The genealogical trees introduce David's era. All the rest is a narration in relation to David who rises like a Colossus spanning the interest of both books. 1, 2 Par sketch David as a saint, e.g., David's adultery is omitted, as is the rebellion of Absalom, etc. The books of Samuel and Kings depict David as he was—a versatile monarch with some weaknesses.

Although the Jews were back home from their Babylonian exile, they were not independent. They lived, however, under the humane rule of the Persian emperors. The Chronicler, writing about 400 B.C., is looking back at an era of prophets who had tried to save Juda from political death. They had failed.

The Chronicler of 1, 2 Par apparently wrote to impress upon the Jews the fact that they should face up to the loss of political independence, and focus on their religious future. Christ was to complete this shift of emphasis by establishing definitively that Israel's glory was to be exclusively in her religion. It is mainly because of the Chronicler's endeavor to stress the importance of religion that both Jews and Christians kept these books in the Canon of Scripture. It was not because of the history recorded therein, since the historic account was already contained elsewhere in Scripture. Many authors signal out for spiritual value the two prayers of David (1 Par 17 and 29); Solomon's prayer for wisdom (2 Par 1); and the solemn dedication of the temple (2 Par 6—7).

As to the literary form of 1, 2 Par there are a great number of scholars who do not call them a midrash, but a kind of history usually considered inferior to the history in the books of Samuel and Kings. Only some scholars classify 1, 2 Par as a midrash—history, embroidered to edify. The problem of the midrash as a literary form, in 1, 2 Par, is not identical with the erudite question of whether or not the Chronicler used a large work called a midrash.

Main divisions of the two books of Paralipomenon are:

A History from Adam to Saul via Genealogical Trees, 1 Par 1—9
From Saul's Death to the Reign of David, 1 Par 10—29
Solomon's Reign, 2 Par 1—9
The History of Juda's Kings from the Schism in 922 B.C. to the Edict of Cyrus in 538 B.C., 2 Par 10—36

1

1.2 ***Genealogy of the Patriarchs*** Adam, Seth, Enos, | Cainan,
3.4 Malaleel, Jared, | Henoc, Mathusale, Lamech. | Noe, Sem,
5 Cham, and Japheth. | The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog,
6 and Madai, and Javan, Thubal, Mosoch, Thiras. | And the sons
7 of Gomer: Ascenez, and Riphath, and Thogorma. | And the
8 sons of Javan: Elisa and Tharsis, Cethim and Dodanim. | The
sons of Cham: Chus, and Mesrai, and Phut, and Chanaan. |
9 And the sons of Chus: Saba, and Hevila, Sabatha, and Regma,
and Sabathaca. And the sons of Regma: Saba, and Dadan. |
10 Now Chus begot Nemrod: he began to be mighty upon earth. |

11 But Mesraim begot Ludim, and Anamim, and Laabim, and
12 Nephtuim, | Phetrusim also, and Casluim: from whom came
13 the Philistines, and Caphtorim. | And Chanaan begot Sidon
14 his firstborn, and the Hethite, | and the Jebusite, and the Amor-
15 rite, and the Gergesite, | and the Hevite, and the Aracite, and
16 the Sinite, | and the Aradian, and the Samarite, and the
Hamathite.
17 The sons of Sem: Elam, and Asur, and Arphaxad, and Lud,
and Aram, and Hus, and Hul, and Gether, and Mosoch. |
18.19 And Arphaxad begot Sale, and Sale begot Heber. | And to
Heber were born two sons, the name of the one was Phaleg, be-
cause in his days the earth was divided; and the name of his
20 brother was Jectan. | And Jectan begot Elmodad, and Saleph,
21 and Asarmoth, and Jare, | and Adoram, and Usal, and Decla, |
22.23 and Hebal, and Abimael, and Saba, | and Ophir, and Hevila,
and Jobab. All these are the sons of Jectan.
24-26 Sem, Arphaxad, Sale, | Heber, Phaleg, Ragau, | Serug,
27.28 Nachor, Thare, | Abram, this is Abraham. | And the sons of
Abraham, Isaac and Ismahel.
29 And these are the generations of them. The firstborn of
Ismahel, Nabajoth, then Cedar, and Adbeel, and Mabsam. |
30.31 And Masma, and Duma, Massa, Hadad, and Thema, | Jetur,
32 Naphis, Cedma: these are the sons of Ismahel. | And the sons
of Cetura, Abraham's concubine, whom she bore: Zamran, Jec-
san, Madan, Madian, Jesboc, and Sue. And the sons of Jecsan,
Saba, and Dadan. And the sons of Dadan: Assurim, and Latus-
33 sim, and Laomin. | And the sons of Madian: Epha, and Epher,
and Henoch, and Abida, and Eldaa. All these are the sons of
Cetura.
34 And Abraham begot Isaac: and his sons were Esau and Israel.
35 The sons of Esau: Eliphaz, Rahuel, Jehus, Ihelom, and Core.
36 | The sons of Eliphaz: Theman, Omar, Sephi, Gathan, Cenez,
37 and by Thamna, Amalec. | The sons of Rahuel: Nahath,
38 Zara, Samma, Meza. | The sons of Seir: Lotan, Sobal, Sebeon,
39 Ana, Dison, Eser, Disan. | The sons of Lotan: Hori, Homam.
40 And the sister of Lotan was Thamna. | The sons of Sobal:
Alian, and Manahath, and Ebal, Sephi, and Onam. The sons of
41 Sebeon: Aia, and Ana. The son of Ana: Dison. | The sons of
Dison: Hamram, and Eseban, and Jethran, and Charan. |
42 The sons of Eser: Balaan, and Zavan, and Jacan. The sons of
Disan: Hus and Aran.

43 ***The Kings and Dukes of Edom*** Now these are the kings
that reigned in the land of Edom, before there was a king over
the children of Israel: Bale the son of Beor: and the name of his

44 city was Denaba. | And Bale died, and Jobab the son of Zare
45 of Bosra, reigned in his stead. | And when Jobab also was dead,
Husam of the land of the Themanites reigned in his stead. |
46 And Husam also died, and Adad the son of Badad reigned in
his stead, and he defeated the Madianites in the land of Moab:
47 and the name of his city was Avith. | And when Adad also was
48 dead, Semla of Masreca reigned in his stead. Semla also died,
and Saul of Rohoboth, which is near the river, reigned in his
49 stead. | And when Saul was dead, Balanan the son of Achobor
50 reigned in his stead. | He also died, and Adad reigned in his
stead: and the name of his city was Phau, and his wife was
called Meetabel the daughter of Matred, the daughter of
Mezaab.
51 And after the death of Adad, there began to be dukes in Edom
instead of kings: duke Thamna, duke Alva, duke Jetheth, |
52.53 duke Oolibama, duke Ela, duke Phinon, | duke Cenez,
54 duke Theman, duke Mabsar, | duke Magdiel, duke Hiram.
These *are* the dukes of Edom.

2

1 ***The Sons of Israel and the Posterity of Juda*** And these
are the sons os Israel: Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Juda, Issachar, and
2 Zabulon, | Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Nephtali, Gad, and Aser. |
3 The sons of Juda: Her, Onam, and Sela. These three were born
to him of the Chanaanitess the daughter of Sue. And Her, the
firstborn of Juda, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he
4 slew him. | And Thamar his daughter-in-law bore him Phares
5 and Zara. So all the sons of Juda were five. | And the sons of
6 Phares were Hesron, and Hamul. | And the sons also of Zare,
Zamri, and Ethan, and Eman, and Chalchal, and Dara, five in
7 all. | And the sons of Charmi: Achar, who troubled Israel, and
8 sinned by the theft of the anathema. | The son of Ethan:
9 Azarias. | And the sons of Hesron that were born to him:
10 Jerameel, and Ram, and Calubi. | And Ram begot Aminadab,
and Aminadab begot Nahasson, prince of the children of Juda. |
11.12 And Nahasson begot Salma, the father of Booz. | And Booz
begot Obed, and Obed begot Isai.
13 And Isai begot Eliab his firstborn, the second Abinadab, the
14 third Simmaa, | the fourth, Nathanael, the fifth Raddai. |
15.16 The sixth Asom, the seventh David. | And their sisters were
Sarvia, and Abigail. The sons of Sarvia: Abisai, Joab, and Asael,
17 three. | And Abigail bore Amasa, whose father was Jether the
Ismahelite.
18 And Caleb the son of Hesron took a wife named Azuba, of
whom he had Jerioth: and her sons were Jaser, and Sobab, and

19 Ardon. | And when Azuba was dead, Caleb took to wife
20 Ephrata: who bore him Hur. | And Hur begot Uri: and Uri
21 begot Bezeleel. | And afterward Hesron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Galaad, and took her to wife when
22 he was threescore years old: and she bore him Segub. | And Segub begot Jair, and he had three and twenty cities in the land
23 of Galaad. | And he took Gessur, and Aram the towns of Jair, and Canath, and the villages thereof, threescore cities. All these,
24 the sons of Machir father of Galaad. | And when Hesron was dead, Caleb went in to Ephrata. Hesron also had to wife Abia, who bore him Ashur the father of Thecua.

25 And the sons of Jerameel the firstborn of Hesron were Ram his firstborn, and Buna, and Aram, and Asom, and Achia. |
26 And Jerameel married another wife, named Atara, who was the
27 mother of Onam. | And the sons of Ram the firstborn of Jera-
28 meel, were Moos, Jamin, and Achar. | And Onam had sons Semei, and Jada. And the sons of Semei: Nadab, and Abisur. |
29 And the name of Abisur's wife was Abihail, who bore him
30 Ahobban, and Molid. | And the sons of Nadab were Saled, and
31 Apphaim. And Saled died without children. | But the son of Apphaim was Jesi: and Jesi begot Sesan. And Sesan begot
32 Oholai. | And the sons of Jada the brother of Semei: Jether,
33 and Jonathan. And Jether also died without children. | But Jonathan begot Phaleth, and Ziza. These were the sons of Jerameel.

34 And Sesan had no sons, but daughters and a servant an
35 Egyptian named Jeraa. | And he gave him his daughter to wife:
36 and she bore him Ethei. | And Ethei begot Nathan, and Na-
37 than begot Zabad. | And Zabad begot Ophlal, and Ophlal
38.39 begot Obed. | Obed begot Jehu, Jehu begot Azarias. | Aza-
40 rias begot Helles, and Helles begot Elasa. | Elasa begot Sisamoi,
41 Sisamoi begot Sellum, | Sellum begot Icamia, and Icamia begot Elisama.

42 Now the sons of Caleb the brother of Jerameel *were* Mesa his firstborn, who was the father of Siph: and the sons of Maresa
43 father of Hebron. | And the sons of Hebron: Core and Thaph-
44 ua, and Recem, and Samma. | And Samma begot Raham, the
45 father of Jercaam, and Recem begot Sammai. | The son of
46 Sammai, Maon: and Maon was the father of Bethsur. | And Epha the concubine of Caleb bore Haran, and Mosa, and Gezez.
47 And Haran begot Gezez. | And the sons of Jahaddai, Rogom, and Joathan, and Gesan, and Phalet, and Epha, and Saaph. |
48 And Maacha the concubine of Caleb bore Saber, and Tharana.
49 | And Saaph the father of Madmena begot Sue the father of

Machbena, and the father of Gabaa. And the daughter of Caleb was Achsa.

50 These were the sons of Caleb, the son of Hur the firstborn of
51 Ephrata, Sobal the father of Cariathiarim. | Salma the father
52 of Bethlehem, Hariph the father of Bethgader. | And Sobal the father of Cariathiarim had sons: he that saw half of the
53 places of rest. | And of the kindred of Cariathiarim, the Jethrites, and Aphuthites, and Semathites, and Maserites. Of
54 them came the Saraites, and Esthaolites. | The sons of Salma, Bethlehem, and Netophathi, the crowns of the house of Joab,
55 and half of the place of rest of Sarai. | And the families of the scribes that dwell in Jabes, singing and making melody, and abiding in tents. These are the Cinites, who came of Calor (Chamath) father of the house of Rechab.

3

1 *The Descendants of David* Now these were the sons of David that were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn Amnon of Achinoam the Jezrahelitess, the second Daniel of Abigail the
2 Carmelitess. | The third Absalom the son of Maacha the daughter of Tolmai king of Gessur, the fourth Adonias the son of
3 Aggith. | The fifth Saphatias of Abital, the sixth Jethrahem of
4 Egla his wife. | So six sons were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months. And in Jerusalem he
5 reigned three and thirty years. | And these sons were born to him in Jerusalem: Simmaa, and Sobab, and Nathan, and Solo-
6 mon, four of Bethsabee the daughter of Ammiel. | Jebaar also,
7 and Elisama, | And Eliphaleth, and Noge, and Nepheg, and
8.9 Japhia, | and Elisama, and Eliada, and Elipheleth, nine. | All these the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines: and they had a sister Thamar.

10 And Solomon's son was Roboam: whose son Abia begot Asa.
11 And his son was Josaphat, | the father of Joram. And Joram
12 begot Ochozias, of whom was born Joas. | And his son Amasias
13 begot Azarias. And Joathan the son of Azarias | begot Achaz,
14 the father of Ezechias, of whom was born Manasses. | And
15 Manasses begot Amon the father of Josias. | And the sons of Josias were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Joakim, the
16 third Sedecias, the fourth Sellum. | Of Joakim was born Jecho-
17 nias, and Sedecias. | The sons of Jechonias were Asir, Salathiel,
18 | Melchiram, Phadaia, Senneser and Jecemia, Sama, and Nada-
19 bia. | Of Phadaia, were born Zorobabel and Semei. Zorobabel
20 begot Mosollam, Hananias, and Salomith their sister: | Hasaba also, and Ohol, and Barachias, and Hasadias, Josabhesed, five.
21 | And the son of Hananias *was* Phaltias the father of Jeseias,

whose son was Raphaia. And his son was Arnan, of whom was
22 born Obdia, whose son was Sechenias. | The son of Sechenias,
was Semeia, whose sons were Hattus, and Jegaal, and Baria,
23 and Naaria, and Saphat, six in number. | The sons of Naaria,
24 Elioenai, and Ezechias, and Ezricam, three. | The sons of
Elioenai, Oduia, and Eliasub, and Pheleia, and Accub, and
Johanan, and Dalaia, and Anani, seven.

4

1 ***Other Descendants of Juda*** The sons of Juda: Phares,
2 Hesron, and Charmi, and Hur, and Sobal. And Raia the son of
Sobal begot Jahath, of whom were born Ahumai, and Laad.
3 These are the families of Sarathi. | And this *is* the posterity of
Etam: Jezrahel, and Jesema, and Jedebos: and the name of
4 their sister was Asalelphuni. | And Phanuel the father of
Gedor, and Ezar the father of Hosa: these are the sons of Hur
5 the firstborn of Ephratha the father of Bethlehem. | And Assur
6 the father of Thecua had two wives, Halaa, and Naara: | and
Naara bore him Ozam, and Hepher, and Themani, and Ahas-
7 thari: these are the sons of Naara. | And the sons of Halaa:
8 Sereth, Isaar, and Ethnan. | And Cos begot Anob, and Soboba,
9 and the kindred of Aharehel the son of Arum. | And Jabes
was more honorable than any of his brethren, and his mother
called his name Jabes, saying: Because I bore him with sorrow.
10 | And Jabes called upon the God of Israel, saying: If blessing
you will bless me, and will enlarge my borders, and your hand
be with me, and you save me from being oppressed by evil. And
God granted him the things he prayed for.
11 And Caleb the brother of Sua begot Mahir, who was the
12 father of Esthon. | And Esthon begot Bethrapha, and Phesse,
and Tehinna father of the city of Naas: these are the men of
13 Recha. | And the sons of Cenez were Othoniel and Saraia. And
14 the sons of Othoniel: Hathath, and Maonathi. | Maonathi
begot Ophra, and Saraia begot Joab the father of the Valley of
15 artificers: for artificers were there. | And the sons of Caleb
the son of Jephone, were Hir, and Ela, and Naham. And the
16 son of Ela: Cenez. | The sons also of Jaleleel: Ziph and Zipha,
17 Thiria and Asrael. | And the sons of Esra: Jether, and Mered,
and Epher, and Jalon, and he begot Mariam, and Sammai, and
18 Jesba the father of Esthamo. | And his wife Judaia bore Jared
the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Socho, and Icuthiel
the father of Zanoe. And these are the sons of Bethia the daugh-
19 ter of Pharao, whom Mered took to wife. | And the sons of his

3, 22: *Six:* counting the father in the number.

wife Odaia the sister of Naham the father of Celia, Garmi, and
20 Esthamo, who was of Machathi. | The sons also of Simon, Amnon, and Rinna the son of Hanan, and Thilon. And the sons of Jesi, Zoheth, and Benzoheth.
21 The sons of Sela the son of Juda: Her the father of Lecha, and Laada the father of Maresa, and the families of the house
22 of them that wrought fine linen in the House of oath. | And he that made the sun to stand, and the men of Lying, and Secure, and Burning, who were princes in Moab, and who returned into
23 Lahem. Now these are things of old. | These are the potters, and they dwelt in Plantations, and Hedges, with the king for his works, and they abode there.

24 ***The Posterity of Simeon*** The sons of Simeon: Namuel,
25 and Jamin, Jarib, Zara, Saul: | Sellum his son, Mapsam his son,
26 Masma his son. | The sons of Masma: Hamuel his son, Zachur
27 his son, Semei his son. | The sons of Semei were sixteen, and six daughters: but his brethren had not many sons, and the whole kindred could not reach to the sum of the children of
28 Juda. | And they dwelt in Bersabee, and Molada, and Hasar-
29.30 suhal, | and in Bala, and in Asom, and in Tholad, | and in
31 Bathuel, and in Horma, and in Siceleg, | and in Bethmarchaboth, and in Hasarsusim, and in Bethberai, and in Saarim. These
32 were their cities unto the reign of David. | Their towns also *were* Etam, and Aen, Remmon, and Thochen, and Asan, five
33 cities. | And all their villages round about these cities as far as Baal. This was their habitation, and the distribution of their dwellings.
34 And Mosabab, and Jemlech, and Josa, the son of Amasias, |
35 and Joel, and Jehu the son of Josabia the son of Saraia the son
36 of Asiel, | and Elioenai, and Jacoba, and Isuhaia, and Asaia, and
37 Adiel, and Ismiel, and Banaia, | Ziza also the son of Sephei the son of Allon the son of Idaia the son of Semri the son of Samaia.
38 | These were named princes in their kindreds, and in the houses
39 of their families were multiplied exceedingly. | And they went forth to enter into Gador as far as to the east side of the valley,
40 to seek pastures for their flocks. | And they found fat pastures, and very good, and a country spacious, and quiet, and fruitful,
41 in which some of the race of Cham had dwelt before. | And these whose names are written above, came in the days of Ezechias king of Juda: and they beat down their tents, and slew the inhabitants that were found there, and utterly destroyed them unto this day: and they dwelt in their place, because they
42 found there fat pastures. | Some also of the children of Simeon, five hundred men, went into mount Seir, having for their cap-

taims Phaltias and Naaria and Raphaia and Oziel the sons of
16 Jesi. | And they slew the remnant of the Amalecites, who had
been able to escape, and they dwelt there in their stead unto this
day.

5

1 *The Line of Ruben.* Now the sons of Ruben the firstborn
of Israel, (for he was his firstborn: but forasmuch as he defiled
his father's bed, his first birthright was given to the sons of
Joseph the son of Israel, and he was not accounted for the first-
2 born. | But of the race of Juda, who was the strongest among
his brethren, came the princes: but the first birthright was ac-
counted to Joseph).
3 The sons then of Ruben the firstborn of Israel were Enoch,
4 and Phallu, Hesron and Charmi. | The sons of Joel: Samaia his
5 son, Gog his son, Semei his son, | Micha his son, Reia his son,
6 Baal his son, | Beera his son, whom Thelgathphalnasar king
of the Assyrians carried away captive, and he was prince in the
7 tribe of Ruben. | And his brethren, and all his kindred, when
they were numbered by their families, had for princes Jeiiel,
8 and Zacharias. | And Bala the son of Azaz, the son of Samma,
the son of Joel, dwelt in Aroer as far as Nebo, and Beelmeon.
9 | And eastward he had his habitation as far as the entrance of
10 the desert, and the river Euphrates. For they possessed a great
number of cattle in the land of Galaad. | And in the days of
Saul they fought against the Agarites, and slew them, and dwelt
in their tents in their stead, in all the country, that looks to the
east of Galaad.
11 And the children of Gad dwelt over against them in the land
12 of Basan, as far as Selcha: | Joiiel the chief, and Saphan the
13 second, and Janai, and Saphat in Basan. | And their brethren
according to the houses of their kindreds, *were* Michael, and
Mosollam, and Seba, and Jora, and Jacan, and Zie, and Heber
14 seven. | These were the sons of Abihail, the son of Huri, the
son of Jara, the son of Galaad, the son of Michael, the son of
15 Jesisi, the son of Jeddo, the son of Buz. | And their brethren
the sons of Ahdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house in their
16 families, | and they dwelt in Galaad, and in Basan and in the
towns thereof, and in all the suburbs of Saron, unto the borders.
17 All these were numbered in the days of Joathan king of Juda,
and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

18 *Gad and Manasses.* The sons of Ruben, and of Gad, and of
the half tribe of Manasses, fighting men, bearing shields, and
swords, and bending the bow, and trained up to battles, four

and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore that went
19 out to war. | They fought against the Agarites: but the
20 Itureans, and Naphis, and Nodab, | gave them help. And the Agarites were delivered into their hands, and all that were with them, because they called upon God in the battle: and he heard
21 them, because they had put their faith in him. | And they took all that they possessed, of camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand,
22 and of men a hundred thousand souls. | And many fell down slain: for it was the battle of the Lord. And they dwelt in their stead till the captivity.
23 And the children of the half tribe of Manasses possessed the land, from the borders of Basan unto Baal, Hermon, and Sanir,
24 and mount Hermon; for their number was great. | And these were the heads of the house of their kindred: Epher, and Jesi, and Eliel, and Esriel, and Jeremia, and Odoia, and Jediel; most valiant and powerful men, and famous chiefs in their families.
25 But they forsook the God of their fathers, and went astray after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed
26 before them. | And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Phul king of the Assyrians, and the spirit of Thelgathphalnasar king of Assur: and he carried away Ruben, and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasses, and brought them to Lahela, and to Habor, and to Ara, and to the river of Gozan, unto this day.

6

1 ***The Sons of Levi and Aaron*** The sons of Levi were
2 Gerson, Caath, and Merari. | The sons of Caath: Amram,
3 Isaar, Hebron, and Oziel. | The children of Amram: Aaron, Moses, and Mary. The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abiu,
4 Eleazar and Ithamar. | Eleazar begot Phinees, and Phinees
5 begot Abisue. | And Abisue begot Bocci, and Bocci begot Ozi.
6.7 | Ozi begot Zaraias, and Zaraias begot Maraioth. | And Ma-
8 raioth begot Amarias, and Amarias begot Achitob. | Achitob
9 begot Sadoc, and Sadoc begot Achimaas. | Achimaas begot
10 Azarias, Azarias begot Johanan. | Johanan begot Azarias. This is he that executed the priestly office in the house which Solomon
11 built in Jerusalem. | And Azarias begot Amarias and Amarias
12 begot Achitob. | And Achitob begot Sadoc, and Sadoc begot
13 Sellum. | Sellum begot Helcias, and Helcias begot Azarias, |
14.15 Azarias begot Saraias, and Saraias begot Josedec. | Now Josedec went out, when the Lord carried away Juda, and Jerusalem, by the hands of Nabuchodonosor.
16 So the sons of Levi were Gerson, Caath, and Merari.
17 And these are the names of the sons of Gerson: Lobni and

18 Semei. | The sons of Caath: Amram, and Isaar, and Hebron,
19 and Oziel. | The sons of Merari: Moholi and Musi. And these
20 are the kindreds of Levi according to their families. | Of Ger-
21 son: Lobni his son, Jahath his son, Zamma his son, | Joah his
22 son, Addo his son, Zara his son, Jethrai his son. | The sons of
23 Caath: Aminadab his son, Core his son, Asir his son, | Elcana
24 his son, Abiasaph his son, Asir his son, | Thahath his son, Uriel
25 his son, Ozias his son, Saul his son. | The sons of Elcana:
26 Amasai, and Achimoth, | and Elcana. The sons of Elcana:
27 Sophai his son, Nahath his son, | Eliab his son, Jeroham his
28 son, Elcana his son. | The sons of Samuel: the firstborn Vas-
29 seni, and Abia. | And the sons of Merari: Moholi, Lobni his
30 son, Semei his son, Oza his son, | Sammaa his son, Haggia his
son, Asaia his son.

31 These are they, whom David set over the singing men of
32 the house of the Lord, after that the ark was placed. | And
they ministered before the tabernacle of the testimony, with
singing, until Solomon built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem,
33 and they stood according to their order in the ministry. | And
these are they that stood with their sons: of the sons of Caath,
34 Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, | the son
of Elcana, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of
35 Thohu, | the son of Suph, the son of Elcana, the son of Ma-
36 hath, the son of Amasai, | the son of Elcana, the son of Johel,
37 the son of Azarias, the son of Sophonias, | the son of Thahath,
38 the son of Asir, the son of Abiasaph, the son of Core, | the son
of Isaar, the son of Caath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. |
39 And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, Asaph the
40 son of Barachias, the son of Samaa, | the son of Michael, the
41 son of Basaia, the son of Melchia, | the son of Athanai, the
42 son of Zara, the son of Adaia, | the son of Ethan, the son of
43 Zamma, the son of Semei, | the son of Jeth, the son of Gerson,
44 the son of Levi. | And the sons of Merari their brethren, on the
left hand: Ethan the son of Cusi, the son of Abdi, the son of
45 Meloch, | the son of Hasabia, the son of Amasai, the son of
46 Helcias, | the son of Amasai, the son of Boni, the son of Somer,
47 | the son of Moholi, the son of Musi, the son of Merari, the son
of Levi.

48 Their brethren also, the Levites, were appointed for all the
49 ministry of the tabernacle of the house of the Lord. | But
Aaron and his sons offered burnt offerings upon the altar of
holocausts, and upon the altar of incense, for every work of the
holy of holies: and to pray for Israel according to all that Moses
50 the servant of God had commanded. | And these are the sons
of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinees his son, Abisue his son, |

51.52 Bocci his son, Ozi his son, Zarahia his son, | Meraioth his
53 son, Amarias his son, Achitob his son, | Sadoc his son, Achim-
aas his son.

54 *The Cities of the Priests* And these are their dwelling
places by the towns and confines, to wit, of the sons of Aaron,
of the families of the Caathites: for they fell to them by lot. |
55 And they gave them Hebron in the land of Juda, and the sub-
56 urbs thereof round about: | But the fields of the city, and the
57 villages to Caleb son of Jephone. | And to the sons of Aaron
they gave the cities for refuge, Hebron, and Lobna, and the sub-
58 urbs thereof, | and Jether and Esthemo, with their suburbs,
59 and Helon, and Dabir with their suburbs: | Asan also, and
60 Bethsames, with their suburbs. | And out of the tribe of Ben-
jamin: Gabee and its suburbs, Almath with its suburbs,
Anathoth also with its suburbs: all their cities throughout their
families were thirteen.
61 And to the sons of Caath that remained of their kindred
they gave out of the half tribe of Manasses ten cities in pos-
62 session. | And to the sons of Gerson by their families out of
the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Aser, and out of
the tribe of Nephtali, and out of the tribe of Manasses in Basan,
63 thirteen cities. | And to the sons of Merari by their families,
out of the tribe of Ruben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out
64 of the tribe of Zabulon, they gave by lot twelve cities. | And
the children of Israel gave to the Levites the cities, and their
65 suburbs. | And they gave them by lot, out of the tribe of the
sons of Juda, and out of the tribe of the sons of Simeon, and
out of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin, these cities which they
66 called by their names. | And to them that were of the kindred
of the sons of Caath, and the cities in their borders were of the
67 tribe of Ephraim. | And they gave them the cities of refuge:
Sichem with its suburbs in mount Ephraim, and Gazer with its
68 suburbs, | Jecmaan also with its suburbs, and Beth-horon in
69 like manner, Helon also with its suburbs, and Gethremmon in
70 like manner, | and out of the half tribe of Manasses, Aner and
its suburbs, Baalam and its suburbs: to wit, to them that were
71 left of the family of the sons of Caath. | And to the sons of
Gersom, out of the kindred of the half tribe of Manasses,
Gaulon, in Basan, and its suburbs, and Astharoth with its sub-
72 urbs. | Out of the tribe of Issachar, Cedes and its suburbs, and
73 Dabereth with its suburbs; | Ramoth also and its suburbs, and
74 Anem with its suburbs. | And out of the tribe of Aser: Masal
75 with its suburbs, and Abdon in like manner; | Hucac also and
76 its suburbs, and Rohob with its suburbs. | And out of the

tribe of Nephtali, Cedes in Galilee and its suburbs, Hamon with
77 its suburbs, and Cariathaim and its suburbs. | And to the sons
of Merari that remained, out of the tribe of Zabulon, Rem-
78 mono and its suburbs, and Thabor with its suburbs. | Beyond
the Jordan also over against Jericho, on the east side of the
Jordan, out of the tribe of Ruben: Bosor in the wilderness with
79 its suburbs, and Jassa with its suburbs; | Cademoth also and
80 its suburbs, and Mephaat with its suburbs; | moreover also
out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Galaad and its suburbs,
81 and Manaim with its suburbs; | Hesebon also with its sub-
urbs, and Jazer with its suburbs.

7

1 ***The Sons of Issachar and Benjamin*** Now the sons of
Issachar were Thola, and Phua, Jasub and Simeron, four. |
2 The sons of Thola: Ozi, and Raphaia, and Jeriel, and Jemai,
and Jebsem, and Samuel, chiefs of the houses of their kindreds.
Of the posterity of Thola were numbered in the days of David,
3 two and twenty thousand six hundred most valiant men. | The
sons of Ozi: Izrahia, of whom were born Michael, and Obadia,
4 and Joel, and Jesia, five all great men. | And there were with
them by their families and peoples, six and thirty thousand most
valiant men ready for war: for they had many wives and chil-
5 dren. | Their brethren also throughout all the house of Issachar
were numbered fourscore and seven thousand most valiant men
for war.

6 The sons of Benjamin were Bela, and Bechor, and Jadihel,
7 three. | The sons of Bela: Esbon, and Ozi, and Oziel, and Jeri-
moth and Urai, five chiefs of their families, and most valiant
warriors, and their number was twenty-two thousand and
8 thirty-four. | And the sons of Bechor were Zamira, and Joas,
and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Amri, and Jerimoth, and Abia,
and Anathoth, and Almath: all these were the sons of Bechor.
9 | And they were numbered by the families, heads of their kin-
dreds, most valiant men for war, twenty thousand and two
10 hundred. | And the son of Jadihel: Balan. And the sons of
Balan; Jehus, and Benjamin, and Aod, and Chanana, and
11 Zethan, and Tharsis, and Ahisahar. | All these were sons of
Jadihel, heads of their kindreds, most valiant men, seventeen
12 thousand and two hundred fit to go out to war. | Sepham also
and Hapham the sons of Hir: and Hasim the sons of Aher.

The Descendants of Nephtali, Manasses and Ephraim
13 And the sons of Nephtali were Jasiel, and Guni, and Jezer, and
Sellum, sons of Bala.

14 And the son of Manasses, Ezriel: and his concubine the Syrian
15 bore Machir the father of Galaad. | And Machir took wives
for his sons Happhim, and Saphan: and he had a sister named
Maacha. The name of the second was Salphaad, and Salphaad
16 had daughters. | And Maacha the wife of Machir bore a son,
and she called his name Phares. And the name of his brother
17 was Sares: and his sons were Ulam and Recen. | And the son
of Ulam, Baden. These are the sons of Galaad, the son of
18 Machir, the son of Manasses. | And his sister named Queen
19 bore Goodlyman, and Abiezer, and Mohola. | And the sons of
Semida were Ahiu, and Sechem, and Leci, and Aniam.
20 And the sons of Ephraim were Suthala, Bared his son, Tha-
hath his son, Elada his son, Thahath his son, and his son Zahad,
21 | and his son Suthala, and his son Ezer and Elad: and the men
of Geth born in the land slew them, because they came down to
22 invade their possessions. | And Ephraim their father mourned
23 many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. | And he
went in to his wife: and she conceived and bore a son, and he
called his name Beria, because he was born when it went evil
24 with his house: | and his daughter was Sara, who built
25 Bethoron, the nether and the upper, and Ozensara. | And
Rapha was his son, and Reseph, and Thale, of whom was born
26 Thaan, | who begot Laadan. And his son was Ammiud, who
27 begot Elisama, | of whom was born Nun, who had Josue for
28 his son. | And their possessions and habitations were Bethel
with her daughters, and eastward Noran, and westward Gazer
and her daughters, Sichem also with her daughters, as far as
Asa with her daughters.
29 And by the borders of the sons of Manasses, Bethsan and
her daughters, Thanach and her daughters, Mageddo and her
daughters, Dor and her daughters. In these dwelt the children
of Joseph, the son of Israel.

30 ***The Children of Aser*** The children of Aser were Jemna,
31 and Jesua, and Jessui, and Baria, and Sara their sister. | And
the sons of Baria: Haber, and Melchiel; he is the father of
32 Barsaith. | And Heber begot Jephlat, and Somer, and Hotham,
33 and Suaa their sister. | The sons of Jephlat: Phosech, and
34 Chamaal, and Asoth: these are the sons of Jephlat. | And the
35 sons of Somer: Ahi, and Roaga, and Haba, and Aram. | And
the sons of Helem his brother: Supha, and Jemna, and Selles,
36 and Amal. | The sons of Supha: Sue, Harnapher, and Sual,

7, 23: *Beria:* signifies, in evil or in affliction.

37 and Beri, and Jamra, | Bosor and Hod, and Samma, and
38 Salesa, and Jethran, and Bera. | The sons of Jether: Jephone,
39 and Phaspha, and Ara. | And the sons of Olla: Aree, and
40 Hamiel, and Resia. | All these were sons of Aser, heads of their families, choice and most valiant captains of captains. And the number of them that were of the age that was fit for war, was six and twenty thousand.

8

1 *Genealogy from Benjamin to Saul* Now Benjamin begot Bale his firstborn, Asbel the second, Ahara the third, |
2-3 Nohaa the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. | And the sons of
4 Bale were Addar, and Gera, and Abiud, | and Abisue, and
5 Naaman, and Ahoe, | and Gera, and Sephuphan, and Huram.
6 | These are the sons of Ahod, heads of families that dwelt in
7 Gaba, who were removed into Manahath. | And Naaman, and Achia, and Gera he removed them, and begot Oza, and
8 Ahiud. | And Saharim begot in the land of Moab, after he
9 sent away Husim and Bara his wives. | And he begot of Hodes
10 his wife Jobab, and Sebia, and Mosa, and Melchom, | and
Jehus, and Sechia, and Marma. These were his sons heads of
11 their families. | And Mehusim begot Abitub, and Elphaal. |
12 And the sons of Elphaal were Heber, and Misaam, and Samad:
13 who built Ono, and Lod, and its daughters. | And Baria, and
Sama were heads of their kindreds that dwelt in Aialon: these
14 drove away the inhabitants of Geth. | And Ahio, and Sesac,
15 16 and Jerimoth, and Zabadia, and Arod, and Heder, | and
17 Michael, and Jespha, and Joba, the sons of Baria. | And Zab-
18 adia, and Mosollam, and Hezeci, and Heber, | and Jesamari,
19 and Jezlia, and Jobab, sons of Elphaal. | and Jacim, and Zechri,
20-21 and Zabdi, | and Elioenai, and Selethai and Eliel, | and
22 Adaia, and Baraia, and Samareth, the sons of Semei. | And
23 Jesphan, and Heber, and Eliel, | and Abdon, and Zechri, and
24-25 Hanan, and Hanania, and Elam, and Anathothia, | and
26 Jephdaia, and Phanuel, the sons of Sesac. | And Samari, and
27 Soboria, and Othalia, | and Jersia, and Elia, and Zechri, the
28 sons of Jeroham. | These were the chief fathers, and heads of
29 their families who dwelt in Jerusalem. | And at Gabaon dwelt
30 Abigabaon, and the name of his wife was Maacha. And his
31-32 firstborn son Abdon, and Sur, and Cis, and Baal, and Nadab, | and Gedor, and Ahio, and Zacher, and Macelloth. | And
Macelloth begot Samaa: and they dwelt over against their
brethren in Jerusalem with their brethren.

39 And Ner begot Cis, and Cis begot Saul. And Saul begot Jona-

34 than and Melchisua, and Abinadab, and Esbaal. | And the son
of Jonathan was Meribbaal. And Meribbaal begot Micha. |
35 And the sons of Micha were Phithon, and Melech, and Tharaa,
36 and Ahaz. | And Ahaz begot Joada. And Joada begot Alamath,
37 and Azmoth, and Zamri. And Zamri begot Mosa. | And Mosa
begot Banaa, whose son was Rapha, of whom was born Elasa,
38 who begot Asel. | And Asel had six sons whose names were
Ezricam, Bocru, Ismahel, Saria, Obdia, and Hanan. All these
39 were the sons of Asel. | And the sons of Esec, his brother were
Ulam the firstborn, and Jehus the second, and Eliphalet the
40 third. | And the sons of Ulam were most valiant men, and
archers of great strength: and they had many sons and grand-
sons, even to a hundred and fifty. All these were children of
Benjamin.

9

1 ***The Inhabitants of Jerusalem*** And all Israel was num-
bered: and the sum of them was written in the book of the kings
of Israel, and Juda. And they were carried away to Babylon
2 for their transgression. | Now the first that dwelt in their pos-
sessions, and in their cities, were the Israelites, and the priests
3 and the Levites, and the Nathineans. | And in Jerusalem dwelt
of the children of Juda, and of the children of Benjamin, and
4 of the children of Ephraim, and of Manasses: | Othei the son
of Ammiud, the son of Amri, the son of Omrai, the son of
5 Bonni, of the sons of Phares the son of Juda. | And of Siloni:
6 Asaia the firstborn, and his sons. | And of the sons of Zara:
7 Jehuel, and their brethren, six hundred and ninety. | And of
the sons of Benjamin: Salo the son of Mosollam, the son of
8 Oduia, the son of Asana. | And Jobania the son of Jeroham.
And Ela the son of Ozi, the son of Mochori. And Mosollam the
9 son of Saphatias, the son of Rahuel, the son of Jebania: | and
their brethren by their families, nine hundred and fifty-six. All
these were heads of their families, by the houses of their fathers.
10.11 And of the priests: Jedaia, Joiarib, and Jachin: | and
Azarias the son of Helcias, the son of Mosollam, the son of
Sadoc, the son of Maraioth, the son of Achitob, high priest of
12 the house of God. | And Adaias the son of Jeroham, the son
of Phassur, the son of Melchias, and Maasai the son of Adiel,
the son of Jezra, the son of Mosollam, the son of Mosollamith,
13 the son of Emmer: and their brethren heads in their families

8, 33-34: *Esbaal:* alias Isboseth. *Meribbaal:* otherwise Miphiboseth (see 2 Sm 4, 4).

9, 2: Nathineans: these were the posterity of the Gabaonites, whose office was to bring wood, water, etc., for the services of the temple.

a thousand seven hundred and threescore, very strong and able men for the work of the ministry in the house of God.

14 *The Offices of Priests and Levites* And of the Levites: Semeia the son of Hassub, the son of Ezricam, the son of Hasebia of the sons of Merari. | And Bacbacar the carpenter, and Galal, and Mathania the son of Micha, the son of Zechri, the son of Asaph. | And Obdia the son of Semeia, the son of Galal, the son of Idithum: and Barachia the son of Asa, the son of Elcana, who dwelt in the suburbs of Netophati. | And the porters were Sellum, and Accub, and Telmon, and Ahimam: and their brother Sellum was the prince. | Until that time, in the king's gate eastward, the sons of Levi waited by their turns. | But Sellum the son of Core, the son of Abiasaph, the son of Core, with his brethren and his father's house, the Corites were over the works of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle: and their families in turns were keepers of the entrance of the camp of the Lord. | And Phinees the son of Eleazar was their prince before the Lord. | And Zacharias the son of Mosollamia was porter of the gate of the tabernacle of the testimony. | All these that were chosen to be porters at the gates were two hundred and twelve: and they were registered in their proper towns: whom David and Samuel the seer appointed in their trust, | as also their sons, to keep the gates of the house of the Lord, and the tabernacle by their turns. | In four quarters were the porters: that is to say, toward the east, and west, and north, and south. | And their brethren dwelt in villages; and came upon their sabbath days from time to time.

26 To these four Levites were committed the whole number of the porters. And they were over the chambers, and treasures, of the house of the Lord. | And they abode in their watches round about the temple of the Lord: that when it was time, they might open the gates in the morning. | And some of their stock had the charge of the vessels for the ministry: for the vessels were both brought in and carried out by number. | Some of them also had the instruments of the sanctuary committed unto them: and the charge of the fine flour, and wine, and oil, and frankincense, and spices. | And the sons of the priests made the ointments of the spices. | And Mathathias a Levite, the firstborn of Sellum the Corite, was overseer of such things as were fried in the frying pan. | And some of the sons of Caath their brethren, were over the loaves of proposition, to prepare always new for every sabbath. | These are the chief of the singing men of the families of the Levites, who dwelt in the chambers, by the temple, that they might serve continually day and night in their

34 ministry. | The heads of the Levites, princes in their families,
abode in Jerusalem.
35 And in Gabaon dwelt Jehiel the father of Gabaon, and the
36 name of his wife was Maacha. | His firstborn son Abdon, and
37 Sur, and Cis, and Baal, and Ner, and Nadab, | Gedor also, and
38 Ahio, and Zacharias, and Macelloth. | And Macelloth begot
Samaan: these dwelt over against their brethren in Jerusalem,
39 with their brethren. | Now Ner begot Cis: and Cis begot Saul:
and Saul begot Jonathan and Melchisua, and Abinadab, and
40 Esbaal. | And the son of Jonathan, was Meribbaal: and Merib-
41 baal begot Micha. | And the sons of Micha were Phithon, and
42 Melech, and Tharaa, and Ahaz. | And Ahaz begot Jara, and
Jara begot Alamath, and Azmoth, and Zamri. And Zamri begot
43 Mosa. | And Mosa begot Banaa: whose son Raphaia begot
44 Elasa: of whom was born Asel. | And Asel had six sons whose
names are, Ezricam, Bocru, Ismahel, Saria, Obdia, Hanan:
these are the sons of Asel.

10

1 ***The Death of Saul*** Now the Philistines fought against
Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines,
2 and fell down wounded in mount Gelboe. | And the Philistines
drew near pursuing after Saul, and his sons. And they killed
3 Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchisua the sons of Saul. | And
the battle grew hard against Saul: and the archers reached him,
4 and wounded him with arrows. | And Saul said to his armor-
bearer: Draw your sword, and kill me: lest these uncircumcised
come, and mock me. But his armorbearer would not, for he was
5 struck with fear. So Saul took his sword, and fell upon it. | And
when his armorbearer saw it, to wit, that Saul was dead, he also
6 fell upon his sword and died. | So Saul died, and his three sons:
and all his house fell together.
7 And when the men of Israel that dwelt in the plains, saw
this, they fled. And Saul and his sons being dead, they forsook
their cities, and were scattered up and down: and the Philistines
8 came, and dwelt in them. | And the next day the Philistines
taking away the spoils of them that were slain, found Saul and
9 his sons lying on mount Gelboe. | And when they had stripped
him, and cut off his head, and taken away his armor, they sent
it into their land, to be carried about, and shown in the temples
10 of the idols and to the people. | And his armor they dedicated
in the temple of their god, and his head they fastened up in the
11 temple of Dagon. | And when the men of Jabes Galaad had
12 heard this, to wit, all that the Philistines had done to Saul, | all
the valiant men of them arose and took the bodies of Saul and

of his sons, and brought them to Jabes, and buried their bones under the oak that was in Jabes: and they fasted seven days. |
13 So Saul died for his iniquities, because he transgressed the commandment of the Lord, which he had commanded, and kept it
14 not: and moreover consulted also a witch, | and trusted not in the Lord. Therefore he slew him, and transferred his kingdom to David the son of Isai.

11

1 ***David's Consecration*** Then all Israel gathered themselves to David in Hebron, saying: We are your bone, and your flesh. |
2 Yesterday also, and the day before when Saul was king, it was you that led out and brought in Israel. For the Lord your God said to you: You shall feed my people Israel, and you shall be
3 ruler over them. | So all the ancients of Israel came to the king to Hebron: and David made a covenant with them before the Lord. And they anointed him king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke in the hand of Samuel.
4 And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus,
5 where the Jebusites were the inhabitants of the land. | And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David: You shall not come in here. But David took the castle of Sion, which is the city of David. |
6 And he said: Whosoever shall first strike the Jebusites, shall be the head and chief captain. And Joab the son of Sarvia went up
7 first, and was made the general. | And David dwelt in the castle,
8 and therefore it was called the city of David. | And he built the city round about from Mello all round, and Joab built the rest
9 of the city. | And David went on growing and increasing: and the Lord of hosts was with him.

10 ***David's Valiant Men*** These are the chief of the valiant men of David, who helped him to be made king over all Israel, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke to Israel. |
11 And this is the number of the heroes of David: Jesbaam the son of Hachamoni the chief among the thirty. He lifted up his spear against three hundred wounded by him at one time. |
12 And after him was Eleazar his uncle's son, the Ahohite, who
13 was one of the three mightiest. | He was with David in Phesdomim, when the Philistines were gathered to that place to battle: and the field of that country was full of barley, and
14 the people fled from before the Philistines. | But these men stood in the midst of the field, and defended it: and they slew the Philistines, and the Lord gave a great deliverance to his
15 people. | And three of the thirty captains went down to the rock, wherein David was, to the cave of Odollam, when the

16 Philistines encamped in the valley of Raphaim. | And David
was in a hold, and the garrison of the Philistines in Bethlehem.
17 And David longed, and said: O that some man would give me
18 water of the cistern of Bethlehem, which is in the gate. | And
these three broke through the midst of the camp of the Philis-
tines, and drew water out of the cistern of Bethlehem, which
was in the gate, and brought it to David to drink: and he would
19 not drink of it, but rather offered it to the Lord, | saying: God
forbid that I should do this in the sight of my God, and should
drink the blood of these men; for with the danger of their lives
they have brought me the water. And therefore he would not
drink. These things did the three most valiant.
20 And Abisai the brother of Joab, he was chief of three, and
he lifted up his spear against three hundred whom he slew, and
21 he was renowned among the three, | and illustrious among
the second three, and their captain: but yet he attained not to
22 the first three. | Banaias the son of Joiada, a most valiant man,
of Cabseel, who had done many acts: he slew the two ariels of
Moab: and he went down, and killed a lion in the midst of a pit
23 in the time of snow. | And he slew an Egyptian, whose stature
was of five cubits, and who had a spear like a weaver's beam.
And he went down to him with a staff, and plucked away the
spear, that he held in his hand, and slew him with his own
24 spear. | These things did Banaias the son of Joiada, who was
25 renowned among the three valiant ones, | and the first among
the thirty, but yet to the three he attained not: and David made
him of his council.
26 Moreover the most valiant men of the army were Asahel
brother of Joab, and Elchanan the son of his uncle of Bethle-
27.28 hem. | Sammoth an Arorite, Helles a Phalonite, | Ira the son
29 of Acces a Thecuite, Abiezer an Anathothite, | Sobbochai a
30 Husathite, Ilai an Ahohite, | Maharai a Netophathite, Heled
31 the son of Baana a Netophathite, | Ethai the son of Ribai of
32 Gabaath of the sons of Benjamin, Banai a Pharathonite, | Hurai
of the torrent Gaas, Abiel an Arbathite, Azmoth a Bauramite,
33 Eliaba a Salabonite, | the sons of Assem a Gezonite, Jonathan
34 the son of Sage an Ararite, | Ahiam the son of Sachar an
35.36 Ararite, | Eliphal the son of Ur, | Hepher a Mecherathite,
37 Ahia a Phelonite, | Hesro a Carmelite, Naarai the son of Asbai,
38 | Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibahar the son of Agarai. |
39 Selec an Ammonite, Naharai a Berothite, the armorbearer of
40 Joab the son of Sarvia. | Ira a Jethrite, Gareb a Jethrite, |

11, 22: *Two ariels:* two lions, or lion-like men: ariel means, in Hebrew, a lion.

41.42 Urias a Hethite, Zabad the son of Oholi, | Adina the son of Siza a Rubenite the prince of the Rubenites, and thirty with 43 him, | Hanan the son of Maacha, and Josaphat a Mathanite, | 44 Ozia an Astarothite, Samma, and Jehiel the sons of Hotham an 45 Aroïte, | Jedihel the son of Samri, and Joha his brother a 46 Thosaite, | Eliel a Mahumite, and Jeribai, and Josaia the sons of Elnaem, and Jethma a Moabite, Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel of Masobia.

12

1 ***The Men Who Followed David*** Now these are they that came to David to Siceleg, while he yet fled from Saul the son of 2 Cis, and they were most valiant and excellent warriors, | bending the bow, and using either hand in hurling stones with slings, and shooting arrows: of the brethren of Saul of Benjamin: | 3 the chief Ahiezer, and Joas, the sons of Samaa of Gabaath, and Jaziel, and Phallet, the sons of Asmoth, and Baracha, and 4 Jehu an Anathothite. | And Samaias of Gabaon, the stoutest amongst the thirty and over the thirty; Jeremias, and Jeheziel, 5 and Johanan, and Jezabad of Gaderoth: | and Eluzai, and Jerimuth, and Baalia, and Samaria, and Saphatia the Haruphite: 6 | Elcana, and Jesia, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jesbaam of 7 Carehim: | And Joela, and Zabadia, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8 From Gaddi also there went over to David, when he lay hidden in the wilderness, most valiant men and excellent warriors, holding shield and spear: whose faces were like the faces of a lion, and they were swift like the roebucks on the mountains. 9.10 | Ezer the chief, Obdias the second, Eliab the third, | Mas- 11 mana the fourth, Jeremias the fifth, | Ethi the sixth, Eliel the 12.13 seventh, | Johanan the eighth, Elzebad the ninth, | Jerenias 14 the tenth, Machbani the eleventh, | these *were* of the sons of Gad, captains of the army: the least of them was captain over a 15 hundred soldiers, and the greatest over a thousand. | These are they who passed over the Jordan in the first month, when it used to flow over its banks: and they put to flight all that dwelt in the valleys both toward the east and toward the west.

16 And there came also of the men of Benjamin and of Juda to 17 the hold in which David abode. | And David went out to meet them, and said: If you have come peaceably to me to help me, let my heart be joined to you. But if you plot against me for my enemies whereas I have no iniquity in my hands, let the God of 18 our fathers see, and judge. | But the spirit came upon Amasai the chief among thirty, and he said: We are yours, O David, and for you, O son of Isai: peace, peace be to you, and peace to

your helpers. For your God is helping you. So David received
19 them, and made them captains of the band. | And there were
some of Manasses that went over to David, when he came with
the Philistines against Saul to fight. But he did not fight with
them: because the lords of the Philistines taking counsel sent
him back, saying: With the danger of our heads he will return
20 to his master Saul. | So when he went back to Siceleg, there
fled to him of Manasses, Ednas and Jozabad, and Jedihel, and
Michael, and Ednas, and Jozabad, and Eliu, and Salathi, cap-
21 tains of thousands in Manasses. | These helped David against
the rovers: for they were all most valiant men, and were made
22 commanders in the army. | Moreover day by day there came
some to David to help him till they became a great number, like
the army of God.

23 *The Armies of David That Made Him King* And this
is the number of the chiefs of the army who came to David,
when he was in Hebron, to transfer to him the kingdom of Saul,
24 according to the word of the Lord. | The sons of Juda bearing
shield and spear, six thousand eight hundred well appointed to
25 war. | Of the sons of Simeon valiant men for war, seven thou-
26 sand one hundred. | Of the sons of Levi, four thousand six
27 hundred. | And Joiada prince of the race of Aaron, and with
28 him three thousand seven hundred. | Sadoc also a young man
of excellent disposition, and the house of his father, twenty-
29 two principal men. | And of the sons of Benjamin the brethren
of Saul, three thousand: for hitherto a great part of them fol-
30 lowed the house of Saul. | And of the sons of Ephraim, twenty
thousand eight hundred, men of great valor renowned in their
31 kindreds. | And of the half tribe of Manasses, eighteen thou-
sand: every one by their names, came to make David king. |
32 Also of the sons of Issachar men of understanding, that knew
all times to order what Israel should do, two hundred principal
men: and all the rest of the tribe followed their counsel. |
33 And of Zabulon such as went forth to battle, and stood in array
well appointed with armor for war, there came fifty thousand
34 to his aid, with no double heart. | And of Nephtali, a thousand
leaders: and with them seven and thirty thousand, furnished
35 with shield and spear. | Of Dan also, twenty-eight thousand six
36 hundred prepared for battle. | And of Aser, forty thousand
37 going forth to fight, and challenging in battle. | And on the
other side of the Jordan of the sons of Ruben, and of Gad, and
of the half of the tribe of Manasses, a hundred and twenty
thousand, furnished with arms for war.
38 All these men of war well appointed to fight came with a

perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel.
And all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David
39 king. | And they were there with David three days eating and
40 drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them. | Moreover they that were near them, even as far as Issachar, and Zabulon, and Nephtali, brought loaves on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, to eat: meal, figs, raisins, wine, oil, and oxen, and sheep in abundance: for there was joy in Israel.

13

1 ***The Ark Brought Back*** And David consulted with the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, and with all the com-
2 manders. | And he said to all the assembly of Israel: If it please you, and if the words which I speak come from the Lord our God, let us send to the rest of our brethren into all the countries of Israel, and to the priests, and the Levites, that dwell in the
3 suburbs of the cities, to gather themselves to us, | and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we sought it not in
4 the days of Saul. | And all the multitude answered that it should be so: for the word pleased all the people.
5 So David assembled all Israel from Sihor of Egypt, even to the entering into Emath, to bring the ark of God from
6 Cariathiarim. | And David went up with all the men of Israel to the hill of Cariathiarim which is in Juda, to bring thence the ark of the Lord God sitting upon the cherubim, where his name
7 is called upon. | And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, out of the house of Abinadab. And Oza and his brother
8 drove the cart. | And David and all Israel played before God with all their might: with hymns, and with harps, and with psalteries, and timbrels, and cymbals, and trumpets.

9 ***Oza Punished for Touching the Ark*** And when they came to the floor of Chidon, Oza put forth his hand, to hold up the ark: for the ox being wanton had made it lean a little on
10 one side. | And the Lord was angry with Oza, and struck him, because he had touched the ark; and he died there before the
11 Lord. | And David was troubled because the Lord had divided Oza: and he called that place the Breach of Oza to this day. |
12 And he feared God at that time, saying: How can I bring in the
13 ark of God to me? | And therefore he brought it not home to himself, that is, into the city of David, but carried it aside into
14 the house of Obededom the Gethite. | And the ark of God remained in the house of Obededom three months: and the Lord blessed his house, and all that he had.

14

1 ***The Children of David*** And Hiram king of Tyre sent
messengers to David, and cedar trees, and masons, and car-
2 penters, to build him a house. | And David perceived that the
Lord had confirmed him king over Israel, and that his kingdom
3 was exalted over his people Israel. | And David took other wives
4 in Jerusalem: and he begot sons, and daughters. | Now these
are the names of them that were born to him in Jerusalem:
5 Samua, and Sobad, Nathan, and Solomon. | Jebahar, and
6 Elisua, and Eliphalet, | and Noga, and Napheg, and Japhia,
7 Elisama, and Baaliada, and Eliphalet.

8 ***David Defeats the Philistines*** And the Philistines hearing
that David was anointed king over all Israel, went all up to
seek him: and David heard of it, and went out against them. |
9 And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the vale of
10 Raphaim. | And David consulted the Lord, saying: Shall I go
up against the Philistines, and will you deliver them into my
hand? And the Lord said to him: Go up, and I will deliver them
11 into your hand. | And when they came to Baalpharasim, David
defeated them there. And he said: God has divided my enemies
by my hand, as waters are divided: and therefore the name of
12 that place was called Baalpharasim. | And they left there their
gods: and David commanded that they should be burned. |
13 Another time also the Philistines made an irruption, and spread
14 themselves abroad in the valley. | And David consulted God
again; and God said to him: Go not up after them; turn away
from them, and come upon them over against the pear trees. |
15 And when you shall hear the sound of one going in the tops of
the pear trees, then shall you go out to battle. For God is going
16 out before you to strike the army of the Philistines. | And David
did as God had commanded him, and defeated the army of the
17 Philistines, slaying them from Gabaon to Gazera. | And the
name of David became famous in all countries: and the Lord
made all nations fear him.

15

1 ***The Levites Carry the Ark*** He made also houses for him-
self in the city of David: and built a place for the ark of God,
2 and pitched a tabernacle for it. | Then David said: No one
ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites, whom the Lord
has chosen to carry it, and to minister unto himself for ever. |
3 And he gathered all Israel together into Jerusalem, that the ark
of God might be brought into its place, which he had prepared
4.5 for it. | And the sons of Aaron also, and the Levites. | Of the

children of Caath, Uriel was the chief: and his brethren a hun-
6 dred and twenty. | Of the sons of Merari, Asaia the chief: and
7 his brethren two hundred and twenty. | Of the sons of Gersom,
8 Joel the chief: and his brethren a hundred and thirty. | Of the
sons of Elisaphan, Semeias the chief: and his brethren two hun-
9 dred. | Of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief: and his brethren
10 eighty. | Of the sons of Oziel, Aminadab the chief: and his
11 brethren a hundred and twelve. | And David called Sadoc, and
Abiathar the priests, and the Levites, Uriel, Asaia, Joel, Semeia,
12 Eliel, and Aminadab. | And he said to them: You that are the
heads of the Levitical families, be sanctified with your brethren;
and bring the ark of the Lord the God of Israel to the place,
13 which is prepared for it: | lest as the Lord at first struck us,
because you were not present, the same should now also come
to pass, by our doing some thing against the law.
14 So the priests and the Levites were sanctified, to carry the ark
15 of the Lord the God of Israel. | And the sons of Levi took the
ark of God, as Moses had commanded, according to the word
of the Lord upon their shoulders, with the staves.

16 ***The Ark Brought into the City of David*** And David
spoke to the chiefs of the Levites, to appoint some of their
brethren to be singers with musical instruments, to wit, on
psalteries, and harps, and cymbals, that the joyful noise might
17 resound on high. | And they appointed Levites, Heman the son
of Joel: and of his brethren Asaph the son of Barachias: and
of the sons of Merari, their brethren, Ethan the son of Casaia. |
18 And with them their brethren: in the second rank, Zacharias,
and Ben, and Jaziel, and Semiramoth, and Jahiel, and Ani, and
Eliab, and Banaias, and Maasias, and Mathathias, and Eliphalu,
19 and Macenias, and Obededom, and Jehiel, the porters. | Now
the singers, Hemar, Asaph, and Ethan, sounded with cymbals of
20 brass. | And Zacharias, and Oziel, and Semiramoth, and Jehiel,
and Ani, and Eliab, and Maasias, and Banaias, sang mysteries
21 upon psalteries. | And Mathathias, and Eliphalu, and Macenias
and Obededom, and Jehiel, and Ozaziu, sang a song of victory
22 for the octave upon harps. | And Chonenias chief of the Levites,
presided over the prophecy, to give out the tunes: for he was
23 very skillful. | And Barachias, and Elcana, were doorkeepers of
24 the ark. | And Sebenias, and Josaphat, and Nathanael, and
Amasai, and Zacharias, and Banaias, and Eliezer the priests,

15, 22: *Prophecy, to give out the tunes:* singing praises to God is here called prophecy.

sounded with trumpets, before the ark of God: and Obededom and Jehias were porters of the ark.

25 So David and all the ancients of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord
26 out of the house of Obededom with joy. | And when God had helped the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the
27 Lord, they offered in sacrifice seven oxen, and seven rams. | And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that carried the ark, and the singing men, and Chonenias the ruler of the prophecy among the singers: and David also had
28 on him an ephod of linen. | And all Israel brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord with joyful shouting, and sounding with the sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and cymbals,
29 and psalteries, and harps. | And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord had come to the city of David, Michol the daughter of Saul looking out at a window, saw king David dancing and playing; and she despised him in her heart.

16

1 ***The Ark Placed in the Tabernacle*** So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent, which David had pitched for it: and they offered holocausts and peace offer-
2 ings before God. | And when David had made an end of offering holocausts and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the
3 name of the Lord. | And he divided to all and every one, both men and women, a loaf of bread, and a piece of roasted beef,
4 and flour fried with oil. | And he appointed Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to remember his works, and to
5 glorify, and praise the Lord God of Israel. | Asaph the chief, and next after him Zacharias: moreover Jahiel, and Semiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mathathias, and Eliab, and Banaias, and Obededom: and Jehiel over the instruments of psaltery, and harps:
6 and Asaph sounded with cymbals: | but Banaias, and Jaziel the priests, to sound the trumpet continually before the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

7 ***David's Psalm of Praise to the Lord*** In that day David made Asaph the chief to give praise to the Lord with his brethren.

8 Praise you the Lord, and call upon his name: make known his doings among the nations.

15, 25-28: The Chronicler adds details to this account taken from 2 Sm 6, 12-15.

9 Sing to him, yea, sing praises to him: and relate all his wondrous works.
10 Praise his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice, that seek the Lord.
11 Seek the Lord, and his power: seek his face evermore.
12 Remember his wonderful works, which he has done: his signs, and the judgments of his mouth.
13 O you seed of Israel his servants, you children of Jacob his chosen.
14 He is the Lord our God: his judgments are in all the earth.
15 Remember for ever his covenant: the word, which he commanded to a thousand generations.
16 The covenant which he made with Abraham: and his oath to Isaac.
17 And he appointed the same to Jacob for a precept: and to Israel for an everlasting covenant:
18 Saying: To you will I give the land of Chanaan: the lot of your inheritance.
19 When they were but a small number: very few and sojourners in it.
20 And they passed from nation to nation: and from a kingdom to another people.
21 He suffered no man to do them wrong: and reproved kings for their sake.
22 Touch not my anointed: and do no evil to my prophets.
23 Sing to the Lord, all the earth: show forth from day to day his salvation.
24 Declare his glory among the Gentiles: his wonders among all people.
25 For the Lord is great and exceedingly to be praised: and he is to be feared above all gods.
26 For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.
27 Praise and magnificence *are* before him: strength and joy in his place.
28 Bring to the Lord, O you families of the nations: bring to the Lord glory and empire.
29 Give to the Lord glory to his name; bring up sacrifice, and come in his sight: and adore the Lord in holy becomingness.
30 Let all the earth be moved at his presence: for he has founded the world immovable.
31 Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad: and let them say among the nations: The Lord has reigned.
32 Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all things that are in them.

33 Then shall the trees of the wood give praise before the Lord:
because he has come to judge the earth.
34 Give glory to the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endures
for ever.
35 And say: Save us, O God our savior; and gather us together;
and deliver us from the nations: that we may give glory to
your holy name, and may rejoice in singing your praises.
36 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel from eternity to eternity:
and let all the people say, Amen, and a hymn to God.
37 So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord,
Asaph and his brethren to minister in the presence of the ark
38 continually day by day, and in their courses. | And Obededom,
with his brethren sixty-eight: and Obededom the son of Idithun,
39 and Hosa he appointed to be porters. | And Sadoc the priest,
and his brethren priests, before the tabernacle of the Lord in
40 the high place, which was in Gabaon. | That they should offer
holocausts to the Lord upon the altar of holocausts continually,
morning and evening, according to all that is written in the law
41 of the Lord, which he commanded Israel. | And after him
Heman, and Idithun, and the rest that were chosen, every one
by his name to give praise to the Lord: because his mercy
42 endures for ever. | And Heman and Idithun sounded the
trumpet, and played on the cymbals, and all kinds of musical
instruments to sing praises to God. And the sons of Idithun he
43 made porters. | And all the people returned to their houses: and
David to bless also his own house.

17

1 ***Nathan's Message to David*** Now when David was dwelling in his house, he said to Nathan the prophet: Behold I dwell
in a house of cedar; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord is
2 under skins. | And Nathan said to David: Do all that is in
3 your heart: for God is with you. | Now that night the word
4 of God came to Nathan, saying: | Go, and speak to David my
servant: Thus says the Lord: You shall not build me a house
5 to dwell in. | For I have not remained in a house from the time
that I brought up Israel, to this day: but I have been always
6 changing places in a tabernacle, and in a tent, | abiding with all
Israel. Did I ever speak to any one, of all the judges of Israel,
whom I charged to feed my people, saying: Why have you not
built me a house of cedar?
7 Now therefore thus shall you say to my servant David:
Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pastures, from
following the flock, that you should be ruler of my people Israel.
8 | And I have been with you wherever you have gone: and have

slain all your enemies before you, and have made you a name like that of one of the great ones that are renowned in the
9 earth. | And I have given a place to my people Israel: they shall be planted, and shall dwell therein, and shall be moved no more: neither shall the children of iniquity waste them, as at the be-
10 ginning, | since the days that I gave judges to my people Israel, and have humbled all your enemies. And I declare to you, that
11 the Lord will build you a house. | And when you shall have ended your days to go to your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which shall be of your sons: and I will establish his
12 kingdom. | He shall build me a house: and I will establish his
13 throne for ever. | I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I
14 took it from him that was before you. | But I will settle him in my house, and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be most firm for ever.

15 ***David's Prayer*** According to all these words, and according
16 to all this vision, so did Nathan speak to David. | And king David came and sat before the Lord, and said:

Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you should give such things to me?

17 But even this has seemed little in your sight: and therefore you have also spoken concerning the house of your servant for the time to come; and have made me remarkable above all men, O Lord God.

18 What can David add more, seeing you have thus glorified your servant, and known him?

19 O Lord, for your servant's sake, according to your own heart, you have shown all this magnificence, and would have all the great things to be known.

20 O Lord, there is none like you, and there is no other God besides you, of all whom we have heard of with our ears.

21 For what other nation is there upon earth like your people Israel, whom God went to deliver, and make a people for himself: and by his greatness and terrors cast out nations before their face whom he had delivered out of Egypt?

22 And you have made your people Israel to be your own people for ever: and you, O Lord, have become their God.

23 Now therefore, O Lord, let the word which you have spoken to your servant, and concerning his house, be established for ever: and do as you have said.

24 And let your name remain and be magnified for ever. And let it be said: The Lord of hosts is God of Israel, and the house of David his servant remains before him.

25 For you, O Lord my God, have revealed to the ear of your servant, that you will build him a house: and therefore your servant has found confidence to pray before you.
26 And now, O Lord, you are God: and you have promised to your servant such great benefits.
27 And you have begun to bless the house of your servant that it may be always before you: for seeing you bless it, O Lord, it shall be blessed for ever.

18

1 ***David's Victories*** And it came to pass after this, that David defeated the Philistines, and humbled them, and took away Geth, and her daughters out of the hands of the Philistines. |
2 And he defeated Moab: and the Moabites were made David's
3 servants, and brought him gifts. | At that time David defeated also Adarezer king of Soba of the land of Hemath, when he went to extend his dominions as far as the river Euphrates. |
4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and he hamstrung all the chariot horses, only a hundred chariots, which
5 he reserved for himself. | And the Syrians of Damascus came also to help Adarezer king of Soba: and David slew of them
6 likewise two and twenty thousand men. | And he put a garrison in Damascus, that Syria also should serve him, and bring gifts. And the Lord assisted him in all things to which he went.
7 And David took the golden quivers which the servants of
8 Adarezer had: and he brought them to Jerusalem. | Likewise out of Thebath and Chun, cities of Adarezer, he brought very much brass, of which Solomon made the brazen sea, and the
9 pillars, and the vessels of brass. | Now when Thou king of Hemath heard that David had defeated all the army of Adarezer
10 king of Soba, | he sent Adoram his son to king David, to desire peace of him, and to congratulate him that he had defeated and overthrown Adarezer: for Thou was an enemy to Adarezer.
11 | And all the vessels of gold, and silver, and brass king David consecrated to the Lord, with the silver and gold which he had taken from all the nations: as well from Edom, and from Moab, and from the sons of Ammon, as from the Philistines, and from Amalec.
12 And Abisai the son of Sarvia slew of the Edomites in the vale
13 of the saltpits, eighteen thousand. | And he put a garrison in Edom, that Edom should serve David. And the Lord pre-
14 served David in all things to which he went. | So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice
15 among all his people. | And Joab the son of Sarvia was over

16 the army: and Josaphat the son of Ahilud recorder. | And
Sadoc the son of Achitob, and Achimelech the son of Abiathar,
17 were the priests: and Susa, scribe. | And Banaias the son of
Joiada was over the bands of the Cerethi, and the Phelethi: and
the sons of David were chief about the king.

19

1 ***The Abuse of David's Messengers*** Now it came to pass
that Naas the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son
2 reigned in his stead. | And David said: I will show kindness
to Hanon the son of Naas: for his father did a favor to me.
And David sent messengers to comfort him upon the death of
his father. But when they came into the land of the children of
3 Ammon, to comfort Hanon, | the princes of the children of
Ammon said to Hanon: You think perhaps that David, to do
honor to your father has sent comforters to you; and you do
not take notice, that his servants have come to you to consider,
4 and search, and spy out your land. | Wherefore Hanon shaved
the heads and beards of the servants of David, and cut away
their garments from the buttocks to the feet, and sent them
5 away. | And when they had gone, they sent word to David,
who sent to meet them (for they had suffered a great affront),
and ordered them to stay at Jericho till their beards grew and
6 then to return. | And when the children of Ammon saw that
they had done an injury to David, Hanon and the rest of the
people sent a thousand talents of silver, to hire them chariots
and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Syria Maacha,
7 and out of Soba. | And they hired two and thirty thousand
chariots, and the king of Maacha, with his people. And they
came and camped over against Medaba. And the children of
Ammon gathered themselves together out of their cities, and
8 came to battle. | And when David heard of it he sent Joab,
and all the army of valiant men.

9 ***Ammonites and Syrians Overcome*** And the children of
Ammon came out and put their army in array before the gate
of the city: and the kings, that had come to their aid, stood
10 apart in the field. | Wherefore Joab, understanding that the
battle was set against him before and behind, chose out the
bravest men of all Israel, and marched against the Syrians. |
11 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abisai
his brother, and they went against the children of Ammon. |
12 And he said: If the Syrians be too strong for me, then you shall
help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for you, I
13 will help you. | Be of good courage, and let us behave our-

selves manfully for our people, and for the cities of our God:
14 and the Lord will do that which is good in his sight. | So Joab
and the people that were with him, went against the Syrians
15 to the battle. And he put them to flight. | And the children of
Ammon seeing that the Syrians had fled, they likewise fled
from Abisai his brother, and went into the city. And Joab also
returned to Jerusalem.
16 But the Syrians, seeing that they had fallen before Israel,
sent messengers, and brought to them the Syrians that were
beyond the river. And Sophach, general of the army of Adarezer,
17 was their leader. | And it was told David, and he gathered
together all Israel, and passed the Jordan, and came upon them,
and put his army in array against them, and they fought with
18 him. | But the Syrian fled before Israel. And David slew of
the Syrians seven thousand chariots, and forty thousand foot-
19 men, and Sophach the general of the army. | And when the
servants of Adarezer saw themselves overcome by Israel, they
went over to David, and served him: and Syria would not help
the children of Ammon any more.

20

1 ***Other Victories over Philistines*** And it came to pass after
the course of a year, at the time that kings go out to battle, Joab
gathered together an army and the strength of the troops: and
wasted the land of the children of Ammon: and went and be-
sieged Rabba. But David stayed at Jerusalem, when Joab smote
2 Rabba, and destroyed it. | And David took the crown of Mel-
chom from his head, and found in it a talent weight of gold,
and most precious stones, and he made himself a diadem of it.
3 He took also the spoils of the city which were very great. | And
the people that were therein he brought out: and made harrows,
and sleds, and chariots of iron to go over them, so that they were
cut and bruised to pieces: in this manner David dealt with all
the cities of the children of Ammon: and he returned with all
his people to Jerusalem.
4 After this there arose a war at Gazer against the Philistines:
in which Sabachai the Husathite slew Saphai of the race of
5 Raphaim, and humbled them. | Another battle also was fought
against the Philistines, in which Adeodatus the son of Saltus a
Bethlehemite slew the brother of Goliath the Gethite, the staff
6 of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. | There was another
battle also in Geth, in which there was a man of great stature,

19, 18: *Seven thousand chariots:* this means seven thousand men who fought in chariots.

whose fingers and toes were four and twenty, six on each hand
7 and foot: who also was born of the stock of Rapha. | He reviled Israel: but Jonathan the son of Samaa the brother of David slew him. These were the sons of Rapha in Geth, who fell by the hand of David and his servants.

21

1 ***David Numbers Israel*** And Satan rose up against Israel:
2 and moved David to number Israel. | And David said to Joab, and to the rulers of the people: Go, and number Israel from Bersabee even to Dan; and bring me the number of them that I
3 may know it. | And Joab answered: The Lord make his people a hundred times more than they are! But, my lord the king, are they not all your servants? Why does my lord seek this thing,
4 which may be imputed as a sin to Israel? | But the king's word rather prevailed: and Joab departed, and went through all Is-
5 rael, and returned to Jerusalem. | And he gave David the number of them, whom he had surveyed: and all the number of Israel was found to be eleven hundred thousand men that drew the sword: and of Juda four hundred and seventy thousand
6 fighting men. | But Levi and Benjamin he did not number: for Joab unwillingly executed the king's orders.
7 And God was displeased with this thing that was commanded:
8 and he struck Israel. | And David said to God: I have sinned exceedingly in doing this: I beseech you take away the iniquity
9 of your servant, for I have done foolishly. | And the Lord
10 spoke to Gad the seer of David, saying: | Go, and speak to David, and tell him: Thus says the Lord: I give you the choice of three things. Choose one which you will, and I will do it to
11 you. And when Gad came to David, he said to him: Thus says the Lord: Choose which you will:

12 ***David Punished by the Lord*** Either three years' famine: or three months to flee from your enemies, and not to be able to escape their sword: or three days to have the sword of the Lord, and pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying in all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore see what I shall answer
13 him who sent me. | And David said to Gad: I am on every side in a great strait; but it is better for me to fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are many, than into the hands of men.

21, 1-30: Details are added here to the account taken from 2 Sm 24.
21, 5: *The number:* the difference of the numbers here and 2 Sm 24, 9 may be explained by textual corruption. Both sets of numbers are inflated.

14 | So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel. And there fell of
15 Israel seventy thousand men. | And he sent an angel to Jerusalem, to strike it. And as he was striking it, the Lord beheld, and took pity for the greatness of the evil: and said to the angel that destroyed: It is enough, now stop your hand. And the angel of the Lord stood by the thrashingfloor of Ornan the
16 Jebusite. | And David lifting up his eyes, saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand, turned against Jerusalem: and both he and the an-
17 cients clothed in haircloth, fell down flat on the ground. | And David said to God: Am not I he that commanded the people to be numbered? It is I that have sinned: it is I that have done the evil, but as for this flock, what has it deserved? O Lord my God, let your hand be turned, I beseech you, upon me, and upon my father's house: and let not your people be destroyed.

18 *Ornan's Thrashingfloor* And the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to tell David, to go up, and build an altar to the
19 Lord God in the thrashingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. | And David went up, according to the word of Gad, which he spoke
20 to him in the name of the Lord. | Now when Ornan looked up, and saw the angel, he and his four sons hid themselves: for at
21 that time he was thrashing wheat in the floor. | And as David was coming to Ornan, Ornan saw him, and went out of the thrashingfloor to meet him, and bowed down to him with his
22 face to the ground. | And David said to him: Give me this place of your thrashingfloor, that I may build therein an altar to the Lord: but you shall take of me as much money as it is
23 worth, that the plague may cease from the people. | And Ornan said to David: Take it, and let my lord the king do all that pleases him: and moreover the oxen also I give for a holocaust, and the drays for wood, and the wheat for the sacrifice.
24 I will give it all willingly. | And king David said to him: It shall not be so, but I will give you money as much as it is worth: for I must not take it from you, and so offer to the Lord holo-
25 causts free cost. | So David gave to Ornan for the place, six hundred sicles of gold of just weight.

26 *David's Repentance and Sacrifice* And he built there an altar to the Lord: and he offered holocausts, and peace offerings, and he called upon the Lord, and he heard him by sending fire
27 from heaven upon the altar of the holocaust. | And the Lord commanded the angel: and he put his sword again into the

21, 15: *Ornan:* otherwise Areuna.

28 sheath. | And David, seeing that the Lord had heard him in
the thrashingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, forthwith offered vic-
29 tims there. | But the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses made
in the desert, and the altar of holocausts, was at that time in the
30 high place of Gabaon. | And David could not go to the altar
there to pray to God: for he was seized with an exceeding great
fear, seeing the sword of the angel of the Lord.

22

David Commissions Solomon to Build the Temple

1 Then David said: This is the house of God, and this is the altar
2 for the holocaust of Israel. | And he commanded to gather to-
gether all the proselytes of the land of Israel, and out of them
he appointed stonecutters to hew stones and polish them, to
3 build the house of God. | And David prepared in abundance
iron for the nails of the gates, and for the closures and joinings:
4 and of brass an immense weight. | And the cedar trees were
without number, which the Sidonians, and Tyrians brought to
5 David. | And David said: Solomon my son is very young and
tender, and the house which I would have to be built to the
Lord must be such as to be renowned in all countries; therefore
I will prepare him necessaries. And therefore before his death
he prepared all the charges.

6 And he called for Solomon his son: and commanded him to
7 build a house to the Lord the God of Israel. | And David said
to Solomon: My son, it was my desire to have built a house to
8 the name of the Lord my God. | But the word of the Lord
came to me, saying: You have shed much blood, and fought
many battles; so you can not build a house to my name after
9 shedding so much blood before me. | The son, that shall be
born to you, shall be a most quiet man: for I will make him
rest from all his enemies round about. And therefore he shall
be called Peaceable: and I will give peace and quietness to
10 Israel all his days. | He shall build a house to my name. And he
shall be a son to me: and I will be a father to him. And I will
establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

11 Now then, my son, the Lord be with you: and do you prosper,
and build the house to the Lord your God, as he has spoken of
12 you. | The Lord also give you wisdom and understanding, that
you may be able to rule Israel, and to keep the law of the Lord
13 your God. | For then you shall be able to prosper, if you keep
the commandments and judgments, which the Lord commanded
Moses to teach Israel. Take courage and act manfully, fear
not, nor be dismayed.

14 ***Preparations for the Temple*** Behold I in my poverty
have prepared the charges of the house of the Lord, of gold a
hundred thousand talents, and of silver a million of talents:
but of brass, and of iron there is no weight, for the abundance
surpasses all account: timber also and stones I have prepared
15 for all the charges. | You have also workmen in abundance,
hewers of stones, and masons, and carpenters, and of all trades
16 the most skillful in their work, | in gold, and in silver, and in
brass, and in iron, whereof there is no number. Arise then, and
be doing, and the Lord will be with you.
17 David also charged all the princes of Israel, to help Solomon
18 his son, | saying: You see, that the Lord your God is with you,
and has given you rest round about, and has delivered all your
enemies into your hands; and the land is subdued before the
19 Lord, and before his people. | Give therefore your hearts and
your souls to seek the Lord your God: and arise, and build a
sanctuary to the Lord God, that the ark of the covenant of the
Lord, and the vessels consecrated to the Lord, may be brought
into the house, which is built to the name of the Lord.

23

1 ***Solomon Made King by David*** And David, being old and
2 full of days, made Solomon his son king over Israel. | And he
gathered all the princes of Israel, and the priests and Levites.
3 And the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years,
and upward: and there were found of them thirty-eight thou-
4 sand men. | Of these twenty-four thousand were chosen, and
distributed unto the ministry of the house of the Lord: and six
5 thousand were the overseers and judges. | Moreover four thou-
sand were porters: and as many singers, singing to the Lord
6 with the instruments which he had made to sing with. | And
David distributed them into courses by the families of the sons
7 of Levi, to wit, of Gerson, and of Caath, and of Merari. | The
8 sons of Gerson were Leedan and Semei. | The sons of Leedan:
9 the chief Jahiel, and Zethan, and Joel, three. | The sons of
Semei: Salomith, and Hosiel, and Aran, three: these were the
10 heads of the families of Leedan. | And the sons of Semei were
Leheth, and Ziza, and Jaus, and Baria: these were the sons of
11 Semei, four. | And Leheth was the first, Ziza the second: but
Jaus and Baria had not many children, and therefore they were
12 counted in one family, and in one house. | The sons of Caath
13 were Amram, and Isaar, Hebron, and Oziel four. | The sons
of Amram, Aaron, and Moses. And Aaron was separated to
minister in the holy of holies, he and his sons for ever, and to
burn incense before the Lord, according to his ceremonies, and

14 to bless his name for ever. | The sons also of Moses, the man
15 of God, were numbered in the tribe of Levi. | The sons of
16 Moses *were* Gersom and Eliezer. | The sons of Gersom: Subuel
17 the first. | And the sons of Eliezer were: Rohobia the first. And
Eliezer had no more sons: but the sons of Rohobia were multi-
18 plied exceedingly. | The sons of Isaar: Salomith the first. |
19 The sons of Hebron: Jeriau the first, Amarias the second, Jaha-
20 ziel the third, Jecmaan the fourth. | The sons of Oziel: Micha
21 the first, Jesia the second. | The sons of Merari: Moholi, and
22 Musi. The sons of Moholi: Eleazar and Cis. | And Eleazar died,
and had no sons but daughters: and the sons of Cis their breth-
23 ren took them. | The sons of Musi: Moholi, and Eder, and
Jerimoth, three.

24 These are the sons of Levi in their kindreds and families, princes by their courses, and the number of every head that did the works of the ministry of the house of the Lord from twenty
25 years old and upward. | And David said: The Lord, the God of Israel, has given rest to his people, and a habitation in Jerusalem for ever.

26 ***The Offices of Priests and Levites*** And it shall not be the office of the Levites to carry any more the tabernacle, and all the
27 vessels for the service thereof. | So according to the last precepts of David, the sons of Levi are to be numbered from twenty
28 years old and upward. | And they are to be under the hand of the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, in the porches, and in the chambers, and in the place of purification, and in the sanctuary, and in all the works of the ministry
29 of the temple of the Lord. | And the priests have the charge of the loaves of proposition, and of the sacrifice of fine flour, and of the unleavened cakes, and of the frying pan, and of the
30 roasting, and of every weight and measure. | And the Levites are to stand in the morning to give thanks, and to sing praises
31 to the Lord: and in like manner in the evening: | as well in the oblation of the holocausts of the Lord, as in the sabbaths, and in the new moons, and the rest of the solemnities, according to the number and ceremonies prescribed for every thing, con-
32 tinually before the Lord. | And let them keep the observances of the tabernacle of the covenant, and the ceremonies of the sanctuary, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, that they may minister in the house of the Lord.

24

1 ***The Priests Divided into Twenty-four Courses*** Now these were the divisions of the sons of Aaron: the sons of

2 Aaron: Nadab, and Abiu, and Eleazar, and Ithamar. | But
Nadab and Abiu died before their father, and had no children:
3 so Eleazar and Ithamar did the office of the priesthood. | And
David distributed them, that is, Sadoc of the sons of Eleazar,
and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their courses
4 and ministry. | And there were found many more of the sons of
Eleazar among the principal men than of the sons of Ithamar.
And he divided them so, that there were of the sons of Eleazar
sixteen chief men by their families: and of the sons of Ithamar
5 eight by their families and houses. | And he divided both the
families one with the other by lot: for there were princes of the
sanctuary, and princes of God, both of the sons of Eleazar, and
6 of the sons of Ithamar. | And Semeias the son of Nathanael
the scribe, a Levite, wrote them down before the king and the
princes, and Sadoc the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abia-
thar, and the princes also of the priestly and Levitical families.
One house, which was over the rest, of Eleazar: and another
7 house, which had the rest under it, of Ithamar. | Now the first
8 lot came forth to Joiarib, the second to Jedei, | the third to
9 Harim, the fourth to Seorim, | the fifth to Melchia, the sixth
10.11 to Maiman, | the seventh to Accos, the eighth to Abia, | the
12 ninth to Jesua, the tenth to Sechenia, | the eleventh to Eliasib,
13 the twelfth to Jacim, | the thirteenth to Hoppha, the fourteenth
14 to Isbaab, | the fifteenth to Belga, the sixteenth to Emmer, |
15.16 the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Aphses, | the
17 nineteenth to Pheteia, the twentieth to Hezechiel, | the one and
18 twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul, | the three
and twentieth to Dalaiau, the four and twentieth to Maaziau. |
19 These are their courses according to their ministries, to come into
the house of the Lord, according to their manner, under the
hand of Aaron their father: as the Lord, the God of Israel, had
commanded.

20 ***The Chiefs of the Levites*** Now of the rest of the sons of
Levi, there was of the sons of Amram, Subael: and of the sons
21 of Subael, Jehedeia. | Also of the sons of Rohobia, the chief
22 Jesias. | And the son of Isaar, Salemoth, and the son of Sale-
23 moth, Jahath. | And his son Jeriau the first, Amarias the sec-
24 ond, Jahaziel the third, Jecmaan the fourth. | The son of Oziel,
25 Micha: the son of Micha, Samir. | The brother of Micha, Jesia:
26 and the son of Jesia, Zacharias. | The sons of Merari, Moholi
27 and Musi: the son of Oziau, Benno. | The son also of Merari,
28 Oziau: and Soam, and Zacchur, and Hebri. | And the son of
29 Moholi, Eleazar, who had no sons. | And the son of Cis, Jera-
30 mael. | The sons of Musi, Moholi, Eder, and Jerimoth. These

are the sons of Levi according to the houses of their families. |
31 And they also cast lots over against their brethren, the sons of
Aaron, before David the king, and Sadoc, and Ahimelech, and
the princes of the priestly and Levitical families, both the elder
and the younger. The lot divided all equally.

25

1 ***Number and Divisions of the Musicians*** Moreover
David and the chief officers of the army separated for the min-
istry the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Idithun: to
prophesy with harps, and with psalteries, and with cymbals
according to their number serving in their appointed office. |
2 Of the sons of Asaph: Zacchur, and Joseph, and Nathania, and
Asarela, sons of Asaph; under the hand of Asaph prophesying
3 near the king. | And of Idithun: the sons of Idithun, Godolias,
Sori, Jesaias, and Hasabias, and Mathathias, six; under the
hand of their father Idithun, who prophesied with a harp to
4 give thanks and to praise the Lord. | Of Heman also: the sons
of Heman, Boccias, Mathanias, Oziel, Subuel, and Jerimoth,
Hananias, Hanani, Eliatha, Geddelthi, and Romemthiezer, and
5 Jesbacasa, Mellothi, Othir, Mahazioth: | All these were the
sons of Heman the seer of the king in the words of God, to lift
up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three
6 daughters. | All these under their father's hand were distrib-
uted to sing in the temple of the Lord, with cymbals, and psal-
teries, and harps, for the service of the house of the Lord, near
the king: to wit, Asaph, and Idithun, and Heman.
7 And the number of them with their brethren, that taught
the song of the Lord, all the teachers, were two hundred and
8 eighty-eight. | And they cast lots by their courses, the elder
equally with the younger, the learned and the unlearned to-
9 gether. | And the first lot came forth to Joseph, who was of
Asaph. The second to Godolias, to him and his sons, and his
10 brethren, twelve. The third to Zacchur, to his sons and his
11 brethren, twelve. The fourth to Isari, to his sons and his breth-
12 ren, twelve. The fifth to Nathania, to his sons and his brethren,
13 twelve. The sixth to Boccias, to his sons and his brethren,
14 twelve. The seventh to Isreela, to his sons and his brethren,
15 twelve. The eighth to Jesaia, to his sons and his brethren, twelve.
16 The ninth to Mathanaias, to his sons and his brethren, twelve.
17 The tenth to Semeias, to his sons and his brethren, twelve.
18 The eleventh to Azareel, to his sons and his brethren, twelve.
19 The twelfth to Hasabia, to his sons and his brethren, twelve.
20 The thirteenth to Subael, to his sons and his brethren, twelve.
21 The fourteenth to Mathathias, to his sons and his brethren,

22 twelve. | The fifteenth to Jerimoth, to his sons and his brethren,
23 twelve. | The sixteenth to Hananias, to his sons and his breth-
24 ren, twelve. | The seventeenth to Jesbacassa, to his sons and
25 his brethren, twelve. | The eighteenth to Hanani, to his sons
26 and his brethren, twelve. | The nineteenth to Mellothi, to his
27 sons and his brethren, twelve. | The twentieth to Eliatha, to his
28 sons and his brethren, twelve. | The one and twentieth to Othir,
29 to his sons and his brethren, twelve. | The two and twentieth to
30 Geddelthi, to his sons and his brethren, twelve. | The three and
twentieth to Mahazioth, to his sons and his brethren, twelve. |
31 The four and twentieth to Romemthiezer, to his sons and his
brethren, twelve.

26

1 ***The Porters*** And the divisions of the porters: of the Corites
2 Meselemia, the son of Core, of the sons of Asaph. | The sons
of Meselemia: Zacharias the firstborn, Jadihel the second, Zaba-
3 dias the third, Jathanael the fourth. | Elam the fifth, Johanan
4 the sixth, Elioenai the seventh. | And the sons of Obededom:
Semeias the firstborn, Jozabad the second, Joaha the third,
5 Sachar the fourth, Nathanael the fifth, | Ammiel the sixth.
Issachar the seventh, Phollathi the eighth: for the Lord had
6 blessed him. | And to Semei his son were born sons, heads of
7 their families: for they were men of great valor. | The sons
then of Semeias were Othni, and Raphael, and Obed, Elizabad,
and his brethren: most valiant men. And Eliu, and Samachias.
8 | All these of the sons of Obededom: they, and their sons, and
their brethren, most able men for service, sixty-two of Obede-
9 dom. | And the sons of Meselemia, and their brethren, strong
10 men, *were* eighteen. | And of Hosa, that is, of the sons of
Merari: Semri the chief (for he had not a firstborn, and there-
11 fore his father made him chief), | Helcias the second, Tabelias
the third, Zacharias the fourth: all these, the sons, and the
brethren of Hosa, were thirteen.
12 Among these were the divisions of the porters, so that the
chiefs of the wards, as well as their brethren, always ministered
13 in the house of the Lord. | And they cast lots equally, both
little and great, by their families for every one of the gates. |
14 And the lot of the east fell to Selemias. But to his son Zacharias,
15 a very wise and learned man, the north gate fell by lot. | And
to Obededom and his sons that toward the south: in which part
16 of the house was the council of the ancients. | To Sephim, and

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26, 10: *(For he had not a firstborn):* that is, his firstborn was either dead or not fit to be chief; and therefore he made Semri the chief.

Hosa toward the west, by the gate which leads to the way of
17 the ascent: ward against ward. | Now toward the east were
six Levites: and toward the north four a day: and toward the
south likewise four a day: and where the council was, two and
18 two. | In the cells also of the porters toward the west four in
19 the way: and two at every cell. | These are the divisions of the
porters of the sons of Core and of Merari.

20 ***Offices of other Levites*** Now Achias was over the treas-
ures of the house of God, and the holy vessels. | The sons of
Ledan, the sons of Gersonni: of Ledan were heads of the fami-
22 lies, of Ledan, and Gersonni, Jehieli. | The sons of Jehieli:
Zathan and Joel, his brethren over the treasures of the house
23 of the Lord, | with the Amramites, and Isaarites, and Hebron-
24 ites, and Ozielites. | And Subael the son of Gersom, the son
25 of Moses, *was* chief over the treasures. | His brethren also:
Eliezer, whose son Rohobia, and his son Isaias, and his son
26 Joram, and his son Zechri, and his son Selemith, | which
Selemith and his brethren were over the treasures of the holy
things, which king David, and the heads of families, and the
captains over thousands and over hundreds, and the captains of
27 the host had dedicated, out of the wars, and the spoils won
in battles, which they had consecrated to the building and furni-
28 ture of the temple of the Lord. | And all these things that Sam-
uel the seer, and Saul the son of Cis, and Abner the son of Ner,
and Joab the son of Sarvia, had sanctified: and whosoever had
sanctified those things, they were under the hand of Selemith
and his brethren.

29 But Chonenias and his sons were over the Isaarites, for the
business abroad over Israel, to teach them and judge them. |
30 And of the Hebronites Hasabias, and his brethren most able
men, a thousand seven hundred, had the charge over Israel
beyond the Jordan westward, in all the works of the Lord, and
31 for the service of the king. | And the chief of the Hebronites
was Jeria, according to their families and kindreds. In the
fortieth year of the reign of David they were numbered, and
32 there were found most valiant men in Jazer Galaad, | and
his brethren of stronger age, two thousand seven hundred chiefs
of families. And king David made them rulers over the Ru-
benites and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasses, for all
the services of God, and the king.

27

1 ***Twelve Captains for Every Month*** Now the children of
Israel according to their number, the heads of families, cap-

tains of thousands and of hundreds, and officers that served the king according to their companies, who came in and went out every month in the year, under every chief were four and twenty
2 thousand. | Over the first company the first month Jesboam, the son of Zabdiel was chief, and under him were four and
3 twenty thousand, | of the sons of Phares, the chief of all the
4 captains in the host in the first month. | The company of the second month was under Dudia, an Ahohite, and after him was another named Macelloth, who commanded a part of the army
5 of four and twenty thousand. | And the captain of the third company for the third month, was Banaias the son of Joiada the priest: and in his division were four and twenty thousand.
6 | This is that Banaias the most valiant among the thirty, and above the thirty. And Amizabad his son commanded his com-
7 pany. | The fourth, for the fourth month, was Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zabadias his son after him: and in his
8 company were four and twenty thousand. | The fifth captain, for the fifth month, was Samaoth, a Jezerite: and his company
9 were four and twenty thousand. | The sixth, for the sixth month, was Hira the son of Acces, a Thecuite: and in his com-
10 pany were four and twenty thousand. | The seventh, for the seventh month, was Helles, a Phallonite of the sons of Ephraim:
11 and in his company were four and twenty thousand. | The eighth, for the eighth month, was Sobochai, a Husathite of the race of Zarahi: and in his company were four and twenty thou-
12 sand. | The ninth, for the ninth month, was Abiezer, an Anathothite of the sons of Jemini: and in his company were four
13 and twenty thousand. | The tenth, for the tenth month, was Marai, who was a Netophathite of the race of Zarai: and in his
14 company were four and twenty thousand. | The eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Banaias, a Pharathonite of the sons of Ephraim: and in his company were four and twenty thousand.
15 | The twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Holdai, a Netophathite, of the race of Gothoniel: and in his company were four and twenty thousand.

16 ***The Chiefs of the Tribes*** Now the chiefs over the tribes of Israel were these: over the Rubenites, Eliezer the son of Zechri was ruler: over the Simeonites, Saphatias the son of
17 Maacha: | over the Levites, Hasabias the son of Camuel: over
18 the Aaronites, Sadoc: over Juda, Eliu the brother of David:
19 over Isaachar, Amri the son of Michael: | over the Zabulonites, Jesmaias the son of Adias: over the Nephtalites, Jerimoth the
20 son of Oziel: | over the sons of Ephraim, Osee the son of Ozaziu: over the half tribe of Manasses, Joel the son of Phadaia:

21 | and over the half tribe of Manasses in Galaad, Jaddo the son
of Zacharias: and over Benjamin, Jasiel the son of Abner: |
22 and over Dan, Ezrihel the son of Jeroham. These were the
23 princes of the children of Israel. | But David would not
number them from twenty years old and under: because the
Lord had said that he would multiply Israel like the stars of
24 heaven. | Joab the son of Sarvia began to number, but he
finished not: because upon this there fell wrath upon Israel,
and therefore the number of them that were numbered was not
registered in the chronicles of king David.
25 And over the king's treasures was Azmoth the son of Adiel:
and over those stores which were in the cities, and in the villages,
26 and in the castles, was Jonathan the son of Ozias. | And over
the tillage, and the husbandmen, who tilled the ground, was
27 Ezri the son of Chelub. | And over the dressers of the vine-
yards was Semeias, a Romathite: and over the wine cellars,
28 Zabdias, an Aphonite. | And over the oliveyards and the fig
groves, which were in the plains, was Balanam, a Gederite: and
29 over the oil cellars, Joas. | And over the herds that fed in
Saron, was Setrai, a Saronite: and over the oxen in the valleys,
30 Saphat the son of Adli. | And over the camels, Ubil, an Ishma-
31 helite. And over the asses, Jadias, a Meronathite. | And over
the sheep Jaziz, an Agarene. All these were the rulers of the
substance of king David.
32 And Jonathan, David's uncle, a counselor, a wise and learned
man, and Jahiel the son of Hachamoni were with the king's
33 sons. | And Achitophel was the king's counselor and Chusai the
34 Arachite, the king's friend. | And after Achitophel was Joiada
the son of Banaias, and Abiathar. And the general of the king's
army was Joab.

28

1 ***David's Speech*** And David assembled all the chief men of
Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the com-
panies, who waited on the king: and the captains over thou-
sands, and over hundreds, and them who had the charge over
the substance and possessions of the king, and his sons with the
officers of the court, and the men of power, and all the bravest
2 of the army at Jerusalem. | And the king rising up, and stand-
ing, said: Hear me, my brethren and my people. I had a thought
to have built a house, in which the ark of the Lord and the foot-
stool of our God might rest: and I prepared all things for the
3 building. | And God said to me: You shall not build a house
to my name; because you are a man of war, and have shed
4 blood. | But the Lord God of Israel chose me of all the house

of my father, to be king over Israel for ever: for of Juda he chose the princes: and of the house of Juda, my father's house: and among the sons of my father, it pleased him to choose
3 me king over all Israel. | And among my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) he has chosen Solomon my son, to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. |
6 And he said to me: Solomon your son shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will
7 be a father to him. | And I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he continue to keep my commandments, and my judgments,
8 as at this day. | Now then before all the assembly of Israel, in the hearing of our God, keep and seek all the commandments of the Lord our God: that you may possess the good land, and may leave it to your children after you for ever.

9 ***David's Exhortation to Solomon*** And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind: for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands all the thoughts of minds. If you seek him, you shall find him: but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for
10 ever. | Now therefore seeing the Lord has chosen you to build the house of the sanctuary, take courage, and do it.
11 And David gave to Solomon his son a description of the porch, and of the temple, and of the treasures, and of the upper floor, and of the inner chambers, and of the house for the mercy
12 seat, | as also of all the courts, which he had in his thought, and of the chambers round about, for the treasures of the house of the Lord, and for the treasures of the consecrated things, |
13 and of the divisions of the priests and of the Levites, for all the works of the house of the Lord, and for all the vessels of the
14 service of the temple of the Lord. | Gold by weight for every vessel for the ministry. And silver by weight according to the
15 diversity of the vessels and uses. | He gave also gold for the golden candlesticks, and their lamps, according to the dimensions of every candlestick, and the lamps thereof. In like manner also he gave silver by weight for the silver candlesticks, and for their lamps according to the diversity of the dimensions of
16 them. | He gave also gold for the tables of proposition, according to the diversity of the tables: in like manner also silver
17 for other tables of silver. | For fleshhooks also, and bowls, and censers of fine gold, and for little lions of gold, according to the measure he gave by weight for every lion. In like manner also for lions of silver he set aside a different weight of silver
18 | And for the altar of incense he gave the purest gold: and to make the likeness of the chariot of the cherubim spreading

their wings, and covering the ark of the covenant of the Lord.
19 | All these things, said he, came to me written by the hand of
the Lord, that I might understand all the works of the pattern.
20 And David said to Solomon his son: Act like a man, and
take courage, and do: fear not, and be not dismayed, for the
Lord my God will be with you, and will not leave you, nor for-
sake you, till you have finished all the work for the service of
21 the house of the Lord. | Behold the courses of the priests and
the Levites, for every ministry of the house of the Lord, stand
by you, and are ready, and both the princes, and the people
know how to execute all your commandments.

29

1 ***David's Gifts for the Temple*** And king David said to all
the assembly: Solomon, my son, whom alone God has chosen,
is as yet young and tender; and the work is great, for a house is
2 prepared, not for man, but for God. | And I with all my ability
have prepared the expenses for the house of my God. Gold for
vessels of gold, and silver for vessels of silver, brass for things
of brass, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood: and
onyx stones, and stones like alabaster, and of divers colors, and
all manner of precious stones, and marble of Paros in great
3 abundance. | Now over and above the things which I have
offered into the house of my God I give, of my own proper
goods, gold and silver for the temple of my God, besides what
4 things I have prepared for the holy house. | Three thousand
talents of gold of the gold of Ophir: and seven thousand talents
5 of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the temple. | And gold
for wheresoever there is need of gold: and silver for whereso-
ever there is need of silver, for the works to be made by the
hands of the artificers. Now, if any man is willing to offer, let
him fill his hand today, and offer what he pleases to the Lord.

6 ***The Contributions of Princes and Captains*** Then the
heads of the families, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and
the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and the overseers
7 of the king's possessions promised, | and they gave for the
works of the house of the Lord: of gold, five thousand talents,
and ten thousand solids: of silver, ten thousand talents: and
of brass, eighteen talents: and of iron, a hundred thousand
8 talents. | And all they that had stones gave them to the treasures
9 of the Lord, by the hand of Jahiel the Gersonite. | And the
people rejoiced, when they promised their offerings willingly:
because they offered them to the Lord with all their heart. And
David the king rejoiced also with a great joy.

10 ***David's Thanksgiving and Prayer*** And he blessed the
Lord before all the multitude, and he said: Blessed are you, O
Lord, the God of Israel, our father from eternity to eternity.
11 | Yours, O Lord, is magnificence, and power, and glory, and
victory: and to you is praise: for all that is in heaven, and in
earth, is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are
12 above all princes. | Yours are riches, and yours is glory: you
have dominion over all. In your hand is power and might: in
13 your hand greatness, and the empire of all things. | Now there-
fore, our God, we give thanks to you: and we praise your
14 glorious name. | Who am I, and what is my people, that we
should be able to promise you all these things? All things are
yours: and we have given you what we received of your hand. |
15 For we are sojourners before you, and strangers, as *were* all our
fathers. Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and there is no
16 stay. | O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to
build you a house for your holy name is from your hand: and
17 all things are yours. | I know, my God, that you prove hearts,
and that you love simplicity. Wherefore I also in the simplicity
of my heart, have joyfully offered all these things: and I have
seen with great joy your people, which are here present, offer
18 you their offerings. | O Lord God of Abraham, and of Isaac,
and of Israel, our fathers, keep for ever this will of their heart,
19 and let this mind remain always for the worship of you. | And
give to Solomon my son a perfect heart, that he may keep your
commandments, your testimonies, and your ceremonies, and
do all things: and build the house, for which I have pro-
vided the charges.
20 And David commanded all the assembly: Bless the Lord our
God. And all the assembly blessed the Lord the God of their
fathers: and they bowed themselves and worshiped God, and
21 then the king. | And they sacrificed victims to the Lord: and
they offered holocausts the next day, a thousand bullocks, a
thousand rams, a thousand lambs, with their libations, and
with every thing prescribed most abundantly for all Israel.

22 ***Solomon Anointed the Second Time*** And they ate, and
drank before the Lord that day with great joy. And they
anointed the second time Solomon the son of David. And they
anointed him to the Lord to be prince, and Sadoc to be high
23 priest. | And Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king
instead of David his father, and he pleased all: and all Israel
24 obeyed him. | And all the princes, and men of power, and all
the sons of king David gave their hand, and were subject to
25 Solomon the king. | And the Lord magnified Solomon over all

Israel: and gave him the glory of a reign, such as no king of Israel had before him.

26.27 So David the son of Isai reigned over all Israel. | And the days that he reigned over Israel were forty years: in Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem three and thirty years.

28 *The Death of David* And he died in a good age, full of days, and riches, and glory. And Solomon his son reigned in his
29 stead. | Now the acts of king David first and last are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the
30 prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer: | and of all his reign, and his valor, and of the times that passed under him, either in Israel, or in all the kingdoms of the countries.

THE SECOND BOOK OF PARALIPOMENON

1

1 ***Solomon's Sacrifices at Gabaon*** And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God
2 was with him, and magnified him to a high degree. | And Solomon gave orders to all Israel, to the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, and to the rulers, and to the judges of all
3 Israel, and the heads of the families: and he went with all the multitude to the high place of Gabaon, where was the tabernacle of the covenant of the Lord, which Moses the servant of
4 God made, in the wilderness. | For David had brought the ark of God from Cariathiarim to the place, which he had prepared for it, and where he had pitched a tabernacle for it, that is, in
5 Jerusalem. | And the altar of brass, which Beseleel the son of Uri the son of Hur had made, was there before the tabernacle of the Lord: and Solomon and all the assembly sought it. |
6 And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar, before the tabernacle of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up on it a thousand victims.

7 ***Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom Is Granted*** And behold that night God appeared to him, saying: Ask what you will that I
8 should give you. | And Solomon said to God: You have shown great kindness to my father David: and have made me king in
9 his stead. | Now therefore, O Lord God, let your word be fulfilled, which you have promised to David my father: for you have made me king over your great people, which is as innumer-
10 able as the dust of the earth. | Give me wisdom and knowledge that I may come in and go out before your people: for who can
11 worthily judge this your people, which is so great? | And God said to Solomon: Because this choice has pleased your heart, and you have not asked riches, and wealth, and glory, nor the lives of them that hate you, nor many days of life: but have asked wisdom and knowledge, to be able to judge my people, over which
12 I have made you king: | wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. And I will give you riches, and wealth, and glory, so that none of the kings before you, nor after you, shall be like you.

13 Then Solomon came from the high place of Gabaon to Jerusalem before the tabernacle of the covenant, and reigned over
14 Israel. | And he gathered to himself chariots and horsemen, and he had a thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thou-

sand horsemen: and he placed them in the cities of the chariots,
15 and with the king in Jerusalem. | And the king made silver
and gold to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees as syca-
16 mores, which grow in the plains in great multitude. | And
there were horses brought him from Egypt, and from Coa, by
17 the king's merchants, who went, and bought at a price: | a
chariot of four horses for six hundred pieces of silver, and a
horse for a hundred and fifty: in like manner, market was made
in all the kingdoms of the Hethites, and of the kings of Syria.

2

1 ***Solomon's Message to Hiram*** And Solomon determined
to build a house to the name of the Lord, and a palace for
2 himself. | And he numbered out seventy thousand men to bear
burdens, and eighty thousand to hew stones in the mountains,
3 and three thousand six hundred to oversee them. | He sent
also to Hiram king of Tyre, saying: As you did with David my
father, and did send him cedars, to build him a house, in which
4 he dwelt, | so do with me: that I may build a house to the
name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to burn incense before
him, and to perfume with aromatical spices, and for the con-
tinual setting forth of bread, and for the holocausts, morning
and evening, and on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and
the solemnities of the Lord our God for ever, which are com-
5 manded for Israel. | For the house which I desire to build, is
6 great: for our God is great above all gods. | Who then can be
able to build him a worthy house? If heaven, and the heaven
of heavens cannot contain him: who am I that I should be able
to build him a house? but to this end only, that incense
7 may be burned before him. | Send me therefore a skillful man,
that knows how to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, and in
iron, in purple, in scarlet and in blue, and that has skill in en-
graving, with the artificers, which I have with me in Judea and
8 Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. | Send me also
cedars, and fir trees, and pine trees from Libanus: for I know
that your servants are skillful in cutting timber in Libanus, and
9 my servants shall be with your servants, | to provide me timber
in abundance. For the house which I desire to build, is to be
10 exceeding great, and glorious. | And I will give your servants
the workmen that are to cut down the trees, for their food,
twenty thousand cores of wheat, and as many cores of barley,
and twenty thousand measures of wine, and twenty thousand
measures of oil.

11 ***Hiram Aids Solomon*** And Hiram king of Tyre sent a let-

ter to Solomon, saying: Because the Lord has loved his people,
12 therefore he has made you king over them. | And he added, saying: Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given to king David a wise and knowing son, endued with understanding and prudence, to build a house
13 to the Lord, and a palace for himself. | I therefore have sent
14 you my father Hiram, a wise and most skillful man, | the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, whose father was a Tyrian, who knows how to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, and in iron, and in marble, and in timber, in purple also, and violet, and silk and scarlet: and who knows to grave all sort of graving, and to devise ingeniously all that there may be need of in the work with your artificers, and with the artificers of my
15 lord David your father. | The wheat therefore, and the barley, and the oil, and the wine, which you, my lord, have promised,
16 send to your servants. | And we will cut down as many trees out of Libanus, as you shall want, and will convey them in floats by sea to Joppe: and it will be your part to bring them from there to Jerusalem.
17 And Solomon numbered all the proselytes in the land of Israel, after the numbering which David his father had made: and they were found a hundred and fifty-three thousand and
18 six hundred. | And he set seventy thousand of them to carry burdens on their shoulders, and eighty thousand to hew stones in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred to be overseers of the work of the people.

3

1 ***The Plan and Ornaments of the Temple*** And Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, in mount Moria, which had been shown to David his father, in the place which David had prepared in the thrashingfloor of Ornan the
2 Jebusite. | And he began to build in the second month, in the
3 fourth year of his reign. | Now these are the foundations, which Solomon laid, to build the house of God. The length by
4 the first measure sixty cubits, the breadth twenty cubits. | And the porch in the front, which was extended in length according to the measure of the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height was a hundred and twenty cubits; and he overlaid
5 it within with pure gold. | And the greater house he ceiled with deal boards, and overlaid them with plates of fine gold throughout: and he graved in them palm trees, and like little
6 chains interlaced with one another. | He paved also the floor of the temple with most precious marble, of great beauty. |
7 And the gold of the plates with which he overlaid the house,

and the beams thereof, and the posts, and the walls, and the doors, was of the finest; and he graved cherubim on the walls.
8 He made also the house of the Holy of Holies: the length of it according to the breadth of the temple, twenty cubits, and the breadth of it in like manner twenty cubits; and he overlaid it with plates of gold, amounting to about six hundred talents. |
9 He made also nails of gold, and the weight of every nail was fifty sicles: the upper chambers also he overlaid with gold. |
10 He made also in the house of the Holy of Holies two cherubim
11 of image work: and he overlaid them with gold. | The wings of the cherubim were extended twenty cubits, so that one wing was five cubits long, and reached to the wall of the house: and the other was also five cubits long, and reached to the wing of
12 the other cherub. | In like manner the wing of the other cherub was five cubits long, and reached to the wall: and his other wing was five cubits long, and touched the wing of the other
13 cherub. | So the wings of the two cherubim were spread forth, and were extended twenty cubits. And they stood upright on their feet, and their faces were turned toward the house with-
14 out. | He made also a veil of violet, purple, scarlet, and silk:
15 and wrought in it cherubim. | He made also before the doors of the temple two pillars, which were five and thirty cubits high:
16 and their chapiters were five cubits. | He made also, as it were little chains in the oracle, and he put them on the heads of the pillars: and a hundred pomegranates, which he put between the
17 little chains. | These pillars he put at the entrance of the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left: that which was on the right hand, he called Jachin, and that on the left hand, Booz.

4

1 ***The Altar and Vessels*** He made also an altar of brass twenty cubits long, and twenty cubits broad, and ten cubits
2 high. | Also a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass: it was five cubits high, and a line of thirty
3 cubits compassed it round about. | And under it there was the likeness of oxen, and certain engravings on the outside of ten cubits compassed the belly of the sea, as it were with two rows.
4 And the oxen were cast; and the sea itself was set upon the twelve oxen, three of which looked toward the north, and other three toward the west: and other three toward the south, and the other three that remained toward the east, and the sea stood upon them; and the hinder parts of the oxen were inward
5 under the sea. | Now the thickness of it was a handbreadth, and the brim of it was like the brim of a cup, or of a crisped lily:

6 and it held three thousand measures. | He made also ten lavers:
and he set five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in
them all such things as they were to offer for holocausts: but
the sea was for the priests to wash in.
7 And he made ten golden candlesticks, according to the form
which they were commanded to be made by: and he set them in
8 the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left. | More-
over also ten tables: and he set them in the temple, five on the
right side, and five on the left. Also a hundred bowls of gold. |
9 He made also the court of the priests, and a great hall, and
10 doors in the hall, which he covered with brass. | And he set
the sea on the right side over against the east toward the south.
11 And Hiram made caldrons, and fleshhooks, and bowls: and
12 finished all the king's work in the house of God: | that is to
say, the two pillars, and the pommels, and the chapiters, and
13 the network, to cover the chapiters over the pommels. | And
four hundred pomegranates, and two wreaths of network, so
that two rows of pomegranates were joined to each wreath, to
14 cover the pommels, and the chapiters of the pillars. | He made
15 also bases, and lavers, which he set upon the bases: | one sea,
16 and twelve oxen under the sea: | and the caldrons, and flesh-
hooks, and bowls. All the vessels did Hiram his father make
17 for Solomon in the house of the Lord of the finest brass. | In
the country near the Jordan did the king cast them, in a clay
18 ground between Sochot and Saredatha. | And the multitude
of vessels was innumerable, so that the weight of the brass was
not known.
19 And Solomon made all the vessels for the house of God,
and the golden altar, and the tables, upon which were the loaves
20 of proposition, | the candlesticks also of most pure gold with
their lamps to give light before the oracle, according to the man-
21 ner. | And certain flowers, and lamps, and golden tongs: all
22 were made of the finest gold. | The vessels also for the per-
fumes, and the censers, and the bowls, and the mortars, of pure
gold. And he graved the doors of the inner temple, that is, for
the Holy of Holies. And the doors of the temple without *were* of
gold. And thus all the work was finished which Solomon made
in the house of the Lord.

5

1 ***The Ark Placed in the Holy of Holies*** Then Solomon
brought in all the things that David his father had vowed, the
silver, and the gold, and all the vessels he put among the treas-
2 ures of the house of God. | And after this he gathered to-
gether the ancients of Israel, and all the princes of the tribes,

and the heads of the families, of the children of Israel to Jerusalem, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the
3 city of David, which is Sion. | And all the men of Israel came
4 to the king in the solemn day of the seventh month. | And when all the ancients of Israel had come the Levites took up
5 the ark. | And brought it in, together with all the furniture of the tabernacle. And the priests with the Levites carried the vessels
6 of the sanctuary, which were in the tabernacle. | And king Solomon and all the assembly of Israel, and all that were gathered together before the ark, sacrificed rams, and oxen without
7 number: so great was the multitude of the victims. | And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord into its place; that is, to the oracle of the temple, into the Holy of Holies
8 under the wings of the cherubim, | so that the cherubim spread their wings over the place, in which the ark was set, and
9 covered the ark itself and its staves. | Now the ends of the staves wherewith the ark was carried, because they were somewhat longer, were seen before the oracle: but if a man were a little outward, he could not see them. So the ark has been there
10 unto this day. | And there was nothing else in the ark but the two tables which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord gave the law to the children of Israel, at their coming out of Egypt.

11 ***The Glory of the Lord Fills the Temple*** Now when the priests had come out of the sanctuary (for all the priests that could be found there were sanctified, and as yet at that time the courses and orders of the ministries were not divided among
12 them), | both the Levites and the singing men, that is, both they that were under Asaph, and they that were under Heman, and they that were under Idithun, with their sons, and their brethren, clothed with fine linen, sounded with cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, standing on the east side of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests, sounding with trum-
13 pets. | So when they all sounded together, both with trumpets, and voice, and cymbals, and organs, and with divers kind of musical instruments, and lifted up their voice on high: the sound was heard afar off, so that when they began to praise the Lord, and to say: Give glory to the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever, the house of God was filled with a
14 cloud. | Nor could the priests stand and minister by reason of the cloud. For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.

6

1 ***Solomon's Blessings*** Then Solomon said: The Lord prom-
2 ised that he would dwell in a cloud. | But I have built a house

3 to his name, that he might dwell there for ever. | And the
king turned his face, and blessed all the multitude of Israel (for
4 all the multitude stood attentive) and he said: | Blessed be the
Lord the God of Israel, who has accomplished in deed that
5 which he spoke to David my father, saying: | From the day
that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no
city among all the tribes of Israel, for a house to be built in it
to my name: neither chose I any other man, to be the ruler of
6 my people Israel. | But I chose Jerusalem, that my name might
be there: and I chose David to set him over my people Israel. |
7 And whereas David my father had a mind to build a house to
8 the name of the Lord the God of Israel, | the Lord said to him:
Forasmuch as it was your will to build a house to my name,
9 you have done well indeed in having such a will. | But you
shall not build the house, but your son, who shall come out of
10 your loins, he shall build a house to my name. | The Lord
therefore has accomplished his word which he spoke. And I
have risen up in the place of David my father, and sit upon
the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised: and have built a
11 house to the name of the Lord God of Israel. | And I have put
in it the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which he
made with the children of Israel.

12 And he stood before the altar of the Lord, in presence of all
13 the multitude of Israel, and stretched forth his hands. | For
Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, and had set it in the midst
of the temple, which was five cubits long, and five cubits broad,
and three cubits high: and he stood upon it. Then kneeling
down in the presence of all the multitude of Israel, and lifting
14 up his hands toward heaven, | he said:

The Prayer of Solomon O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven nor in earth: who keeps covenant and mercy with your servants, that walk before you with all their hearts:

15 Who has performed to your servant David my father all that you have promised him: and you have accomplished in fact, what you have spoken with your mouth; as also the present time proves.

16 Now then, O Lord God of Israel, fulfill to your servant David my father, whatsoever you have promised him, saying: There shall not fail you a man in my sight, to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that your children take heed to their ways, and walk in my law, as you have walked, before me.

17 And now, Lord God of Israel, let your word be established which you have spoken to your servant David.

18 Is it credible then that God should dwell with men on the earth? If heaven and the heavens of heavens do not contain you, how much less this house, which I have built?
19 But to this end only it is made, that you may regard the prayer of your servant and his supplication, O Lord my God: and may hear the prayers which your servant pours out before you.
20 That you may open your eyes upon this house, day and night, upon the place wherein you have promised that your name should be called upon,
21 And that you would hear the prayer which your servant prays in it. Hearken then to the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel. Whosoever shall pray in this place, hear you from your dwelling place, that is, from heaven, and show mercy.
22 If any man sin against his neighbor and come to swear against him, and bind himself with a curse before the altar in this house:
23 Then hear you from heaven, and do justice to your servants, so as to requite the wicked by making his wickedness fall upon his own head, and to revenge the just, rewarding him according to his justice.
24 If your people Israel be overcome by their enemies, (for they will sin against you), and being converted shall do penance, and call upon your name, and pray to you in this place,
25 Then hear you from heaven, and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back into the land, which you gave to them and their fathers.
26 If the heavens be shut up, and there fall no rain by reason of the sins of the people, and they shall pray to you in this place, and confess to your name, and be converted from their sins, when you afflict them,
27 Then hear you from heaven, O Lord, and forgive the sins of your servants and of your people Israel, and teach them the good way, in which they may walk; and give rain to your land which you have given to your people to possess.
28 If a famine arise in the land, or a pestilence or blasting, or mildew, or locusts, or caterpillars; or if their enemies waste the country, and besiege the cities, whatsoever scourge or infirmity shall be upon them:
29 Then if any of your people Israel, knowing his own scourge and infirmity, shall pray, and shall spread forth his hands in this house,
30 Hear you from heaven, from your high dwelling place, and forgive, and render to every one according to his ways, which

you know him to have in his heart (for you only know the hearts of the children of men):
31 That they may fear you, and walk in your ways, all the days that they live upon the face of the land, which you have given to our fathers.
32 If the stranger also, who is not of your people Israel, come from a far country, for the sake of your great name, and your strong hand, and your stretched out arms, and adore in this place:
33 Hear you from heaven, your firm dwelling place, and do all that which that stranger shall call upon you for: that all the people of the earth may know your name, and may fear you, as your people Israel, and may know, that your name is invoked upon this house, which I have built.
34 If your people go out to war against their enemies, by the way that you shall send them, and adore you toward the way of this city, which you have chosen, and the house which I have built to your name:
35 Then hear you from heaven their prayers, and their supplications, and revenge them.
36 And if they sin against you (for there is no man that sins not), and you be angry with them, and deliver them up to their enemies, and they lead them away captive to a land, either afar off, or near at hand;
37 And if they be converted in their hearts in the land to which they were led captive, and do penance, and pray to you in the land of their captivity, saying: We have sinned, we have done wickedly, we have dealt unjustly;
38 And return to you with all their heart, and with all their soul in the land of their capitivity, to which they were led away, and adore you toward the way of their own land which you gave their fathers, and of the city, which you have chosen, and the house which I have built to your name:
39 Then hear you from heaven, that is, from your firm dwelling place, their prayers, and do judgment, and forgive your people, although they have sinned.
40 For you are my God: let your eyes, I beseech you, be open, and let your ears be attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.
41 Now, therefore, arise, O Lord God, into your resting place, you and the ark of your strength: let your priests, O Lord God, put on salvation, and your saints rejoice in good things.
42 O Lord God, turn not away the face of your anointed: remember the mercies of David your servant.

7

3 ***Fire from Heaven Consumes the Sacrifices*** And when Solomon had made an end of his prayer, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the holocausts and the victims: and the
2 majesty of the Lord filled the house. ¶ Neither could the priest enter into the temple of the Lord; because the majesty of the
3 Lord had filled the temple of the Lord. ¶ Moreover all the children of Israel saw the fire coming down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house. And falling down with their faces to the ground, upon the stone pavement, they adored and praised the Lord: because he is good, because his mercy endures for ever.
4 ¶ And the king and all the people sacrificed victims before the Lord.

5 ***The Solemn Dedication of the Temple*** And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand rams: and the king and all the
6 people dedicated the house of God. ¶ And the priests stood in their offices: and the Levites with the instruments of music of the Lord, which king David made to praise the Lord: because his mercy endures for ever, singing the hymns of David by their ministry; and the priests sounded with trumpets before
7 them, and all Israel stood. ¶ Solomon also sanctified the middle of the court before the temple of the Lord: for he offered there the holocausts and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brazen altar which he had made could not hold the holocausts,
8 and the sacrifices, and the fat. ¶ And Solomon kept the solemnity at that time seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entrance of Emath to the torrent
9 of Egypt. ¶ And he made on the eighth day a solemn assembly, because he had kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and
10 had celebrated the solemnity, seven days. ¶ So, on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent away the people to their dwellings, joyful and glad for the good that the Lord had done to David, and to Solomon, and to all Israel his people.

11 ***The Lord's Promise to Solomon*** And Solomon finished the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all that he had designed in his heart to do, in the house of the Lord, and in
12 his own house; and he prospered. ¶ And the Lord appeared to him by night, and said: I have heard your prayer, and I have
13 chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. ¶ If I shut up heaven, and there fall no rain, or if I give orders, and command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence
14 among my people: ¶ and my people, upon whom my name is

called, being converted, shall make supplication to me, and seek out my face, and do penance for their most wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and
15 will heal their land. | My eyes also shall be open, and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place. |
16 For I have chosen, and have sanctified this place, that my name may be there for ever: and my eyes and my heart may remain there perpetually.
17 And as for you, if you walk before me, as David your father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded
18 you, and keep my justices and my judgments: | I will raise up the throne of your kingdom, as I promised to David your father, saying: There shall not fail you a man of your stock
19 to be ruler in Israel. | But if you turn away, and forsake my justices, and my commandments, which I have set before you,
20 and shall go and serve strange gods, and adore them, | I will pluck you up by the root out of my land which I have given you: and this house which I have sanctified to my name, I will cast away from before my face, and will make it a byword, and an
21 example among all nations. | And this house shall be for a proverb to all that pass by, and they shall be astonished and say: Why has the Lord done thus to this land, and to this
22 house? | And they shall answer: Because they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on strange gods, and adored them, and worshiped them: therefore all these evils have come upon them.

8

1 ***Solomon's other Buildings*** And at the end of twenty years after Solomon had built the house of the Lord and his
2 own house: | he built the cities which Hiram had given to
3 Solomon, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there. | He
4 went also into Emath Suba, and possessed it. | And he built Palmira in the desert, and he built other strong cities in Emath.
5 | And he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether,
6 walled cities with gates and bars and locks. | Balaath also, and all the strong cities that were Solomon's, and all the cities of the chariots, and the cities of the horsemen. All that Solomon had a mind, and designed, he built in Jerusalem, and in
7 Libanus, and in all the land of his dominion. | All the people that were left of the Hethites, and the Amorrites, and the Pherezites, and the Hevites, and the Jebusites, that were not
8 of the stock of Israel: | of their children, and of the posterity whom the children of Israel had not slain, Solomon made to

9 be the tributaries, unto this day. | But of the children of Israel
he set none to serve in the king's works: for they were men of
war, and chief captains, and rulers of his chariots and
10 horsemen. | And all the chief captains of king Solomon's army
11 were two hundred and fifty, who taught the people. | And he
removed the daughter of Pharao from the city of David, to the
house which he had built for her. For the king said: My wife
shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, for it is
sanctified: because the ark of the Lord came into it.

12 *The Sacrifices* Then Solomon offered holocausts to the
Lord upon the altar of the Lord, which he had built before
13 the porch, | that every day an offering might be made on it ac-
cording to the ordinance of Moses, in the sabbaths, and on the
new moons, and on the festival days three times a year, that is
to say, in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of
14 weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. | And he appointed
according to the order of David his father the offices of the
priests in their ministries: and the Levites in their order to give
praise, and minister before the priests according to the duty of
every day: and the porters in their divisions by gate and gate:
15 for so David, the man of God, had commanded. | And the
priests and Levites departed not from the king's command-
ments, as to any thing that he had commanded, and as to the
keeping of the treasures.
16 Solomon had all charges prepared, from the day that he
founded the house of the Lord, until the day wherein he fin-
17 ished it. | Then Solomon went to Asiongaber, and to Ailath,
on the coast of the Red Sea, which is in the land of Edom. |
18 And Hiram sent him ships by the hands of his servants, and
skillful mariners. And they went with Solomon's servants to
Ophir: and they took thence four hundred and fifty talents of
gold and brought it to king Solomon.

9
1 *The Queen of Saba* And when the queen of Saba heard
of the fame of Solomon, she came to try him with hard ques-
tions at Jerusalem, with great riches, and camels, which car-
ried spices, and abundance of gold, and precious stones. And
when she had come to Solomon, she proposed to him all that
2 was in her heart. | And Solomon explained to her all that
she proposed: and there was not any thing that he did not
3 make clear unto her. | And when she had seen these things,
to wit, the wisdom of Solomon, and the house which he had
4 built, | and the meats of his table, and the dwelling places of

his servants, and the attendance of his officers, and their a
parel, his cupbearers also, and their garments, and the victin
which he offered in the house of the Lord: there was no mo
5 spirit in her, she was so astonished. | And she said to the kin
The word is true which I heard in my country of your virtu
6 and wisdom. | I did not believe them that told it, until
came, and my eyes had seen, and I had proved that scarce o
half of your wisdom had been told me. You have exceeded t
7 same with your virtues. | Happy are your men, and happy a
your servants, who stand always before you, and hear yo
8 wisdom. | Blessed be the Lord your God, who has been pleas
to set you on his throne, king of the Lord your God. Becau
God loves Israel, and will preserve them for ever: therefo
has he made you king over them, to do judgment and justic
9 And she gave to the king a hundred and twenty talents
gold, and spices in great abundance, and most precious stone
there were no such spices as these which the queen of Saba ga
10 to king Solomon. | And the servants also of Hiram, with t
servants of Solomon, brought gold from Ophir, and thyi
11 trees, and most precious stones. | And the king made of t
thyine trees stairs in the house of the Lord, and in the kin
house, and harps and psalteries for the singing men: nev
12 were there seen such trees in the land of Juda. | And kin
Solomon gave to the queen of Saba all that she desired, a
that she asked, and many more things than she brought to hi
So she returned, and went to her own country with her servan

13 ***The Riches and Glory of Solomon*** And the weight
the gold, that was brought to Solomon every year, was s
14 hundred and sixty-six talents of gold: | besides the sum whi
the deputies of divers nations, and the merchants were a
customed to bring, and all the kings of Arabia, and the lor
15 of the lands, who brought gold and silver to Solomon. | A
king Solomon made two hundred golden spears, of the sum
16 six hundred pieces of gold, which went to every spear. | A
three hundred golden shields of three hundred pieces of gol
which went to the covering of every shield. And the king p
17 them in the armory, which was compassed with a wood. | T
king also made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it wi
18 pure gold: | and six steps to go up to the throne, and a fo
stool of gold, and two arms one on either side, and two lio
19 standing by the arms. | Moreover twelve other little lio
standing upon the steps on both sides: there was not such
20 throne in any kingdom. | And all the vessels of the kin

table were of gold, and the vessels of the house of the forest of Libanus were of the purest gold. For no account was made
21 of silver in those days. | For the king's ships went to Tharsis with the servants of Hiram, once in three years: and they brought thence gold and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks.
22 And Solomon was magnified above all the kings of the
23 earth for riches and glory. | And all the kings of the earth desired to see the face of Solomon, that they might hear the wis-
24 dom which God had given in his heart. | And every year they brought him presents: vessels of silver and of gold, and gar-
25 ments, and armor, and spices, and horses, and mules. And Solomon had forty thousand horses in the stables, and twelve thousand chariots, and horsemen, and he placed them in the cities of the chariots, and where the king was in Jerusalem. |
26 And he exercised authority over all the kings from the river Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, and to the borders of
27 Egypt. | And he made silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones: and cedars as common as the sycamores, which grow
28 in the plains. | And horses were brought to him out of Egypt, and out of all countries.
29 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon first and last are written in the words of Nathan the prophet, and in the books of Ahias the Silonite, and in the vision of Addo the seer, against
30 Jeroboam the son of Nabat. | And Solomon reigned in Jeru-
31 salem over all Israel forty years. | And he slept with his fathers. And they buried him in the city of David: and Roboam his son reigned in his stead.

10

1 ***The People's Petition to Roboam*** And Roboam went to Sichem: for thither all Israel were assembled to make him
2 king. | And when Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who was in Egypt (for he had fled there from Solomon), heard it, forth-
3 with he returned. | And they sent for him; and he came with
4 all Israel. And they spoke to Roboam, saying: | Your father oppressed us with a most grievous yoke; do you govern us with a lighter hand than your father, who laid upon us a heavy servitude, and ease some thing of the burden, that we
5 may serve you. | And he said to them: Come to me again after
6 three days. And when the people were gone, | he took counsel with the ancients, who had stood before his father Solomon, while he yet lived, saying: What counsel give you to me, that
7 I may answer the people? | And they said to him: If you

please this people, and soothe them with kind words, they wil
8 be your servants for ever. | But he forsook the counsel of the
ancients, and began to treat with the young men, that had beer
9 brought up with him, and were in his train. | And he saic
to them: What seems good to you? Or what shall I answer
this people, who have said to me: Ease the yoke which your
10 father laid upon us? | But they answered as young men and
brought up with him in pleasures, saying: To the people whc
said to you: Your father made our yoke heavy, do you ease it
you shall say: My little finger is thicker than the loins of my
11 father. | My father laid upon you a heavy yoke: and I will
add more weight to it: my father beat you with scourges but I
will beat you with scorpions.
12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Roboam the third
13 day, as he commanded them. | And the king answered roughly
14 leaving the counsel of the ancients. | And he spoke according
to the advice of the young men: My father laid upon you a
heavy yoke, which I will make heavier: my father beat you with
15 scourges, but I will beat you with scorpions. | And he con
descended not to the people's requests: for it was the will o
God, that his word might be fulfilled, which he had spoken by
the hand of Ahias the Silonite to Jeroboam the son of Nabat.

16 ***The Ten Tribes Revolt*** And all the people upon the king'
speaking roughly, said thus unto him: We have no part in Da
vid, nor inheritance in the son of Isai. Return to your dwellings
O Israel: and do you, O David, feed your own house. And Is
17 rael went away to their dwellings. | But Roboam reigned ove
18 the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Juda. | An
king Roboam sent Aduram, who was over the tributes, and th
children of Israel stoned him, and he died: and king Roboam
made haste to get up into his chariot, and fled into Jerusalem.
19 And Israel revolted from the house of David unto this day.

11

1 ***The Reign of Roboam*** And Roboam came to Jerusalem
and called together all the house of Juda and of Benjamin,
hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men and warriors, t
fight against Israel, and to bring back his kingdom to him.
2 And the word of the Lord came to Semeias the man of Goc
3 saying: | Speak to Roboam the son of Solomon, the king c
4 Juda, and to all Israel, in Juda and Benjamin: | Thus says th
Lord: You shall not go up, nor fight against your brethern
let every man return to his own house, for by my will this thin

has been done. And when they heard the word of the Lord, they returned, and did not go against Jeroboam.

5 And Roboam dwelt in Jersualem and built walled cities in
6 Juda. | And he built Bethlehem, and Etam and Thecue, |
7.8 and Bethsur, and Socho, and Odollam, | and Geth, and
9 Maresa, and Ziph, | and Aduram, and Lachis, and Azecha. |
10 Saraa also, and Aialon, and Hebron, which are in Juda and
11 Benjamin, well fenced cities. | And when he had enclosed them with walls, he put in them governors and storehouses of
12 provisions, that is, of oil and of wine. | Moreover in every city he made an armory of shields and spears; and he fortified them with great diligence; and he reigned over Juda, and Ben-
13 jamin. | And the priests and Levites, that were in all Israel,
14 came to him out of all their seats, | leaving their suburbs, and their possessions, and passing over to Juda, and Jerusalem; because Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing
15 the priestly office to the Lord. | And he made to himself priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which
16 he had made. | Moreover out of all the tribes of Israel, whosoever gave their heart to seek the Lord the God of Israel, came into Jerusalem to sacrifice their victims before the Lord, the God of their fathers.

17 ***Roboam's Kingdom Strengthened*** And they strengthened the kingdom of Juda, and established Roboam the son of Solomon for three years: for they walked in the ways of David
18 and of Solomon, only three years. | And Roboam took to wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth, the son of David: and
19 Abihail the daughter of Eliab, the son of Isai. | And they bore
20 him sons, Jehus, and Somorias, and Zoom. | And after her, he married Maacha the daughter of Absalom, who bore him
21 Abia, and Ethai, and Ziza, and Salomith. | And Roboam loved Maacha, the daughter of Absalom, above all his wives and concubines. For he had married eighteen wives, and threescore concubines. And he begot eight and twenty sons, and threescore
22 daughters. | But he put at the head of them Abia the son of Maacha, to be the chief ruler over all his brethren: for he meant
23 to make him king, | because he was wiser and mightier than all his sons, and in all the countries of Juda, and of Benjamin, and in all the walled cities: and he gave them provisions in abundance, and he sought many wives.

12

1 ***Sesac, King of Egypt, Invades Juda*** And when the kingdom of Roboam was strengthened and fortified, he forsook

2 the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him. | And in the fifth
year of the reign of Roboam, Sesac king of Egypt came up
against Jerusalem (because they had sinned against the Lord) |
3 with twelve hundred chariots and threescore thousand horse-
men. And the people were without number that came with him
out of Egypt, to wit, Libyans, and Troglodites, and Ethiopians.
4 | And he took the strongest cities in Juda, and came to Jeru-
5 salem. | And Semeias the prophet came to Roboam, and to
the princes of Juda, that were gathered together in Jerusalem,
fleeing from Sesac. And he said to them: Thus says the Lord:
You have left me, and I have left you in the hand of Sesac. |
6 And the princes of Israel, and the king, being in a consternation,
7 said: The Lord is just. | And when the Lord saw that they
were humbled, the word of the Lord came to Semeias, saying:
Because they are humbled, I will not destroy them, and I will
give them a little help, and my wrath shall not fall upon Jeru-
8 salem by the hand of Sesac. | But yet they shall serve him, that
they may know the difference between my service, and the
service of a kingdom of the earth.

9 ***The Treasures of the Temple Taken away*** So Sesac
king of Egypt departed from Jerusalem, taking away the treas-
ures of the house of the Lord, and of the king's house. And he
took all with him, and the golden shields that Solomon had
10 made, | instead of which the king made brazen ones, and
delivered them to the captains of the shieldbearers, who guarded
11 the entrance of the palace. | And when the king entered
into the house of the Lord, the shieldbearers came and
12 took them, and brought them back again to their armory. | But
yet because they were humbled, the wrath of the Lord turned
away from them, and they were not utterly destroyed: for even
in Juda there were found good works.

13 King Roboam therefore was strengthened in Jerusalem, and
reigned: he was one and forty years old when he began to
reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city
which the Lord chose out of all the tribes of Israel, to establish
his name there: and the name of his mother was Naama, an
14 Ammonitess. | But he did evil, and did not prepare his heart
15 to seek the Lord. | Now the acts of Roboam first and last are
written in the books of Semeias the prophet, and of Addo the
seer, and diligently recorded. And there was war between Ro-
16 boam and Jeroboam all their days. | And Roboam slept with
his fathers; and was buried in the city of David. And Abia
his son reigned in his stead.

13

Abia's Reign

1 In the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam, Abia
2 reigned over Juda. | Three years he reigned in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Michaia, the daughter of Uriel of Gabaa. And there was war between Abia and Jeroboam.
3 And when Abia had begun battle, and had with him four hundred thousand most valiant and chosen men, Jeroboam put his army in array against him, eight hundred thousand
4 men, who were also chosen and most valiant for war. | And Abia stood upon mount Semeron, which was in Ephraim, and
5 said: Hear me, O Jeroboam, and all Israel: | Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave to David the kingdom over Israel for ever, to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? |
6 And Jeroboam the son of Nabat, the servant of Solomon the
7 son of David, rose up, and rebelled against his lord. | And there were gathered to him vain men, and children of Belial: and they prevailed against Roboam the son of Solomon, for Roboam was unexperienced, and of a fearful heart, and could
8 not resist them. | And now you say that you are able to withstand the kingdom of the Lord, which he possesses by the sons of David, and you have a great multitude of people, and golden
9 calves, which Jeroboam has made you for gods. | And you have cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and you have made you priests, like all the nations of the earth. Whosoever comes and consecrates his hand with a bullock of the herd, and with seven rams, is made a priest of those
10 who are no gods. | But the Lord is our God, whom we forsake not, and the priests who minister to the Lord are the sons of
11 Aaron, and the Levites are in their order. | And they offer holocausts to the Lord, every day, morning and evening, and incense made according to the ordinance of the law, and the loaves are set forth on a most clean table. And there is with us the golden candlestick, and the lamps thereof, to be lighted always in the evening: for we keep the precepts of the Lord our
12 God, whom you have forsaken. | Therefore God is the leader in our army, and his priests who sound with trumpets, and resound against you. O children of Israel, fight not against the Lord the God of your fathers, for it is not good for you.
13 While he spoke these things, Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind him. And while he stood facing the enemies, he encompassed Juda, who perceived it not, with his

13, 2: *Michaia:* otherwise Maacha. Her father had also two names, namely Absalom (or Abessalom), and Uriel.

13, 5: *A covenant of salt:* that is, a firm and perpetual covenant.

14 army. | And when Juda looked back, they saw the battle coming upon them both before and behind, and they cried to the Lord: and the priests began to sound with the trumpets.

15 ***Abia's Victory over Jeroboam*** And all the men of Juda shouted. And behold when they shouted, God terrified Jero-
16 boam, and all Israel that stood against Abia and Juda. | And the children of Israel fled before Juda, and the Lord delivered
17 them into their hand. | And Abia and his people slew them with a great slaughter, and there fell wounded of Israel five
18 hundred thousand valiant men. | And the children of Israel were brought down, at that time, and the children of Juda were exceedingly strengthened, because they had trusted in the Lord
19 the God of their fathers. | And Abia pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Bethel and her daughters, and Jesana
20 with her daughters, Ephron also and her daughters. | And Jeroboam was not able to resist any more, in the days of Abia:
21 and the Lord struck him, and he died. | But Abia, being strengthened in his kingdom, took fourteen wives: and begot
22 two and twenty sons, and sixteen daughters. | And the rest of the acts of Abia, and of his ways and works, are written diligently in the book of Addo the prophet.

14

1 ***The Good Reign of Asa*** And Abia slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. |
2 And Asa did that which was good and pleasing in the sight of his God: and he destroyed the altars of foreign worship, and
3 the high places. | And broke the statues, and cut down the
4 groves. | And he commanded Juda to seek the Lord the God of their fathers, and to do the law, and all the commandments.
5 | And he took away out of all the cities of Juda the altars,
6 and temples; and reigned in peace. | He built also strong cities in Juda: for he was quiet, and there had no wars risen in his
7 time, the Lord giving peace. | And he said to Juda: Let us build these cities, and compass them with walls, and fortify them with towers, and gates, and bars, while all is quiet from wars, because we have sought the Lord the God of our fathers and he has given us peace round about. So they built, and there was no hindrance in building.

8 And Asa had in his army of men that bore shields and spears, of Juda three hundred thousand, and of Benjamin that bore shields and drew bows, two hundred and eighty thousand. All these were most valiant men.

9 ***Asa Defeats the Ethiopians*** And Zara, the Ethiopian, came out against them with his army of ten hundred thousand men, and with three hundred chariots: and he came as far as
10 Maresa. | And Asa went out to meet him, and set his army in array for battle in the vale of Sephata, which is near Maresa. |
11 And he called upon the Lord God, and said: Lord, there is no difference with you, whether you help with few, or with many. Help us, O Lord our God: for with confidence in you, and in your name, we have come against this multitude. O Lord you
12 are our God. Let not man prevail against you. | And the Lord terrified the Ethiopians before Asa and Juda: and the Ethio-
13 pians fled. | And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them to Gerara: and the Ethiopians fell even to utter destruction, for the Lord slew them, and his army fought against them, and they were destroyed. And they took abundance of
14 spoils. | And they took all the cities round about Gerara: for a great fear had come upon all men. And they pillaged the cities,
15 and carried off much booty. | And they destroyed the sheepcotes, and took an infinite number of cattle, and of camels: and returned to Jerusalem.

15

1 ***The Prophecy of Azarias*** And the spirit of God came upon
2 Azarias the son of Oded. | And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: Hear me, Asa, and all Juda and Benjamin: The Lord is with you, because you have been with him. If you seek him, you shall find: but if you forsake him, he will forsake
3 you. | And many days shall pass in Israel, without the true God, and without a priest a teacher, and without the law. |
4 And when in their distress they shall return to the Lord the God
5 of Israel, and shall seek him, they shall find him. | At that time there shall be no peace to him that goes out and comes in: but terrors on every side among all the inhabitants of the
6 earth. | For nation shall fight against nation, and city against
7 city: for the Lord will trouble them with all distress. | Do you therefore take courage, and let not your hands be weakened: for there shall be a reward for your work.

8 And when Asa had heard the words, and the prophecy of Azarias the son of Oded, the prophet, he took courage, and took away the idols out of all the land of Juda, and out of Benjamin, and out of the cities of mount Ephraim, which he had taken; and he dedicated the altar of the Lord, which was be-
9 fore the porch of the Lord. | And he gathered together all Juda and Benjamin, and the strangers with them, of Ephraim, and Manasses, and Simeon: for many had come over to him out of

10 Israel, seeing that the Lord his God was with him. | And when
they had come to Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth
11 year of the reign of Asa, | they sacrificed to the Lord in that
day of the spoils, and of the prey that they had brought, seven
hundred oxen, and seven thousand rams.

12 ***Asa's Covenant with God*** And he went in to confirm as
usual the covenant, that they should seek the Lord the God of
their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul. |
13 And if any one, said he, seek not the Lord the God of Israel,
14 let him die whether little or great, man or woman. | And they
swore to the Lord with a loud voice with joyful shouting, and
15 with sound of trumpets, and sound of cornets, | all that were
in Juda with a curse: for with all their heart they swore, and
with all their will they sought him, and they found him; and
the Lord gave them rest round about.
16 Moreover Maacha the mother of king Asa he deposed from
the royal authority, because she had made in a grove an idol
of Priapus: and he entirely destroyed it, and breaking it into
17 pieces burned it at the torrent Cedron. | But high places were
left in Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his
18 days. | And the things which his father had vowed, and he
himself had vowed, he brought into the house of the Lord: gold
19 and silver, and vessels of divers uses. | And there was no war
unto the five and thirtieth year of the kingdom of Asa.

16

1 ***Asa Seeks Help from the Syrians*** And in the six and thir-
tieth year of his kingdom, Baasa the king of Israel came up
against Juda, and built a wall about Rama, that no one might
2 safely go out or come in of the kingdom of Asa. | Then Asa
brought silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the
Lord, and of the king's treasures, and sent to Benadad king of
3 Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying: | There is a league be-
tween me and you, as there was between my father and your
father. Wherefore I have sent you silver and gold, that you may
break your league with Baasa king of Israel, and make him de-
4 part from me. | And when Benadad heard this, he sent the
captains of his armies against the cities of Israel: and they took
Ahion, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the walled cities of
5 Nephtali. | And when Baasa heard of it, he left off the build-
6 ing of Rama, and interrupted his work. | Then king Asa took

16, 1: *Six and thirtieth year of his kingdom:* that is, of the kingdom of Juda, taking the date of it from the beginning of the reign of Roboam.

all Juda, and they carried away from Rama the stones, and the timber that Baasa had prepared for the building: and he built with them Gabaa, and Maspha.

7 ***Asa Reproved for His Lack of Trust in God*** At that time, Hanani the prophet came to Asa king of Juda, and said to him: Because you have had confidence in the king of Syria, and not in the Lord your God, therefore has the army of the
8 king of Syria escaped out of your hand. | Were not the Ethiopians, and the Libyans much more numerous in chariots, and horsemen, and an exceeding great multitude: yet, because you
9 trusted in the Lord, he delivered them into your hand? | For the eyes of the Lord behold all the earth, and give strength to those who with a perfect heart trust in him. Wherefore, you have done foolishly, and for this cause from this time wars shall
10 arise against you. | And Asa was angry with the seer, and commanded him to be put in prison: for he was greatly enraged because of this thing. And he put to death many of the people at that time.

11 But the works of Asa the first and last are written in the
12 book of the kings of Juda and Israel. | And Asa fell sick in the nine and thirtieth year of his reign, of a most violent pain in his feet. And yet in his illness he did not seek the Lord, but
13 rather trusted in the skill of physicians. And he slept with his fathers: and he died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. |
14 And they buried him in his own sepulcher, which he had made for himself in the city of David. And they laid him on his bed, full of spices and odoriferous ointments, which were made by the art of perfumers, and they burned them over him with very great pomp.

17

1 ***The Reign of Josaphat*** And Josaphat his son reigned in
2 his stead, and grew strong against Israel. | And he placed numbers of soldiers in all the fortified cities of Juda. And he put garrisons in the land of Juda, and in the cities of Ephraim,
3 which Asa his father had taken. | And the Lord was with Josaphat, because he walked in the first ways of David his father:
4 and trusted not in Baalim, | but in the God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not according to the sins of
5 Israel. | And the Lord established the kingdom in his hand, and all Juda brought presents to Josaphat: and he acquired
6 immense riches, and much glory. | And when his heart had taken courage for the ways of the Lord, he took away also the high places and the groves out of Juda.

7 *Josaphat's Teachers of the People* And in the third year of his reign he sent of his princes, Benhail, and Abdias, and Zacharias, and Nathanael, and Micheas, to teach in the cities
8 of Juda. | And with them the Levites, Semeias, and Nathanias, and Zabadias, and Asael, and Semiramoth, and Jonathan, and Adonias, and Tobias, and Thobadonias, Levites, and with them
9 Elisama, and Joram, priests. | And they taught the people in Juda, having with them the book of the law of the Lord: and they went about all the cities of Juda, and instructed the people.
10 And the fear of the Lord came upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Juda: and they dared not make
11 war against Josaphat. | The Philistines also brought presents to Josaphat, and tribute in silver, and the Arabians brought him cattle, seven thousand seven hundred rams, and as many he-
12 goats. | And Josaphat grew, and became exceeding great: and he built in Juda houses like towers, and walled cities.

13 *The Forces of Josaphat* And he prepared many works in the cities of Juda: and he had warriors, and valiant men in
14 Jerusalem. | Of whom this is the number of the houses and families of every one: in Juda captains of the army, Ednas the chief, and with him three hundred thousand most valiant men.
15 | After him Johanan the captain, and with him two hundred
16 and eighty thousand. | And after him was Amasias the son of Zechri, consecrated to the Lord, and with him were two hundred
17 thousand valiant men. | After him was Eliada, valiant in battle, and with him two hundred thousand armed with bow and
18 shield. | After him also was Jozabad, and with him a hundred
19 and eighty thousand ready for war. | All these were at the hand of the king, beside others, whom he had put in the walled cities, in all Juda.

18

1 *Josaphat and Achab Consult False Prophets* Now Josaphat was rich and very glorious, and was joined by affinity to
2 Achab. | And he went down to him after some years to Samaria: and Achab at his coming killed sheep and oxen in abundance, for him and the people that came with him: and he per-
3 suaded him to go up to Ramoth Galaad. | And Achab king of Israel said to Josaphat king of Juda: Come with me to Ramoth Galaad. And he answered him: You are as I am, and my people as your people, and we will be with you in the war. |
4 And Josaphat said to the king of Israel: Inquire, I beseech
5 you, at present the word of the Lord. | So the king of Israel gathered together of the prophets four hundred men, and he

said to them: Shall we go to Ramoth Galaad to fight, or shall we forbear? But they said: Go up, and God will deliver it into
6 the king's hand. | And Josaphat said: Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire also of him? |
7 And the king of Israel said to Josaphat: There is one man, of whom we may ask the will of the Lord: but I hate him, for he never prophesies good to me, but always evil: and it is Micheas the son of Jemla. And Josaphat said: Speak not thus, O king.
8 | And the king of Israel called one of the eunuchs, and said to him: Call quickly Micheas the son of Jemla.
9 Now the king of Israel, and Josaphat king of Juda, both sat on their thrones, clothed in royal robes, and they sat in the open court by the gate of Samaria: and all the prophets prophesied
10 before them. | And Sedecias the son of Chanaana made him horns of iron, and said: Thus says the Lord: With these shall
11 you push Syria, till you destroy it. | And all the prophets prophesied in like manner, and said: Go up to Ramoth Galaad; and you shall prosper; and the Lord will deliver them into the
12 king's hand. | And the messenger that went to call Micheas, said to him: Behold the words of all the prophets with one mouth declare good to the king. I beseech you therefore let not your word disagree with them: and speak you also good success.
13 | And Micheas answered him: As the Lord lives, whatsoever my God shall say to me, that will I speak.

14 ***The Prophecy of Micheas*** So he came to the king and the king said to him: Micheas, shall we go to Ramoth Galaad to fight, or forbear? And he answered him: Go up for all shall succeed prosperously, and the enemies shall be delivered into
15 your hands. | And the king said: I adjure you again and again to say nothing but the truth to me, in the name of the
16 Lord. | Then he said: I saw all Israel scattered in the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the Lord said: These have no masters. Let every man return to his own house in
17 peace. | And the king of Israel said to Josaphat: Did I not tell you that this man would not prophesy me any good, but
18 evil? | Then he said: Hear therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the army of heaven
19 standing by him on the right hand and on the left. | And the Lord said: Who shall deceive Achab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall in Ramoth Galaad? And when one spoke in this
20 manner, and another otherwise: | there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said: I will deceive him. And the Lord said to him: By what means will you deceive him? |

21 And he answered: I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the
mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said: You shall deceive,
22 and shall prevail. Go out, and do so. | Now therefore behold
the Lord has put a spirit of lying in the mouth of all your
prophets: and the Lord has spoken evil against you.
23 And Sedecias the son of Chanaana came and struck Micheas
on the cheek and said: Which way went the spirit of the Lord
24 from me, to speak to you? | And Micheas said: You yourself
shall see in that day, when you shall go in from chamber to
25 chamber, to hide yourself. | And the king of Israel com-
manded, saying: Take Micheas, and carry him to Amon the
26 governor of the city, and to Joas the son of Amelech, | and say:
Thus says the king: Put this fellow in prison, and give him
bread and water in a small quantity till I return in peace. |
27 And Micheas said: If you return in peace, the Lord has not
spoken by me. And he said: Hear, all you people.
28 So the king of Israel and Josaphat king of Juda went up to
29 Ramoth Galaad. | And the king of Israel said to Josaphat: I
will change my dress, and so I will go to the battle: but put
you on your own garments. And the king of Israel, having
30 changed his dress, went to the battle. | Now the king of Syria
had commanded the captains of his cavalry, saying: Fight not
31 with small, or great, but with the king of Israel only. | So when
the captains of the cavalry saw Josaphat, they said: This is the
king of Israel. And they surrounded him to attack him: but he
cried to the Lord, and he helped him, and turned them away
32 from him. | For when the captains of the cavalry saw that he
was not the king of Israel, they left him.

33 *Achab's Death* And it happened that one of the people shot
an arrow at a venture, and struck the king of Israel between the
neck and the shoulders, and he said to his chariot man: Turn
your hand, and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded. |
34 And the fight was ended that day: but the king of Israel stood
in his chariot against the Syrians until the evening, and died
at the sunset.

19

1 *Josaphat's Charge to Judges and Levites* And Josaphat
king of Juda returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. |
2 And Jehu the son of Hanani, the seer, met him and said to him:
You help the ungodly; and you are joined in friendship with
them that hate the Lord: and therefore you did deserve indeed
3 the wrath of the Lord. | But good works are found in you
because you have taken away the groves out of the land of

Juda, and have prepared your heart to seek the Lord the God of your fathers.

4 And Josaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again to the people from Bersabee to mount Ephraim, and brought
5 them back to the Lord the God of their fathers. | And he set judges of the land in all the fenced cities of Juda, in every
6 place. | And charging the judges, he said: Take heed what you do: for you exercise not the judgment of man, but of the Lord. And whatsoever you judge, it shall redound to you. |
7 Let the fear of the Lord be with you, and do all things with diligence: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor
8 respect of persons, nor desire of gifts. | In Jerusalem also Josaphat appointed Levites, and priests and chiefs of the families of Israel, to judge the judgment and the cause of the Lord, for
9 the inhabitants thereof. | And he charged them, saying: Thus shall you do in the fear of the Lord faithfully, and with a per-
10 fect heart. | Every cause that shall come to you of your brethren, that dwell in their cities, between kindred and kindred, wheresoever there is question concerning the law, the commandment, the ceremonies, the justifications: show it them, that they may not sin against the Lord, and that wrath may not come upon you and your brethren: and so doing you shall not
11 sin. | And Amarias the priest your high priest shall be chief in the things which regard God; and Zabadias the son of Ismahel, who is ruler in the house of Juda, shall be over those matters which belong to the king's office. And you have before you the Levites for masters. Take courage and do diligently, and the Lord will be with you in good things.

20

1 ***Juda Attacked*** After this the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them of the Ammonites, were
2 gathered together to fight against Josaphat. | And there came messengers, and told Josaphat, saying: There comes a great multitude against you from beyond the sea, and out of Syria, and behold they are in Asasonthamar, which is Engaddi. |
3 And Josaphat being seized with fear betook himself wholly to pray to the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Juda. |
4 And Juda gathered themselves together to pray to the Lord: and all came out of their cities to make supplication to him.

5 ***Josaphat's Prayer for Deliverance*** And Josaphat stood in the midst of the assembly of Juda, and Jerusalem, in the house
6 of the Lord, before the new court, | and said: O Lord God of our fathers, you are God in heaven, and you rule over all the

kingdoms and nations: in your hand is strength and power; and
7 no one can resist you. | Did not you our God kill all the inhab-
itants of this land before your people Israel, and give it to the
8 seed of Abraham your friend for ever? | And they dwelt in
9 it, and built in it a sanctuary to your name, saying: | If evils
fall upon us, the sword of judgment, or pestilence, or famine,
we will stand in your presence before this house, in which your
name is called upon: and we will cry to you in our afflictions.
10 And you will hear, and save us. | Now therefore behold the
children of Ammon, and of Moab, and mount Seir (through
whose lands you did not allow Israel to pass, when they came
out of Egypt, but they turned aside from them, and slew them
11 not) | do the contrary, and endeavor to cast us out of the pos-
12 session which you have delivered to us. | O our God, will you
not then judge them? As for us, we have not strength enough to
be able to resist this multitude, which comes violently upon us.
But as we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to
you.

13 ***God's Fight for His People Foretold*** And all Juda stood
before the Lord with their little ones, and their wives, and their
14 children. | And Jahaziel the son of Zacharias, the son of Ba-
naias, the son of Jehiel, the son of Mathanias, a Levite of the
sons of Asaph, was *there,* upon whom the spirit of the Lord
15 came in the midst of the multitude. | And he said: Attend
you, all Juda, and you that dwell in Jerusalem, and you king
Josaphat: Thus says the Lord to you: Fear not, and be not dis-
mayed at this multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.
16 | Tomorrow you shall go down against them: for they will come
up by the ascent named Sis, and you shall find them at the head
of the torrent, which is over against the wilderness of Jeruel. |
17 It shall not be you that shall fight, but only stand with confi-
dence, and you shall see the help of the Lord over you, O Juda,
and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be you dismayed: tomorrow you
shall go out against them, and the Lord will be with you.
18 Then Josaphat, and Juda and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem
19 fell flat on the ground before the Lord, and adored him. | And
the Levites of the sons of Caath, and of the sons of Core, praised
20 the Lord the God of Israel with a loud voice, on high. | And
they rose early in the morning, and went out through the desert
of Thecua. And as they were marching, Josaphat standing in
the midst of them, said: Hear me, you men of Juda, and all the
inhabitants of Jerusalem: believe in the Lord your God, and you
shall be secure: believe his prophets, and all things shall succeed
21 well. | And he gave counsel to the people, and appointed the

singing men of the Lord, to praise him by their companies, and to go before the army, and with one voice to say: Give glory to the Lord, for his mercy endures for ever.

22 And when they began to sing praises, the Lord turned their ambushments upon themselves, that is to say, of the children of Ammon, and of Moab, and of mount Seir, who had come
23 out to fight against Juda, and they were slain. | For the children of Ammon, and of Moab, rose up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, to kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of them, they turned also against one another, and
24 destroyed one another. | And when Juda came to the watch tower, that looks toward the desert, they saw afar off all the country, for a great space, full of dead bodies; and that no one
25 was left that could escape death. | Then Josaphat came, and all the people with him to take away the spoils of the dead, and they found among the dead bodies, stuff of various kinds, and garments, and most precious vessels: and they took them for themselves, insomuch that they could not carry all, nor in three
26 days take away the spoils, the booty was so great. | And on the fourth day they were assembled in the valley of Blessing: for there they blessed the Lord; and therefore they called that place the valley of Blessing until this day.

27 *Juda Rejoices* And every man of Juda, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem returned, and Josaphat at their head, into Jerusalem, with great joy, because the Lord had made them rejoice
28 over their enemies. | And they came into Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets into the house of the Lord. |
29 And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies
30 of Israel. | And the kingdom of Josaphat was quiet, and God gave him peace round about.

31 And Josaphat reigned over Juda, and he was five and thirty years old when he began to reign. And he reigned five and twenty years in Jerusalem: and the name of his mother was
32 Azuba the daughter of Selahi. | And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and departed not from it, doing the things that
33 were pleasing before the Lord. | But yet he took not away the high places, and the people had not yet turned their heart to
34 the Lord the God of their fathers. | But the rest of the acts of Josaphat, first and last, are written in the words of Jehu the son of Hanani, which he digested into the books of the kings of Israel.

35 After these things Josaphat king of Juda made friendship with Ochozias king of Israel, whose works were very wicked. |

36 And he was partner with him in making ships, to go to Tharsis:
37 and they made the ships in Asiongaber. | And Eliezer the son of Dodau of Maresa prophesied to Josaphat, saying: Because you have made a league with Ochozias, the Lord has destroyed your works, and the ships are broken, and they could not go to Tharsis.

21

1 ***Joram Succeeds Josaphat*** And Josaphat slept with his fathers; and was buried with them in the city of David: and
2 Joram his son reigned in his stead. | And he had brethren, the sons of Josaphat, Azarias, and Jahiel, and Zacharias, and Azaria, and Michael, and Saphatias: all these were the sons of
3 Josaphat king of Juda. | And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and pensions, with strong cities in Juda: but the kingdom he gave to Joram, because he was the
4 eldest. | So Joram rose up over the kingdom of his father: and when he had established himself, he slew all his brethren with the sword, and some of the princes of Israel.
5 Joram was two and thirty years old when he began to reign:
6 and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. | And he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Achab had done: for his wife was a daughter of Achab, and he did evil in the
7 sight of the Lord. | But the Lord would not destroy the house of David: because of the covenant which he had made with him: and because he had promised to give a lamp to him, and
8 to his sons for ever. | In those days Edom revolted from being
9 subject to Juda, and made themselves a king. | And Joram went over with his princes, and all his cavalry with him, and rose in the night, and defeated the Edomites who had surrounded
10 him and all the captains of his cavalry. | However, Edom revolted from being under the dominion of Juda unto this day. At that time, Lobna also revolted, from being under his hand.
11 For he had forsaken the Lord the God of his fathers. | Moreover he built also high places in the cities of Juda, and he made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and Juda to transgress.

12 ***Joram Is Punished for His Wickedness*** And there was a letter brought him from Elias the prophet, in which it was written: Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: Because you have not walked in the ways of Josaphat your fa-
13 ther, nor in the ways of Asa king of Juda, | but have walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made Juda and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, imitating the

fornication of the house of Achab: moreover also you have killed your brethren, the house of your father, better men than
14 yourself, | behold the Lord will strike you with a great plague, with all your people, and your children, and your wives, and
15 all your substance. | And you shall be sick of a very grievous disease of your bowels, till your vital parts come out by little and little every day.
16 And the Lord stirred up against Joram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, who border on the Ethiopians. |
17 And they came up into the land of Juda, and wasted it. And they carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house: his sons also, and his wives; so that there was no son
18 left him but Joachaz, who was the youngest. | And besides all this, the Lord struck him with an incurable disease in his
19 bowels. | And as day came after day, and time rolled on, two whole years passed: then after being wasted with a long consumption, so as to void his very bowels, his disease ended with his life. And he died of a most wretched illness, and the people did not make a funeral for him according to the manner of
20 burning, as they had done for his ancestors. | He was two and thirty years old when he began his reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked not rightly, and they buried him in the city of David: but not in the sepulchers of the kings.

22

1 ***Reign and Death of Ochozias*** And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ochozias his youngest son king in his place: for the rovers of the Arabians, who had broken in upon the camp, had killed all that were his elder brothers. So Ochozias the son
2 of Joram king of Juda reigned. | Ochozias was forty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem: and the name of his mother was Athalia the daughter
3 of Amri. | He also walked in the ways of the house of Achab:
4 for his mother pushed him on to do wickedly. | So he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Achab did: for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction.
5 And he walked after their counsels. And he went with Joram the son of Achab king of Israel, to fight against Hazael king of Syria, at Ramoth Galaad: and the Syrians wounded Joram.
6 | And he returned to be healed in Jezrahel: for he received many wounds in the foresaid battle. And Ochozias the son of Joram king of Juda went down to visit Joram the son of Achab

21, 17: *Joachaz:* otherwise Ochozias.
22, 2: *Forty-two:* divers Greek Bibles read: thirty-two.

7 in Jezrahel where he lay sick. | For it was the will of God against Ochozias that he should come to Joram: and when he had come, he should go out also against Jehu the son of Namsi, whom the Lord had anointed to destroy the house of Achab. |
8 So when Jehu was rooting out the house of Achab, he found the princes of Juda, and the sons of the brethren of Ochozias, who
9 served him: and he slew them. | And he sought for Ochozias himself, and took him lying hidden in Samaria: and when he was brought to him, he killed him, and they buried him: because he was the son of Josaphat, who had sought the Lord with all his heart. And there was no more hope that any one should reign of the race of Ochozias.

10 ***The Tyranny of Athalia*** For Athalia his mother, seeing that her son was dead, rose up, and killed all the royal family
11 of the house of Joram. | But Josabeth the king's daughter took Joas the son of Ochozias, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain. And she hid him with his nurse in a bedchamber: now Josabeth that hid him, was daughter of king Joram, wife of Joiada the high priest, and sister of Ochozias,
12 and therefore Athalia did not kill him. | And he was with them hidden in the house of God six years, during which Athalia reigned over the land.

23

1 ***Joas Made King*** And in the seventh year Joiada being encouraged, took the captains of hundreds, to wit, Azarias the son of Jeroham, and Ismahel the son of Johanan, and Azarias the son of Obed, and Maasias the son of Adaias, and Elisaphat
2 the son of Zechri; and made a covenant with them. | And they went about Juda, and gathered together the Levites out of all the cities of Juda, and the chiefs of the families of Israel; and
3 they came to Jerusalem. | And all the multitude made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Joiada said to them: Behold the king's son shall reign, as the Lord has said of
4 the sons of David. | And this is the thing that you shall do: |
5 A third part of you that come to the sabbath, of the priests, and of the Levites, and of the porters, shall be at the gates, and a third part at the king's house, and a third at the gate that is called the Foundation: but let all the rest of the people be in

22, 7-9: These verses are a summary of 4 Kgs 9, 1-28; 10, 11-14.
22, 10—23, 21: Details are added here to the account which comes from 4 Kgs 11.
23, 5: *Come to the sabbath:* that is, to perform in their appointed weeks the functions of their office, or the weekly watches.

6 the courts of the house of the Lord. | And let no one come into
the house of the Lord, but the priests, and they that minister of
the Levites. Let them only come in, because they are sanctified:
and let all the rest of the people keep the watches of the Lord. |
7 And let the Levites be round about the king, every man with his
arms; (and if any other come into the temple, let him be slain,)
and let them be with the king, both coming in and going out.
8 So the Levites, and all Juda did according to all that Joiada
the high priest had commanded. And they took every one his
men that were under him, and that came in by the course of the
sabbath, with those who had fulfilled the sabbath, and were to
go out. For Joiada the high priest permitted not the companies
to depart, which were accustomed to succeed one another every
9 week. | And Joiada the priest gave to the captains the spears,
and the shields, and targets of king David, which he had dedi-
10 cated in the house of the Lord. | And he set all the people with
swords in their hands, from the right side of the temple to the
left side of the temple, before the altar, and the temple, round
11 about the king. | And they brought out the king's son, and put
the crown upon him, and the testimony, and gave him the law
to hold in his hand. And they made him king: and Joiada the
high priest and his sons anointed him. And they prayed for him,
and said: God save the king.

12 ***Athalia Is Slain*** Now when Athalia heard the noise of the
people running and praising the king, she came in to the people,
13 into the temple of the Lord. | And when she saw the king
standing upon the step in the entrance, and the princes, and the
companies about him, and all the people of the land rejoicing,
and sounding with trumpets, and playing on instruments of
divers kinds, and the voice of those that praised, she rent her
14 garments, and said: Treason, treason. | And Joiada the high
priest going out to the captains, and the chiefs of the army, said
to them: Take her away, outside the precinct of the temple, and
when she is there, let her be killed with the sword. For the priest
commanded that she should not be killed in the house of the
15 Lord. | And they laid hold on her by the neck: and when she
came within the horse gate of the palace, they killed her there.

16 ***Joiada Destroys Idolatry*** And Joiada made a covenant
between himself and all the people, and the king, that they
17 should be the people of the Lord. | And all the people went
into the house of Baal, and destroyed it: and they broke down
his altars and his idols, and they slew Mathan the priest of
18 Baal before the altars. | And Joiada appointed overseers in

the house of the Lord, under the hands of the priests and the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord: to offer holocausts to the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with joy and singing, according to the disposition of
19 David. | He appointed also porters in the gates of the house of the Lord, that none who was unclean in any thing should
20 enter in. | And he took the captains of hundreds, and the most valiant men, and the chiefs of the people, and all the people of the land, and they brought down the king from the house of the Lord, and brought him through the upper gate into the
21 king's house, and set him on the royal throne. | And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet: but Athalia was slain with the sword.

24

1 ***Joas Repairs the Temple*** Joas was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem: the
2 name of his mother was Sebia of Bersabee. | And he did that which is good before the Lord all the days of Joiada the priest.
3 | And Joiada took for him two wives, by whom he had sons and daughters.

4 After this Joas had a mind to repair the house of the Lord. |
5 And he assembled the priests, and the Levites, and said to them: Go out to the cities of Juda, and gather of all Israel money to repair the temple of your God, from year to year, and do this
6 with speed: but the Levites were negligent. | And the king called Joiada the chief, and said to him: Why have you not taken care to oblige the Levites to bring in out of Juda and Jerusalem the money that was appointed by Moses the servant of the Lord for all the multitude of Israel to bring into the tabernacle
7 of the testimony? | For that wicked woman Athalia and her children have destroyed the house of God and adorned the temple of Baal with all the things that had been dedicated in the
8 temple of the Lord. | And the king commanded, and they made a chest: and set it by the gate of the house of the Lord on the
9 outside. | And they made a proclamation in Juda and Jerusalem, that every man should bring to the Lord the money which Moses the servant of God appointed for all Israel in the desert.
10 | And all the princes, and all the people rejoiced: and going in they contributed and cast so much into the chest of the Lord
11 that it was filled. | And when it was time to bring the chest before the king by the hands of the Levites (for they saw there

24, 4-14: Details are added here to the account coming from 4 Kgs 12, 4-16.

was much money), the king's scribe, and he whom the high priest had appointed went in: and they poured out the money that was in the chest: and they carried back the chest to its place. And thus they did from day to day, and there was
12 gathered an immense sum of money. | And the king and Joiada gave it to those who were over the works and of the house of the Lord. But they hired with it stonecutters and artificers of every kind of work, to repair the house of the Lord: and such as wrought in iron and brass, to uphold what began to be falling.
13 | And the workmen were diligent, and the breach of the walls was closed up by their hands, and they set up the house of the
14 Lord in its former state and made it stand firm. | And when they had finished all the works, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Joiada: and with it were made vessels for the temple, for the ministry, and for holocausts and bowls, and other vessels of gold and silver. And holocausts were offered in the house of the Lord continually all the days of Joiada.

15 ***Idolatry Returns upon Joiada's Death*** But Joiada grew old, and was full of days, and died when he was a hundred
16 and thirty years old. | And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good to Israel, and to his
17 house. | And after the death of Joiada the princes of Juda went in, and worshiped the king: and he was soothed by their services
18 and hearkened to them. | And they forsook the temple of the Lord the God of their fathers, and served groves and idols; and
19 wrath came upon Juda and Jerusalem for this sin. | And he sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord, and they
20 would not give ear when they testified against them. | The spirit of God then came upon Zacharias the son of Joiada the priest. And he stood in the sight of the people, and said to them: Thus says the Lord God: Why transgress you the commandment of the Lord which will not be for your good, and have
21 forsaken the Lord, to make him forsake you? | And they gathered themselves together against him, and stoned him at the king's commandment in the court of the house of the Lord. |
22 And king Joas did not remember the kindness that Joiada his father had done to him; but killed his son. And when he died, he said: The Lord see, and require it.

23 And when a year had passed, the army of Syria came up against him. And they came to Juda and Jerusalem and killed all the princes of the people, and they sent all the spoils to the
24 king of Damascus. | And although there came a very small number of the Syrians, the Lord delivered into their hands an

infinite multitude, because they had forsaken the Lord the God of their fathers: and on Joas they executed shameful judgments.

23 ***Joas Slain by His Servants*** And departing they left him in great diseases. And his servants rose up against him, for revenge of the blood of the son of Joiada the priest. And they slew him in his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of
26 David, but not in the sepulchers of the kings. | Now the men that conspired against him were Zabad the son of Semmaath an Ammonitess, and Jozabad the son of Semarith a Moabitess. |
27 And concerning his sons, and the sum of money which was gathered under him, and the repairing the house of God, they are written more diligently in the book of kings: and Amasias his son reigned in his stead.

25

1 ***The Reign of Amasias*** Amasias was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem: the name of his mother was Joadan
2 of Jerusalem. | And he did what was good in the sight of the
3 Lord: but yet not with a perfect heart. | And when he saw himself strengthened in his kingdom, he put to death the serv-
4 ants that had slain the king his father. | But he slew not their children, as it is written in the book of law of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying: The fathers shall not be slain for the children, nor the children for their fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.

5 Amasias therefore gathered Juda together, and appointed them by families, and captains of thousands and of hundreds in all Juda, and Benjamin. And he numbered them from twenty years old and upward, and found three hundred thousand young men that could go out to battle, and could hold the spear
6 and shield. | He hired also of Israel a hundred thousand valiant
7 men, for a hundred talents of silver. | But a man of God came to him, and said: O king, let not the army of Israel go out with you. For the Lord is not with Israel, and all the children of
8 Ephraim. | And if you think that battles consist in the strength of the army, God will make you to be overcome by the enemies,
9 for it belongs to God, both to help, and to put to flight. | And Amasias said to the man of God: What will then become of the hundred talents which I have given to the soldiers of Israel? And the man of God answered him: The Lord is rich enough
10 to be able to give you much more than this. | Then Amasias separated the army that came to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: but they being much enraged against Juda, re-

11 turned to their own country. | And Amasias taking courage led
forth his people, and went to the vale of saltpits, and slew of the
12 children of Seir ten thousand. | And other ten thousand men
the sons of Juda took, and brought to the steep of a certain rock,
and cast them down headlong from the top, and they all were
13 broken to pieces. | But that army which Amasias had sent back,
that they should not go with him to battle, spread themselves
among the cities of Juda, from Samaria to Bethhoron, and hav-
ing killed three thousand took away much spoil.
14 But Amasias, after he had slain the Edomites, set up the gods
of the children of Seir, which he had brought there to be his
15 gods, and adored them, and burned incense to them. | Where-
fore the Lord, being angry against Amasias, sent a prophet to
him, to say to him: Why have you adored gods that have not
16 delivered their own people out of your hand? | And when he
spoke these things, he answered him: Are you the king's coun-
selor? Be quiet lest I kill you. And the prophet departing, said:
I know that God is minded to kill you, because you have done
this evil, and moreover have not hearkened to my counsel. |
17 Then Amasias king of Juda, taking very bad counsel, sent to
Joas the son of Joachaz the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying:
18 Come, let us see one another. | But he sent back the messengers,
saying: The thistle that is in Libanus, sent to the cedar in Lib-
anus, saying: Give your daughter to my son to wife. And be-
hold the beasts that were in the wood of Libanus passed by, and
19 trod down the thistle. | You have said: I have overthrown
Edom, and therefore your heart is lifted up with pride: stay at
home, why do you provoke evil against you, that you should
20 fall, and Juda with you. | Amasias would not hearken to him,
because it was the Lord's will that he should be delivered into
21 the hands of enemies, because of the gods of Edom. | So Joas
king of Israel went up, and they presented themselves to be seen
by one another: and Amasias king of Juda was in Bethsames of
Juda.

22 ***Amasias Defeated*** And Juda fell before Israel, and they
23 fled to their dwellings. | And Joas king of Israel took Amasias
king of Juda, the son of Joas, the son of Joachaz, in Bethsames,
and brought him to Jerusalem: and broke down the walls
thereof, from the gate of Ephraim to the gate of the corner,
24 four hundred cubits. | And he took all the gold and silver,
and all the vessels, that he found in the house of God, and with
Obededom, and in the treasures of the king's house. Moreover
also the sons of the hostages, he brought back to Samaria.
25 And Amasias the son of Joas king of Juda lived, after the

death of Joas the son of Joachaz king of Israel, fifteen years. |
26 Now the rest of the acts of Amasias, the first and last, are
27 written in the book of the kings of Juda and Israel. | And after
he revolted from the Lord, they made a conspiracy against him
in Jerusalem. And he fled into Lachis; and they sent, and killed
28 him there. | And they brought him back upon horses, and
buried him with his fathers in the city of David.

26

1 ***Ozias Made King*** And all the people of Juda took his son
Ozias, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the
2 room of Amasias his father. | He built Ailath, and restored it
to the dominion of Juda, after that the king slept with his fa-
3 thers. | Ozias was sixteen years old when he began to reign;
and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem: the name of
4 his mother was Jechelia of Jerusalem. | And he did that which
was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that Amasias
5 his father had done. | And he sought the Lord in the days of
Zacharias that understood and saw God: and as long as he
sought the Lord, he directed him in all things.
6 Moreover he went forth and fought against the Philistines,
and broke down the wall of Geth, and the wall of Jabnia, and
the wall of Azotus: and he built towns in Azotus, and among
7 the Philistines. | And God helped him against the Philistines,
and against the Arabians, that dwelt in Gurbaal, and against the
8 Ammonites. | And the Ammonites gave gifts to Ozias: and his
name was spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt for his
9 frequent victories. | And Ozias built towers in Jerusalem over
the gate of the corner, and over the gate of the valley, and the
10 rest, in the same side of the wall, and fortified them. | And he
built towers in the wilderness, and dug many cisterns, for he
had much cattle both in the plains, and in the waste of the des-
ert. He had also vineyards and dressers of vines in the moun-
tains, and in Carmel: for he was a man that loved husbandry.
11 And the army of his fighting men, that went out to war, was
under the hand of Jehiel the scribe, and Maasias the doctor, and
under the hand of Henanias, who was one of the king's cap-
12 tains. | And the whole number of the chiefs by the families
13 of valiant men were two thousand six hundred. | And the
whole army under them, three hundred and seven thousand five
hundred: who were fit for war, and fought for the king against
14 the enemy. | And Ozias prepared for them, that is, for the
whole army, shields, and spears, and helmets, and coats of mail,
15 and bows, and slings to cast stones. | And he made in Jeru-
salem engines of diverse kinds, which he placed in the towers,

and in the corners of the walls, to shoot arrows, and great stones. And his name went forth far abroad: for the Lord helped him, and had strengthened him.

16 But when he was made strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: and he neglected the Lord his God. And going into the temple of the Lord, he had a mind to burn incense upon the
17 altar of incense. | And immediately Azarias the priest going in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, most
18 valiant men, | withstood the king and said: It does not belong to you, Ozias, to burn incense to the Lord, but to the priests, that is, to the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated for this ministry. Go out of the sanctuary, do not despise: for this thing shall not be accounted to your glory by the Lord God.

19 ***Ozias Is Stricken with Leprosy*** And Ozias was angry, and holding in his hand the censer to burn incense, threatened the priests. And presently there rose a leprosy in his forehead before the priests, in the house of the Lord at the altar of in-
20 cense. | And Azarias the high priest, and all the rest of the priests looked upon him, and saw the leprosy in his forehead; and they made haste to thrust him out. And he himself also being frightened, hastened to go out, because he had quickly felt
21 the stroke of the Lord. | And Ozias the king was a leper unto the day of his death. And he dwelt in a house apart, being full of the leprosy for which he had been cast out of the house of the Lord. And Joatham his son governed the king's house, and
22 judged the people of the land. | But the rest of the acts of Ozias, first and last, were written by Isaias the son of Amos, the
23 prophet. | And Ozias slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the field of the royal sepulchers, because he was a leper: and Joatham his son reigned in his stead.

27

1 ***Joatham's Good Reign*** Joatham was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: the name of his mother was Jerusa the daughter of
2 Sadoc. | And he did that which was right before the Lord, according to all that Ozias his father had done, only that he entered not into the temple of the Lord, and the people still
3 transgressed. | He built the high gate of the house of the Lord,
4 and on the wall of Ophel he built much. | Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Juda, and castles and towers in the
5 forests. | He fought against the king of the children of Ammon, and overcame them, and the children of Ammon gave him at that time a hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand meas-

ures of wheat, and as many measures of barley: so much did the children of Ammon give him in the second and third year.
6 And Joatham was strengthened, because he had his way directed before the Lord his God.
7 Now the rest of the acts of Joatham, and all his wars, and his works, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and
8 Juda. | He was five and twenty years old when he began to
9 reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. | And Joatham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Achaz his son reigned in his stead.

28

1 ***The Wicked Reign of Achaz*** Achaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord
2 as David his father had done, | but walked in the ways of the
3 kings of Israel. Moreover also he cast statues for Baalim. | It was he that burned incense in the valley of Benennom, and consecrated his sons in the fire, according to the manner of the nations which the Lord slew at the coming of the children of Is-
4 rael. | He sacrificed also, and burned incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.
5 And the Lord his God delivered him into the hands of the king of Syria, who defeated him, and took a great booty out of his kingdom, and carried *it* to Damascus. He was also delivered into the hands of the king of Israel, who overthrew him with a
6 great slaughter. | For Phacee the son of Romelia slew of Juda a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, all valiant men: because they had forsaken the Lord the God of their fathers. |
7 At the same time Zechri, a powerful man of Ephraim, slew Maasias the king's son, and Ezricam the governor of his house, and Elcana who was next to the king.
8 And the children of Israel carried away of their brethren two hundred thousand women, boys, and girls, and an immense
9 booty. And they brought it to Samaria. | At that time there was a prophet of the Lord there, whose name was Oded. And he went out to meet the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: Behold the Lord the God of your fathers being angry with Juda has delivered them into your hands, and you have butchered them cruelly, so that your cruelty has reached up to
10 heaven. | Moreover you have a mind to keep under the children of Juda and Jerusalem for your bondmen and bondwomen, which ought not to be done: for you have sinned in this against
11 the Lord your God. | But hear my counsel, and release the captives that you have brought of your brethren; because a

12 great indignation of the Lord hangs over you. | Then some of
the chief men of the sons of Ephraim: Azarias the son of Joha-
nan, Barachias the son of Mosollamoth, Ezechias the son of Sel-
lum, and Amasa the son of Adali, stood up against them that
13 came from the war. | And they said to them: You shall not
bring the captives here, lest we sin against the Lord. Why will
you add to our sins, and heap up upon our former offenses? For
the sin is great, and the fierce anger of the Lord hangs over Is-
14 rael. | So the soldiers left the spoils, and all that they had tak-
en, before the princes and all the multitude.

15 ***The Captives Are Released*** And the men, whom we men-
tioned above, rose up and took the captives, and with the
spoils clothed all them that were naked. And when they had
clothed and shod them, and refreshed them with meat and
drink, and anointed them because of their labor, and had taken
care of them, they set such of them as could not walk, and
were feeble, upon beasts, and brought them to Jericho the city
of palm trees to their brethren. And then returned to Samaria.
16 At that time king Achaz sent to the king of the Assyrians
17 asking help. | And the Edomites came and slew many of Juda,
18 and took a great booty. | The Philistines also spread themselves
among the cities of the plains, and to the south of Juda: and
they took Bethsames, and Aialon, and Gaderoth, and Socho,
and Thamnan, and Gamzo, with their villages, and they dwelt
19 in them. | For the Lord had humbled Juda because of Achaz
the king of Juda, for he had stripped it of help, and had con-
20 temned the Lord. | And he brought against him Thelgathphal-
nasar king of the Assyrians, who also afflicted him, and plun-
21 dered him without any resistance. | And Achaz stripped the
house of the Lord, and the house of the kings, and of the princes,
and gave gifts to the king of the Assyrians: and yet it availed
22 him nothing. | Moreover also in the time of his distress he in-
creased contempt against the Lord: king Achaz himself |
23 sacrificed victims to the gods of Damascus that struck him, and
he said: The gods of the kings of Syria help them, and I will
appease them with victims, and they will help me: but on the
24 contrary they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. | Then
Achaz having taken away all the vessels of the house of God,
and broken them, shut up the doors of the temple of God, and
25 made himself altars in all the corners of Jerusalem. | And in
all the cities of Juda he built altars to burn frankincense, and
26 he provoked the Lord the God of his fathers to wrath. | But
the rest of his acts and all his works first and last are written
27 in the book of the kings of Juda and Israel. | And Achaz slept

with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of Jerusalem: for they received him not into the sepulchers of the kings of Israel. And Ezechias his son reigned in his stead.

29

1 ***Ezechias Purifies the Temple*** Now Ezechias began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem: the name of his mother 2 was Abia, the daughter of Zacharias. | And he did that which was pleasing in the sight of the Lord, according to all that 3 David his father had done. | In the first year and month of his reign he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and re- 4 paired them. | And he brought the priests and the Levites, 5 and assembled them in the east street. | And he said to them: Hear me, Levites, and be sanctified; purify the house of the Lord the God of your fathers, and take away all filth out of 6 the sanctuary. | Our fathers have sinned and done evil in the sight of the Lord God, forsaking him: they have turned away their faces from the tabernacle of the Lord, and turned their 7 backs. | They have shut up the doors that were in the porch, and put out the lamps. And have not burned incense, nor of- 8 fered holocausts in the sanctuary of the God of Israel. | Therefore the wrath of the Lord has been stirred up against Juda and Jerusalem: and he has delivered them to trouble, and to destruction, and to be hissed at, as you see with your eyes. | 9 Behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword: our sons, and our daughters, and wives have been led away captives for 10 this wickedness. | Now therefore I have a mind that we make a covenant with the Lord the God of Israel: and he will turn 11 away the wrath of his indignation from us. | My sons, be not negligent. The Lord has chosen you to stand before him, and to minister to him, and to worship him, and to burn incense to him.

12 Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azarias, the sons of Caath: and of the sons of Merari, Cis the son of Abdi, and Azarias the son of Jalaleel: and of the sons of Gerson, Joah the son of Zemma, and Eden 13 the son of Joah. | And of the sons of Elisaphan, Samri, and Jahiel. Also of the sons of Asaph, Zacharias, and Mathanias. | 14 And of the sons of Heman, Jahiel, and Semei: and of the sons 15 of Idithun, Semeias, and Oziel. | And they gathered together their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and went in according to the commandment of the king, and the precept of the 16 Lord, to purify the house of God. | And the priests went into the temple of the Lord to sanctify it, and brought out all the

uncleanness that they found within to the entrance of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took it away, and carried it out
17 to the torrent Cedron. ¶ And they began to cleanse on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the same month they came into the porch of the temple of the Lord. And they purified the temple in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of
18 the same month they finished what they had begun. ¶ And they went in to king Ezechias, and said to him: We have sanctified all the house of the Lord, and the altar of holocaust, and the vessels thereof, and the table of proposition with all its vessels,
19 ¶ And all the furniture of the temple, which king Achaz in his reign had defiled, after his transgression. And behold they are all set forth before the altar of the Lord.

20 ***Solemn Sacrifices Offered*** And king Ezechias rising early, assembled all the rulers of the city, and went up into the house
21 of the Lord. ¶ And they offered together seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats for sin, for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, for Juda: and he spoke to the priests the sons of Aaron, to offer them upon the altar of the
22 Lord. ¶ Therefore they killed the bullocks, and the priests took the blood and poured it upon the altar. They killed also the rams, and their blood they poured also upon the altar. And they killed the lambs and poured the blood upon the altar. ¶
23 And they brought the he-goats for sin before the king, and the
24 whole multitude, and they laid their hand upon them: ¶ and the priests immolated them, and sprinkled their blood before the altar for an expiation of all Israel: for the king had commanded that the holocaust and the sin offering should be made
25 for all Israel. ¶ And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, according to the regulations of David the king, and of Gad the seer, and of Nathan the prophet: for it was the commandment of the Lord by the
26 hand of his prophets. ¶ And the Levites stood, with the instru-
27 ments of David, and the priests with trumpets. ¶ And Ezechias commanded that they should offer holocausts upon the altar. And when the holocausts were offered, they began to sing praises to the Lord, and to sound with trumpets, and divers instruments which David the king of Israel had prepared. ¶
28 And all the multitude adored, and the singers, and the trumpet-
29 ers, were in their office till the holocaust was finished. ¶ And when the oblation was ended, the king, and all that were with
30 him bowed down and adored. ¶ And Ezechias and the princes commanded the Levites to praise the Lord with the words of

David, and Asaph the seer: and they praised him with great joy, and bowing the knee adored.

31 And Ezechias added, and said: You have filled your hands to the Lord, come and offer victims, and praises in the house of the Lord. And all the multitude offered victims, and praises, and
32 holocausts with a devout mind. | And the number of the holocausts which the multitude offered, was seventy bullocks, a
33 hundred rams, and two hundred lambs. | And they consecrated
34 to the Lord six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep. | But the priests were few, and were not enough to flay the holocausts: wherefore the Levites their brethren, helped them, till the work was ended, and priests were sanctified, for the Levites
35 are sanctified with an easier rite than the priests. | So there were many holocausts, and the fat of peace offerings, and the libations of holocausts: and the service of the house of the Lord
36 was completed. | And Ezechias, and all the people rejoiced because the ministry of the Lord was accomplished. For the resolution of doing this thing was taken suddenly.

30

1 ***All Israel Invited to Celebrate the Pasch*** And Ezechias sent to all Israel and Juda: and he wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasses, that they should come to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, and keep the phase to the Lord the God of Israel. |
2 For the king, taking counsel, and the princes, and all the assembly of Jerusalem, decreed to keep the phase the second
3 month. | For they could not keep it in its time; because there were not priests enough sanctified, and the people were not
4 as yet gathered together to Jerusalem. | And the thing pleased
5 the king, and all the people. | And they decreed to send messengers to all Israel, from Bersabee even to Dan, that they should come, and keep the phase to the Lord the God of Israel in Jerusalem: for many had not kept it as it is prescribed
6 by the law. | And the posts went with letters by commandment of the king, and his princes, to all Israel and Juda, proclaiming according to the king's orders: All you children of Israel, turn again to the Lord, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Israel. And he will return to the remnant of you that have
7 escaped the hand of the king of the Assyrians. | Be not like your fathers, and brethren, who departed from the Lord the God of their fathers: and he has given them up to destruction,
8 as you see. | Harden not your necks, as your fathers did: yield yourselves to the Lord, and come to his sanctuary, which he has sanctified for ever. Serve the Lord the God of your fa-

thers, and the wrath of his indignation shall be turned away
9 from you. | For if you turn again to the Lord, your brethren
and children shall find mercy before their masters, that have
led them away captive, and they shall return into this land: for
the Lord your God is merciful, and will not turn away his face
from you, if you return to him.
10 So the posts went speedily from city to city, through the
land of Ephraim, and of Manasses, even to Zabulon, while
11 they laughed at them and mocked them. | Nevertheless some
men of Aser, and of Manasses, and of Zabulon, yielding to the
12 counsel, came to Jerusalem. | But the hand of God was in Juda,
to give them one heart to do the word of the Lord, according to
13 the commandment of the king, and of the princes. | And
many people were assembled to Jerusalem to celebrate the so-
14 lemnity of the unleavened bread in the second month: | and
they arose and destroyed the altars that were in Jerusalem, and
took away all things in which incense was burned to idols, and
15 cast them into the torrent Cedron. | And they immolated the
phase on the fourteenth day of the second month. And the
priests and the Levites being at length sanctified offered holo-
16 causts in the house of the Lord. | And they stood in their
order, according to the disposition and law of Moses the man
of God. But the priests received the blood which was to be
17 poured out from the hands of the Levites, | because a great
number was not sanctified. And therefore the Levites immola-
ted the phase for them that came not in time to be sanctified to
18 the Lord. | For a great part of the people from Ephraim, and
Manasses, and Issachar, and Zabulon, that had not been sanc-
tified, ate the phase otherwise than it is written. And Ezechias
prayed for them, saying: The Lord who is good will show
19 mercy, | to all them, who with their whole heart seek the Lord
the God of their fathers: and will not impute it to them that
20 they are not sanctified. | And the Lord heard him, and was
merciful to the people.

21 ***The Solemnity Is Kept for Fourteen Days*** And the chil-
dren of Israel, that were found at Jerusalem, kept the feast
of unleavened bread seven days with great joy, praising the
Lord every day: the Levites also, and the priests, with instru-
22 ments that agreed to their office. | And Ezechias spoke to the
heart of all the Levites that had good understanding, concern-
ing the Lord: and they ate during the seven days of the solem-
nity, immolating victims of peace offerings, and praising the
23 Lord the God of their fathers. | And it pleased the whole mul-

titude to keep other seven days: which they did with great joy. |
24 For Ezechias the king of Juda had given to the multitude a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep: and the princes had given the people a thousand bullocks, and ten thousand
25 sheep. And a great number of priests was sanctified. | And all the multitude of Juda with the priests and Levites, and all the assembly that came out of Israel, and the proselytes of the
26 land of Israel, and that dwelt in Juda, were full of joy. | And there was a great solemnity in Jerusalem, such as had not been in that city since the time of Solomon the son of David
27 king of Israel. | And the priests and the Levites rose up and blessed the people. And their voice was heard: and their prayer came to the holy dwelling place of heaven.

31

1 ***Provisions Made for the Ministers*** And when these things had been duly celebrated, all Israel that were found in the cities of Juda went out. And they broke the idols, and cut down the groves, demolished the high places, and destroyed the altars, not only out of all Juda and Benjamin, but out of Ephraim also and Manasses, till they had utterly destroyed them. Then all the children of Israel returned to their possessions and cities.

2 And Ezechias appointed companies of the priests, and the Levites, by their courses, every man in his own office, to wit, both of the priests, and of the Levites, for holocausts, and for peace offerings: to minister, and to praise, and to sing in the
3 gates of the camp of the Lord. | And the king's part was, that of his proper substance the holocaust should be offered always morning and evening, and on the sabbaths, and the new moons and the other solemnities, as it is written in the law of
4 Moses. | He commanded also the people that dwelt in Jerusalem, to give to the priests, and the Levites their portion,
5 that they might attend to the law of the Lord. | Which when it was noised abroad in the ears of the people, the children of Israel offered in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey: and brought the tithe of all things which the
6 ground brings forth. | Moreover the children of Israel and Juda, that dwelt in the cities of Juda, brought in the tithes of oxen, and sheep, and the tithes of holy things, which they had vowed to the Lord their God: and carrying them all, made many
7 heaps. | In the third month they began to lay the foundations of the heaps, and in the seventh month they finished them.
8 And when Ezechias and his princes came in, they saw the

heaps; and they blessed the Lord and the people of Israel. |
9 And Ezechias asked the priests and the Levites, why the heaps
10 lay so. | Azarias as the chief priest of the race of Sadoc answered him, saying: Since the firstfruits began to be offered in the house of the Lord, we have eaten, and have been filled, and abundance is left, because the Lord has blessed his people: and
11 of that which is left is this great store which you see. | Then Ezechias commanded to prepare storehouses in the house of the
12 Lord. And when they had done so, | they brought in faithfully both the firstfruits, and the tithes, and all they had vowed. And the overseer of them was Chonenias the Levite, and
13 Semei his brother was the second, | and after him Jehiel, and Azarias, and Nahath, and Asael, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Jesmachias, and Mahath, and Banaias, overseers under the hand of Chonenias, and Semei his brother, by the commandment of Ezechias the king, and Azarias the high priest
14 of the house of God, to whom all things appertained. | But Core the son of Jemna the Levite, the porter of the east gate, was overseer of the things which were freely offered to the Lord, and of the firstfruits and the things dedicated for the Holy of Holies.

15 ***Distribution of Offerings*** And under his charge were Eden, and Benjamin, Jesue, and Semeias, and Amarias, and Sechenias, in the cities of the priests, to distribute faithfully portions to
16 their brethren, both little and great: besides the males from three years old and upward: to all that went into the temple of the Lord, and whatsoever there was need of in the ministry. and their offices according to their courses, day by day. |
17 To the priests by their families, and to the Levites from the twentieth year and upward, by their classes and companies. |
18 And to all the multitude, both to their wives, and to their children of both sexes, victuals were given faithfully out of the
19 things that had been sanctified. | Also of the sons of Aaron who were in the fields and in the suburbs of each city, there were men appointed to distribute portions to all the males, among the priests and the Levites.

20 So Ezechias did all things which we have said in all Juda, and wrought that which was good, and right, and truth, before
21 the Lord his God, | in all the service of the ministry of the house of the Lord according to the law and the ceremonies, desiring to seek his God with all his heart. And he did it and prospered.

32

1 ***Sennacherib's Invasion of Juda*** After these things, and this truth, Sennacherib king of the Assyrians came and entered into Juda, and besieged the fenced cities, desiring to
2 take them. | And when Ezechias saw that Sennacherib had come, and that the whole force of the war was turning against
3 Jerusalem, | he took counsel with the princes, and the most valiant men, to stop up the heads of the springs that were
4 without the city. And as they were all of this mind, | he gathered together a very great multitude; and they stopped up all the springs and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying: Lest the kings of the Assyrians should come, and
5 find abundance of water. | He built up also with great diligence all the wall that had been broken down, and built towers upon it, and another wall without. And he repaired Mello in the
6 city of David, and made all sorts of arms and shields: | and he appointed captains of the soldiers of the army, and he called them all together in the street of the gate of the city, and spoke
7 to their heart, saying: | Behave like men, and take courage. Be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of the Assyrians, nor for all the multitude that is with him. For there are many more
8 with us than with him. | For with him is an arm of flesh: with us the Lord our God, who is our helper, and fights for us. And the people were encouraged with these words of Ezechias king of Juda.

9 ***Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem*** After this, Sennacherib king of the Assyrians sent his servants to Jerusalem (for he with all his army was besieging Lachis) to Ezechias king of
10 Juda, and to all the people that were in the city, saying: | Thus says Sennacherib king of the Assyrians: in whom do you trust,
11 that you sit still besieged in Jerusalem? | Does not Ezechias deceive you, to give you up to die by hunger and thirst, affirming that the Lord your God shall deliver you from the hand of
12 the king of the Assyrians? | Is it not this same Ezechias that has destroyed his high places, and his altars, and commanded Juda and Jerusalem, saying: You shall worship before one altar,
13 and upon it you shall burn incense? | Know you not what I and my fathers have done to all the people of the lands? Have the gods of any nations and lands been able to deliver their
14 country out of my hand? | Who is there among all the gods of the nations, which my fathers have destroyed, that could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able

32, 1-23: These verses summarize 4 Kgs 18, 13—19, 37.

15 to deliver you out of this hand? | Therefore let not Ezechias
deceive you, nor delude you with a vain persuasion, and do not
believe him. For if no god of all the nations and kingdoms
could deliver his people out of my hand, and out of the hand of
my fathers, consequently neither shall your God be able to de-
16 liver you out of my hand. | And many other things did his
servants speak against the Lord God, and against Ezechias his
17 servant. | He wrote also letters full of blasphemy against the
Lord the God of Israel, and he spoke against him: As the gods
of other nations could not deliver their people out of my
hand, so neither can the God of Ezechias deliver his people
18 out of this hand. | Moreover he cried out with a loud voice, in
the Jews' tongue, to the people that sat on the walls of Jeru-
19 salem, that he might frighten them, and take the city. | And
he spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of
the people of the earth, the works of the hands of men.

20 ***An Angel Destroys Sennacherib's Army*** And Ezechias
the king, and Isaias the prophet, the son of Amos, prayed
21 against this blasphemy, and cried out to heaven. | And the
Lord sent an angel, who cut off all the stout men and the war-
riors, and the captains of the army of the king of the Assyrians.
And he returned with disgrace into his own country. And when
he came into the house of his god, his sons that had come out
22 of his bowels slew him with the sword. | And the Lord saved
Ezechias and the inhabitants of Jerusalem out of the hand of
Sennacherib king of the Assyrians, and out of the hand of all,
23 and gave them treasures on every side. | Many also brought
victims and sacrifices to the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to
Ezechias king of Juda. And he was magnified thenceforth in the
sight of all nations.

24 In those days, Ezechias was sick even to death, and he
prayed to the Lord, and he heard him, and gave him a sign. |
25 But he did not render again according to the benefits which he
had received, for his heart was lifted up: and wrath was en-
26 kindled against him, and against Juda and Jerusalem. | And
he humbled himself afterward, because his heart had been lifted
up, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and therefore the
wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Ezechias.

27 ***The Riches and Works of Ezechias*** And Ezechias was
rich, and very glorious; and he gathered himself great treasures
of silver and of gold, and of precious stones, of spices, and of
28 arms of all kinds, and of vessels of great price. | Storehouses
also of corn, of wine, and of oil, and stalls for all beasts, and

29 folds for cattle. | And he built himself cities: for he had flocks
of sheep, and herds without number, for the Lord had given him
30 very much substance. | This same Ezechias was he that stopped
the upper source of the waters of Gihon, and turned them away
underneath toward the west of the city of David. In all his works
31 he did properously what he would. | But yet in the embassy of
the princes of Babylon, that were sent to him, to inquire of the
wonder that had happened upon the earth, God left him that he
might be tempted, and all the things might be made known that
32 were in his heart. | Now the rest of the acts of Ezechias, and of
his mercies, are written in the book of the kings of Juda and
33 Israel. | And Ezechias slept with his fathers, and they buried
him above the sepulchers of the sons of David: and all Juda,
and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem celebrated his funeral: and
Manasses his son reigned in his stead.

33

1 ***The Evil Reign of Manasses*** Manasses was twelve years
old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in
2 Jerusalem. | And he did evil before the Lord, according to all
the abominations of the nations, which the Lord cast out be-
3 fore the children of Israel. | And he turned, and built again
the high places which Ezechias his father had destroyed. And
he built altars to Baalim, and made groves, and he adored all
4 the host of heaven, and worshiped them. | He built also altars
in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said: In Je-
5 rusalem shall my name be for ever. | And he built them for all
the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. |
6 And he made his sons to pass through the fire in the valley of
Benennom. He observed dreams, followed divinations, gave
himself up to magic arts, had with him magicians and en-
chanters: and he wrought many evils before the Lord, to pro-
7 voke him to anger. | He set also a graven and a molten statue
in the house of God, of which God had said to David, and to
Solomon his son: In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I
have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name
8 for ever. | And I will not make the foot of Israel to be removed
out of the land which I have delivered to their fathers: yet so
if they will take heed to do what I have commanded them, and
all the law, and the ceremonies, and judgments, by the hand of
9 Moses. | So Manasses seduced Juda, and the inhabitants of Je-
rusalem, to do evil beyond all the nations which the Lord had

33, 3: *Host of heaven:* here it means the sun, moon, and stars.

10 destroyed before the face of the children of Israel. | And the
Lord spoke to him, and to his people and they would not hark-
11 en. | Therefore he brought upon them the captains of the army
of the king of the Assyrians: and they took Manasses, and car-
12 ried him bound with chains and fetters to Babylon. | And after
that he was in distress he prayed to the Lord his God: and
did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers.

13 ***Manasses Returned from Babylonian Captivity*** And he
entreated him, and besought him earnestly. And he heard his
prayer, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.
14 And Manasses knew that the Lord was God. | After this, he
built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gi-
hon in the valley, from the entering in of the fish gate round
about to Ophel, and raised it up to a great height. And he ap-
pointed captains of the army in all the fenced cities of Juda. |
15 And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the
house of the Lord: the altars also which he had made in the
mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem. And he cast
16 them all out of the city. | And he repaired the altar of the
Lord, and sacrificed upon it victims, and peace offerings, and
praise: and he commanded Juda to serve the Lord the God of
17 Israel. | Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high
18 places to the Lord their God. | But the rest of the acts of Ma-
nasses, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers
that spoke to him in the name of the Lord the God of Israel,
19 are contained in the words of the kings of Israel. | His prayer
also, and his being heard, and all his sins, and contempt, and
places wherein he built high places, and set up groves, and
statues before he did penance, are written in the words of
20 Hozai | And Manasses slept with his fathers, and they buried
him in his house: and his son Amon reigned in his stead.

21 ***Amon, the Son of Manasses, Slain*** Amon was two and
twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two
22 years in Jerusalem. | And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,
as Manasses his father had done: and he sacrificed to all the
idols which Manasses his father had made, and served them. |
23 And he did not humble himself before the Lord, as Manasses
his father had humbled himself, but committed far greater sins.
24 | And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his
25 own house. | But the rest of the multitude of the people slew
them that had killed Amon, and made Josias his son king in
his stead.

34

1 ***Josias Abolishes Idolatry*** Josias was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one and thirty years in Je-
2 rusalem. | And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father: he declined
3 not, neither to the right hand, nor to the left. | And in the eighth year of his reign, when he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of his father David: and in the twelfth year after he began to reign, he cleansed Juda and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the idols, and the graven things. |
4 And they broke down before him the altars of Baalim, and demolished the idols that had been set upon them. And he cut down the groves and the graven things, and broke them in pieces: and strewed the fragments upon the graves of them that
5 had sacrificed to them. | And he burned the bones of the priests on the altars of the idols: and he cleansed Juda and
6 Jerusalem. | And in the cities of Manasses, and of Ephraim,
7 and of Simeon, even to Nephtali, he demolished all. | And when he had destroyed the altars, and the groves, and had broken the idols in pieces, and had demolished all profane temples throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

8 ***Repair of the Temple*** Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land, and the temple of the Lord, he sent Saphan the son of Eselias, and Maasias the governor of the city, Joha the son of Joachaz the recorder, to re-
9 pair the house of the Lord his God. | And they came to Helcias the high priest: and received of him the money which had been brought into the house of the Lord, and which the Levites and porters had gathered together from Manasses and Ephraim, and all the remnant of Israel, and from all Juda, and Benjamin,
10 and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, | which they delivered into the hands of them that were over the workmen in the house of the Lord, to repair the temple, and mend all that was weak. |
11 But they gave it to the artificers, and to the masons, to buy stones out of the quarries, and timber for the couplings of the buildings, and to rafter the houses, which the kings of Juda
12 had destroyed. | And they did all faithfully. Now the overseers of the workmen were Jahath and Abdias of the sons of Merari, Zacharias and Mosollam of the sons of Caath, who hastened the work: all Levites skillful to play on instruments. |
13 But over them that carried burdens for divers uses there were scribes, and masters of the number of the Levites, and porters.

34, 4-7: These verses summarize 4 Kgs 23, 4-20.

14 ***The Finding of the Book of the Law*** Now when they carried out the money that had been brought into the temple of the Lord, Helcias the priest found the book of the law of
15 the Lord, by the hand of Moses. | And he said to Saphan the scribe: I have found the book of the law in the house of the
16 Lord. And he delivered it to him. | But he carried the book to the king, and told him, saying: Lo, all that you have committed
17 to your servants is accomplished. | They have gathered together the silver that was found in the house of the Lord: and it was given to the overseers of the artificers, and of the workmen,
18 for divers works. | Moreover Helcias the priest gave me this book. And he read it before the king.

19 And when he had heard the words of the law, he rent his
20 garments: | and he commanded Helcais, and Ahicam the son of Saphan, and Abdon the son of Micha, and Saphan the
21 scribe, and Asaa the king's servant, saying: | Go, and pray to the Lord for me, and for the remnant of Israel, and Juda, concerning all the words of this book, which has been found. For the great wrath of the Lord has fallen upon us, because our fathers have not kept the words of the Lord, to do all things that are written in this book.

22 ***Olda's Prophecy*** And Helcias and they that were sent with him by the king, went to Olda the prophetess, the wife of Sellum the son of Thecuath, the son of Hasra keeper of the wardrobe, who dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second part: and they
23 spoke to her the words above mentioned. | And she answered them: Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: Tell the man that
24 sent you to me: | Thus says the Lord: Behold I will bring evils upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, and all the curses that are written in this book which they read before
25 the king of Juda. | Because they have forsaken me, and have sacrificed to strange gods, to provoke me to wrath with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath shall fall upon this
26 place and shall not be quenched. | But as to the king of Juda that sent you to beseech the Lord, thus shall you say to him: Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: Because you have heard
27 the words of this book, | and your heart was softened, and you have humbled yourself in the sight of God for the things that are spoken against this place, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and reverencing my face, have rent your garments, and
28 wept before me: I also have heard you, says the Lord. | For now I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be brought to your tomb in peace: and your eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and the inhabitants thereof.

29 They therefore reported to the king all that she had said, | and
he called together all the ancients of Juda and Jerusalem, |
30 and went up to the house of the Lord, and all the men of Juda,
and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites,
and all the people from the least to the greatest. And the king
read in their hearing, in the house of the Lord, all the words of
the book.

31 ***Josias Renews the Covenant*** And standing up in his tri-
bunal he made a covenant before the Lord to walk after him,
and keep his commandments, and testimonies, and justifica-
tions with all his heart, and with all his soul, and to do the
the things that were written in that book which he had read. |
32 And he adjured all that were found in Jerusalem, and Benja-
min to do the same: and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did ac-
cording to the covenant of the Lord the God of their fathers. |
33 And Josias took away all the abominations out of all the coun
tries of the children of Israel: and made all that were left in
Israel to serve the Lord their God. As long as he lived they
departed not from the Lord the God of their fathers.

35

1 ***Josias Celebrates the Pasch*** And Josias kept a phase to
the Lord in Jerusalem, and it was sacrificed on the fourteenth
2 day of the first month. | And he sat the priests in their offices,
3 and exhorted them to minister in the house of the Lord. | And
he spoke to the Levites, by whose instruction all Israel was
sanctified to the Lord, saying: Put the ark in the sanctuary of
the temple, which Solomon the son of David king of Israel
built: for you shall carry it no more, but minister now to the
4 Lord your God and to his people Israel. | And prepare your-
selves by your houses and families, according to your courses,
as David king of Israel commanded, and Solomon his son has
5 written. | And serve in the sanctuary by the families and com-
6 panies of Levi. | And being sanctified kill the phase, and pre-
pare your brethren, that they may do according to the words
7 which the Lord spoke by the hand of Moses. | And Josias
gave to all the people that were found there in the solemnity
of the phase, of lambs and of kids of the flocks, and of other
small cattle, thirty thousand, and of oxen, three thousand. All
8 these were of the king's substance. | And his princes willingly

35, 1-25: These verses contain accounts prolonged with details from 4 Kgs 23, 21-23 (Josias' Passover celebration) and 4 Kgs 23, 29-30 (his death).

offered what they had vowed, both to the people and to the priests and the Levites. Moreover Helcias, and Zacharias, and Jahiel, rulers of the house of the Lord, gave to the priests to keep the phase two thousand six hundred small cattle, and
9 three hundred oxen. | And Chonenias, and Semeias, and Nathanael, his brethren, and Hasabias, and Jehiel, and Jozabad, princes of the Levites, gave to the rest of the Levites to celebrate the phase five thousand small cattle, and five hundred
10 oxen. | And the ministry was prepared, and the priests stood in their office: the Levites also in *their* companies, according to the king's commandment.
11 And the phase was immolated: and the priests sprinkled the blood with their hand, and the Levites flayed the holocausts
12 | and they separated them to give them by the houses and families of every one, and to be offered to the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses. And with the oxen they did in
13 like manner. | And they roasted the phase with fire, according to that which is written in the law: but the victims of peace offerings they boiled in caldrons, and kettles, and pots; and
14 they distributed them speedily among all the people. | And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests, for the priests were busied in offering of holocausts and the fat until night: wherefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and
15 for the priests the sons of Aaron last. | And the singers the sons of Asaph stood in their order, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Idithun, the prophets of the king. And the porters kept guard at every gate, so as not to depart one moment from their service: and therefore
16 their brethren the Levites prepared meats for them. | So all the service of the Lord was duly accomplished that day, both in keeping the phase, and offering holocausts upon the altar of the
17 Lord, according to the commandment of king Josias. | And the children of Israel that were found there kept the phase at that
18 time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. | There was no phase like to this in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet: neither did any of all the kings of Israel keep such a phase as Josias kept, with the priests, and the Levites, and all Juda, and Israel that were found, and the inhabitants of Je-
19 rusalem. | In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josias was this phase celebrated.

20 ***Josias' Death at Mageddo*** After Josias had repaired the temple, Nechao king of Egypt came up to fight in Charcamis by
21 the Euphrates: and Josias went out to meet him. | But he sent messengers to him, saying: What have I to do with you,

O king of Juda? I come not against you this day, but I fight against another house, to which God has commanded me to go in haste: forbear to do against God, who is with me, lest he
22 kill you. | Josias would not return, but prepared to fight against him, and hearkened not to the words of Nechao from the mouth of God, but went to fight in the field of Mageddo. |
23 And there he was wounded by the archers, and he said to his servants: Carry me out of the battle, for I am grievously
24 wounded. | And they removed him from the chariot into another, that followed him after the manner of kings, and they carried him away to Jerusalem: and he died, and was buried in the monument of his fathers, and all Juda and Jerusalem
25 mourned for him, | particularly Jeremias: whose lamentations for Josias all the singing men and singing women repeat unto this day, and it became like a law in Israel: Behold it is found written in the Lamentations.
26 Now the rest of the acts of Josias and of his mercies, ac-
27 cording to what was commanded by the law of the Lord, | and his works first and last, are written in the book of the kings of Juda and Israel.

36

1 ***Joachaz and Joakim*** Then the people of the land took Joachaz the son of Josias, and made him king instead of his
2 father in Jerusalem. | Joachaz was three and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jeru-
3 salem. | And the king of Egypt came to Jerusalem, and deposed him, and condemned the land in a hundred talents of
4 silver, and a talent of gold. | And he made Eliakim his brother king in his stead, over Juda and Jerusalem, and he turned his name to Joakim: but he took Joachaz with him, and carried
5 him away into Egypt. | Joakim was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jeru-
6 salem: and he did evil before the Lord his God. | Against him came up Nabuchodonosor king of the Chaldeans, and led him
7 bound in chains into Babylon. | And he carried also thither
8 the vessels of the Lord, and put them in his temple. | But the rest of the acts of Joakim, and his abominations, which he wrought, and the things that were found in him, are contained in the book of the kings of Juda and Israel. And Joachin his son reigned in his stead.

9 ***Joachin and Sedecias*** Joachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Je-
10 rusalem: and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. | And at the return of the year, king Nabuchodonosor sent, and brought

him to Babylon, carrying away at the same time the most precious vessels of the house of the Lord. And he made Sedecias
11 his uncle king over Juda and Jerusalem. | Sedecias was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned
12 eleven years in Jerusalem. | And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God, and did not reverence the face of Jeremias the
13 prophet speaking to him from the mouth of the Lord. | He also revolted from king Nabuchodonosor, who had made him swear by God. And he hardened his neck and his heart, from
14 returning to the Lord the God of Israel. | Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people wickedly transgressed according to all the abominations of the Gentiles: and they defiled the house of the Lord, which he had sanctified to himself in
15 Jerusalem. | And the Lord the God of their fathers sent to them, by the hand of his messengers, rising early, and daily admonishing them: because he spared his people and his dwelling
16 place. | But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused the prophets, until the wrath of the Lord
17 arose against his people, and there was no remedy. | For he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, and he slew their young men with the sword in the house of his sanctuary. He had no compassion on young man, or maiden, old man, or even him that stooped for age, but he delivered them all into his hands. |
18 And all the vessels of the house of the Lord, great and small, and the treasures of the temple and of the king and of the
19 princes he carried away to Babylon. | And the enemies set fire to the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all the towers, and whatsoever was precious they destroyed.

20 ***The Seventy Years' Captivity*** Whosoever escaped the sword was led into Babylon, and there served the king and his
21 sons till the reign of the king of Persia. | That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremias might be fulfilled, and the land might keep her sabbaths: for all the days of the desolation she
22 kept a sabbath, till the seventy years were expired. | But in the first year of Cyrus king of the Persians, to fulfill the word of the Lord, which he had spoken by the mouth of Jeremias, the Lord stirred up the heart of Cyrus king of the Persians: who commanded it to be proclaimed through all his kingdom, and
23 by writing also, saying: | Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord the God of heaven given to me; and he has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.

THE FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS

INTRODUCTION

The Douay version follows the Latin Vulgate in using the names "The First Book of Esdras" and "The Book of Nehemias, which is called The Second of Esdras."

The same Chronicler who wrote 1, 2 Par also wrote the books of Esdras and Nehemias. The two latter books outline the politico-religious restoration period following the return of the Jews from their Babylonian exile in 538 B.C. The Chronicler used as his sources for these two books the memoirs of Esdras and of Nehemias, genealogies found in the temple, and Persian documents.

Scholars do not know the number of caravans that left Babylonia but the return to Judea continued for over a century. Of the adults, deported in 597 and 587 B.C., only few were still alive, and many of the repatriated Jews, who were born in exile, felt not at all enthusiastic about returning since they had been living in easy circumstances in Babylon. The poor economic conditions of Judea and the constant harassing by the Samaritans did not help the newly arrived people. What discouraged them most was the gradual realization that the prophetic promises of the Messianic age with all their political and materialistic colorings were not forthcoming. Little did they know that another five centuries would pass before the coming of the true Messia.

During the exile, Jerusalem had always been inhabited. Its temple was most likely used for worship in spite of its ruined condition. Yet the real religious and doctrinal development took place not in Jerusalem but in exile. The exile served as a "spiritual retreat" for the Jews who were resolved to observe the Mosaic Law exactly. They became known as the People of the Book. They wanted to isolate themselves from the contamination with Gentiles till the Messianic age would come. These are some of the characteristics of what is still known as "Judaism." If one text could indicate the birth of Judaism it is Neh 8, 1-12, where Esdras solemnly proclaims the Law.

The new Persian emperors supported the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. The Persian masters also supported those who desired to return from exile. This brings us to the most debated of many chronological uncertainties in these two books—the date of Esdras' mission to Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile (Esd 7, 8). The traditional opinion, still well supported by moderns, is that Esdras came to Jerusalem in 458, when king Artaxerxes I ruled for the seventh year (465-424 B.C.), thirteen years before Nehemias' arrival in 445. In this opinion, the religious reform of Esdras preceded the social reform of Nehemias. The most popular of modern opinions (for there are others) reverses the order, holding that Esdras went to Jerusalem in 398, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes II (405-359 B.C.) and, thus, that Nehemias came before Esdras. The objection to this latter theory is that it splits the two careers of Esdras and Nehemias too neatly. Therefore, other modern opinions try to explain the overlapping of their careers since the Bible presents them that way.

The reading of these two books leaves a sense of appreciation for two personalities who have never been as well known as they deserve. Both, Esdras (or Ezra) the priest scribe, and Nehemias (or Nehemiah) the layman, were outstanding leaders whose one purpose in life was to bring the Jews back to Yahweh. In expending this consuming ambition they manifested a wholesome combination of the active life with prayer life. Both must have been attractive personalities in spite of the demands they made on their followers. Esdras may have been more of a rigorist in his policy, e.g., on forbidding mixed marriages, with no regard for affection (Esd 9—10), but Nehemias may have been more of a rigorist in his individual dealings (Neh 13, 25). This rigorist disciplinarian character, however, seems somewhat balanced by a rare Old Testament quality, i.e., generosity toward the poor (Neh 5, 18).

Main divisions of the books of Esdras and Nehemias are:

The Return from Exile and the Difficulty in Rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem, Esd 1—6
The Reforms of Esdras, Esd 7—10
The Obstacles that Nehemias Met in Rebuilding the City Walls of Jerusalem, Neh 1—7
The Reading of the Mosaic Law to the People and More Reforms, Neh 8—13

1

1 ***Release from the Babylonian Captivity*** In the first year of Cyrus king of the Persians, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremias might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of the Persians: and he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and in writing also, saying: |
2 Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: The Lord the God of heaven has given to me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in
3 Judea. | Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him. Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judea, and build the house of the Lord the God of Israel. He is the God that
4 is in Jerusalem. | And let all the rest in all places, wheresoever

1, 1-3a repeats 2 Par 36, 22-23. Scholars ordinarily regard this overlapping as a sign that 1, 2 Par, Esd, and Neh were originally one book.

1, 1: *That the word . . . fulfilled:* this is somewhat repetitious of 2 Par 36, 21 where "seventy years' " captivity is a round number or it may be understood literally if taken from 609 B.C. Jer 29, 10 foretells that the Jews would return after the exile. See Jer 25, 11-12. *The Lord stirred up:* an expression found in five other places of the Bible to signify God's control over the Gentiles, e.g., 1 Par 5, 26.

1, 2-4: Here, the decree was written in Hebrew; it differs slightly in Aramaic (6, 3-5). The Persians liberated other deported peoples with similar decrees.

1, 2: *The Lord the God of heaven:* this does not imply that Cyrus was a monotheist.

they dwell, help him every man from his place, with silver and gold, and goods, and cattle, besides that which they offer freely to the temple of God which is in Jerusalem.

5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Juda and Benjamin, and the priests, and Levites, and every one whose spirit God had raised up, to go up to build the temple of the Lord which
6 was in Jerusalem. | And all they that were round about helped their hands with vessels of silver and gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with furniture, besides what they had offered on their own accord.

7 ***Cyrus Restores the Holy Vessels*** And king Cyrus brought forth the vessels of the temple of the Lord, which Nabuchodonosor had taken from Jerusalem, and had put them in the
8 temple of his god. | Now Cyrus king of Persia brought them forth by the hand of Mithridates the son of Gazabar, and num-
9 bered them to Sassabasar the prince of Juda. | And this is the number of them: thirty bowls of gold, a thousand bowls of
10 silver, nine and twenty knives, thirty cups of gold. | Silver cups of a second sort, four hundred and ten; other vessels, a
11 thousand. | All the vessels of gold and silver, five thousand four hundred. All these Sassabasar brought with them that came up from the captivity of Babylon to Jerusalem.

2

1 ***The People Who Returned*** Now these are the children of the province that went out of the captivity, which Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who
2 returned to Jerusalem and Juda, every man to his city. | Who came with Zorobabel: Josue, Nehemia, Saraia, Rahelaia, Mardochai, Belsan, Mesphar, Beguai, Rehum, Baana. The num-
3 ber of the men of the people of Israel: | the children of Pha-
4 ros, two thousand one hundred seventy-two. | The children of
5 Sephatia, three hundred seventy-five. | The children of Area,
6 seven hundred seventy-five. | The children of Phahath Moab, of the children of Josue: Joab two thousand eight hundred
7 twelve. | The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty-
8 four. | The children of Zethua, nine hundred forty-five. |
9.10 The children of Zachai, seven hundred sixty. | The children
11 of Bani, six hundred forty-two. | The children of Bebai, six
12 hundred twenty-three. | The children of Azgad, a thousand
13 two hundred twenty-two. | The children of Adonicam, six
14 hundred sixty-six. | The children of Beguai, two thousand

1, 8: *Sassabasar:* scholars dispute his identity. Is he the same as Zorobabel?

15 fifty-six. | The children of Adin, four hundred fifty-four. |
16 The children of Ather, who were of Ezechias, ninety-eight. |
17 The children of Besai, three hundred and twenty-three. |
18.19 The children of Jora, a hundred and twelve. | The children
of Hasum, two hundred twenty-three.
20.21 And the children of Gebbar, ninety-five. | The children of
22 Bethlehem, a hundred twenty-three. | The men of Netupha,
23 fifty-six. | The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty-eight. |
24.25 The children of Azmaveth, forty-two. | The children of Ca-
riathiarim, Cephira, and Beroth, seven hundred forty-three. |
26 The children of Rama and Gabaa six hundred twenty-one. |
27.28 The men of Machmas, a hundred twenty-two. | The men of
29 Bethel and Hai, two hundred twenty-three. | The children of
30 Nebo, fifty-two. | The children of Megbis, a hundred fifty-six.
31 | The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty-
32 four. | The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. |
33 The children of Lod, Hadid and Ono, seven hundred twenty-
34.35 five. | The children of Jericho, three hundred forty-five. | The
children of Senaa, three thousand six hundred thirty.
36 The priests: the children of Jadaia of the house of Josue,
37 nine hundred seventy-three. | The children of Emmer, a thou-
38 sand fifty-two. | The children of Pheshur, a thousand two
39 hundred forty-seven. | The children of Harim, a thousand
and seventeen.
40 The Levites: the children of Josue and of Cedmihel, the
41 children of Odovia, seventy-four. | The singing men: The
42 children of Asaph, a hundred twenty-eight. | The children of
the porters: The children of Sellum, the children of Ater, the
children of Telmon, the children of Accub, the children of Hati-
ta, the children of Sobai. In all a hundred thirty-nine.
43 The Nathinites: the children of Siha, the children of Ha-
44 supha, the children of Tabbaoth. | The children of Ceros, the
45 children of Sia, the children of Phadon. | The children of Le-
46 bana, the children of Hegaba, the children of Accub. | The
children of Hagab, the children of Semlai, the children of Ha-
47 nan. | The children of Gaddel, the children of Gaher, the chil-
48 dren of Raaia. | The children of Rasin, the children of Necoda,
49 the children of Gazam. | The children of Asa, the children of
50 Phasea, the children of Besee. | The children of Asena, the chil-
51 dren of Munim, the children of Nephusim. | The children of
Bacbuc, the children of Hacupha, the children of Harhur. |
52 The children of Besluth, the children of Mahida, the children
53 of Harsa. | The children of Bercos, the children of Sisara, the
54 children of Thema. | The children of Nasia, the children of
55 Hatipha. | The children of the servants of Solomon, the chil-

dren of Sotai, the children of Sopheret, the children of Pharuda.
56 | The children of Jala, the children of Dercon, the children of
57 Geddel. | The children of Saphatia, the children of Hatil, the children of Phochereth, which were of Asebaim, the children of
58 Ami. | All the Nathinites, and the children of the servants of Solomon, three hundred ninety-two.
59 And these are they that came up from Thelmela, Thelharsa, Cherub, and Adon, and Emer. And they could not show the house of their fathers and their seed, whether they were of
60 Israel. | The children of Dalaia, the children of Tobia, the
61 children of Necoda, six hundred fifty-two. | And of the children of the priests: the children of Hobia, the children of Accos, the children of Berzellai, who took a wife of the daughters of
62 Berzellai, the Galaadite, and was called by their name. | These sought the writing of their genealogy, and found it not, and they
63 were cast out of the priesthood. | And Athersatha said to them that they should not eat of the holy of holies, till there arose a priest learned and perfect.
64 All the multitudes as one man, *were* forty-two thousand three
65 hundred and sixty, | besides their menservants, and womenservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven: and among them singing men, and singing
66 women, two hundred. | Their horses, seven hundred thirty-six,
67 their mules, two hundred forty-five, | their camels, four hundred thirty-five, and their asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68 ***The Peoples' Offerings*** And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the temple of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem, offered freely to the house of the Lord to build it in
69 its place. | According to their ability, they gave toward the expenses of the work, sixty-one thousand solids of gold, five thousand pounds of silver, and a hundred garments for the
70 priests. | So the priests and the Levites, and some of the people and the singing men, and the porters, and the Nathinites dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

3

1 ***An Altar Is Built*** And now the seventh month had come and the children of Israel were in their cities. And the people
2 gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. | And Josue the son of Josedec rose up, and his brethren the priests and Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, and his brethren, and they built the altar of the God of Israel that they might offer holocausts upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of

3 God. | And they set the altar of God upon its bases, while
the people of the lands round about put them in fear, and they
offered upon it a holocaust to the Lord morning and evening.
4 | And they kept the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and
offered the holocaust every day orderly according to the com-
5 mandment, the duty of the day in its day. | And afterward the
continual holocausts, both on the new moons, and on all the
solemnities of the Lord, that were consecrated, and on all in
6 which a freewill offering was made to the Lord. | From the
first day of the seventh month they began to offer holocausts
to the Lord: but the temple of God was not yet founded.
7 And they gave money to hewers of stones and to masons:
and meat and drink and oil to the Sidonians and Tyrians, to
bring cedar trees from Libanus to the sea of Joppe, according
to the orders which Cyrus king of the Persians had given them.
8 | And in the second year of their coming to the temple of God
in Jerusalem, the second month, Zorobabel the son of Salathiel,
and Josue the son of Josedec, and the rest of their brethren, the
priests, and the Levites, and all that had come from the cap-
tivity to Jerusalem began, and they appointed Levites from
twenty years old and upward, to hasten forward the work of
9 the Lord. | Then Josue and his sons and his brethren, Cedmihel,
and his sons, and the children of Juda, as one man, stood to
hasten them that did the work in the temple of God: the sons
of Henadad, and their sons, and their brethren the Levites.

10 ***The Foundations of the Temple Are Laid*** And when
the masons laid the foundations of the temple of the Lord, the
priests stood in their ornaments with trumpets; and the Levites
the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise God by the hands of
11 David king of Israel. | And they sang together hymns, and
praise to the Lord: because he is good, for his mercy endures for
ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great
shout, praising the Lord, because the foundations of the temple
of the Lord were laid.
12 But many of the priests and the Levites, and the chief of the
fathers and the ancients that had seen the former temple, when
they had the foundation of this temple before their eyes, wept
with a loud voice: and many shouting for joy lifted up their
13 voice, | so that one could not distinguish the voice of the shout
of joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people: for one

3, 10: *By the hands of David:* according to the directions of David.
3, 12: *Many:* seems a very relative term since they would be very old.

with another the people shouted with a loud shout, and the voice was heard afar off.

4

1 ***Samaritans Hinder the Building*** Now the enemies of Juda and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity
2 were building a temple to the Lord the God of Israel. | And they came to Zorobabel, and the chief of the fathers, and said to them: Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do. Behold we have sacrificed to him, since the days of Asor Had-
3 dan king of Assyria, who brought us here. | But Zorobabel, and Josue, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel said to them: You have nothing to do with us to build a house to our God, but we ourselves alone will build to the Lord our God,
4 as Cyrus king of the Persians has commanded us. | Then the people of the land hindered the hands of the people of Juda,
5 and troubled them in building. | And they hired counselors against them, to frustrate their design all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of the Persians.
6 And in the reign of Assuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Juda and Jeru-
7 salem. | And in the days of Artaxerxes, Beselam, Mithridates, and Thabeel, and the rest that were in the council wrote to Artaxerxes king of the Persians: and the letter of accusation was written in Syriac, and was read in the Syrian tongue.

8 ***The Samaritans' Letter to Artaxerxes*** Reum, Beelteem, and Samsai the scribe wrote a letter from Jerusalem to king
9 Artaxerxes, in this manner: | Reum, Beelteem, and Samsai the scribe, and the rest of their counselors, the Dinites, and the Apharsathacites, the Therphalites, the Apharsites, the Erchuites, the Babylonians, the Susanechites, the Dievites, and the Elam-

4, 1: *Enemies of Juda:* these are the descendants of the foreigners who were brought into Samaria after its fall in 722-21 B.C. See 4 Kgs 17, 24.

4, 2: *We seek your God:* they claimed that their common religion entitled them to help build the temple.

4, 3: The Jews answer that officially they are not allowed to extend to others the privilege of building the temple. Actually, they refused the help because the Samaritans had contaminated the true religion with pagan religions of their non-Israelite ancestors.

4, 5: *Hired:* they bribed the local Persian overlords. Thus the temple building was halted for sixteen years.

4, 6-16: Three later protests are collected here. The first is in v. 6 to Xerxes ("Assuerus"); the second is in v. 7. It was written in Aramaic ("Syriac," "Syrian"), the international language; the third is in vv. 8-16.

10 ites, | and the rest of the nations, whom the great and glorious
Asenaphar brought over and made to dwell in the cities of
Samaria and in the rest of the countries of this side of the river
11 in peace. | (This is the copy of the letter, which they sent to
him): To Artaxerxes the king, your servants, the men that are
12 on this side of the river send greeting. | Be it known to the
king, that the Jews, who came up from you to us, have come
to Jerusalem a rebellious and wicked city, which they are build-
ing, setting up the ramparts thereof and repairing the walls. |
13 And now be it known to the king, that if this city be built up,
and the walls thereof repaired, they will not pay tribute nor
toll, nor yearly revenues, and this loss will fall upon the kings.
14 | But we, remembering the salt that we have eaten in the palace,
and because we count it a crime to see the king wronged, have
15 therefore sent and certified the king, | that search may be made
in the books of the histories of your fathers. And you shall find
written in the records, and shall know that this city is a rebel-
lious city, and hurtful to the kings and provinces, and that wars
were raised therein of old time. For which cause also the city
16 was destroyed. | We certify the king, that if this city be built,
and the walls thereof repaired, you shall have no possession on
this side of the river.

17 ***The Building Is Interrupted*** The king sent word to Reum,
Beelteem and Samsai the scribe, and to the rest that were in their
council, inhabitants of Samaria, and to the rest beyond the river,
18 sending greeting and peace: | The accusation, which you have
19 sent to us, has been plainly read before me. | And I com-
manded, and search has been made. And it is found, that this
city of old time has rebelled against kings, and seditions and
20 wars have been raised therein. | For there have been powerful
kings in Jerusalem: who have had dominion over all the coun-
try that is beyond the river, and have received tribute, and toll,
21 and revenues. | Now therefore hear the sentence: Hinder those
men, that this city be not built, till further orders be given by
22 me. | See that you be not negligent in executing this, lest by
little and little the evil grow to the hurt of the kings.
23 Now the copy of the edict of king Artaxerxes was read before
Reum, Beelteem, and Samsai the scribe, and their counselors.
And they went up in haste to Jerusalem to the Jews, and hin-
dered them with arm and power.
24 Then the work of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem was in-

4, 14: To eat salt in the king's palace means to be in the king's pay.

terrupted, and ceased till the second year of the reign of Darius king of the Persians.

5

1 ***The Work Proceeds*** Now Aggeus the prophet, and Zach-
arias the son of Addo, prophesied to the Jews that were in
2 Judea and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel. | Then
rose up Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, and Josue, the son of
Josedec, and began to build the temple of God in Jerusalem,
3 and with them were the prophets of God helping them. | And
at the same time came to them Thathanai, who was governor
beyond the river, and Stharbuzanai, and their counselors, and
said thus to them: Who has given you counsel to build this
4 house, and to repair the walls thereof? | In answer to which,
we gave them the names of the men who were the promoters of
5 that building. | But the eye of their God was upon the ancients
of the Jews, and they could not hinder them. And it was agreed
that the matter should be referred to Darius, and then they
should give satisfaction concerning that accusation.

6 ***The Governor's Letter to Darius*** The copy of the letter
that Thathanai governor of the country beyond the river, and
Stharbuzanai, and his counselors the Arphasachites, who dwelt
7 beyond the river, sent to Darius the king. | The letter which
they sent him, was written thus: To Darius the king all peace. |
8 Be it known to the king, that we went to the province of Judea,
to the house of the great God, which they are building with un-
polished stones, and timber is laid in the walls: and this work
9 is carried on diligently, and advances in their hands. | And we
asked those ancients, and said to them thus: Who has given you
10 authority to build this house, and to repair these walls? | We
asked also of them their names, that we might give you notice:
and we have written the names of the men that are the chief
11 among them. | And they answered us in these words, saying:
We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth; and we are
building a temple that was built these many years ago, and
12 which a great king of Israel built and set up. | But afterward
our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, and he

5, 1: Resumes the narrative thread from 4, 5. The two prophets encouraged the people not to abandon their attempt to rebuild the temple.

5, 3: *Governor*: a Persian satrap. Since the Persians did not allow temple building without their permission, perhaps the protests of the Samaritans led the satrap to ask who authorized the Jews to rebuild their temple.

5, 5: *The eye:* the favor.

delivered them into the hands of Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon the Chaldean: and he destroyed this house, and carried
13 away the people to Babylon. | But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon, king Cyrus set forth a decree, that this house
14 of God should be built. | And the vessels also of gold and silver of the temple of God, which Nabuchodonosor had taken out of the temple, that was in Jerusalem, and had brought them to the temple of Babylon, king Cyrus brought out of the temple of Babylon. And they were delivered to one Sassabasar, whom
15 also he appointed governor, | and said to him: Take these vessels, and go, and put them in the temple that is in Jerusalem,
16 and let the house of God be built in its place. | Then came this same Sassabasar, and laid the foundations of the temple of God in Jerusalem, and from that time until now it is in building, and is not yet finished.
17 Now therefore if it seem good to the king, let him search in the king's library, which is in Babylon, whether it has been decreed by Cyrus the king, that the house of God in Jerusalem should be built: and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

6

1 ***The Record Is Found*** Then king Darius gave orders; and they searched in the library of the books that were laid up in
2 Babylon, | and there was found in Ecbatana, which is a castle in the province of Media, a book in which this record was
3 written. | In the first year of Cyrus the king: Cyrus the king decreed, that the house of God should be built, which is in Jerusalem, in the place where they may offer sacrifices; and that they lay the foundations that may support the height of threescore
4 cubits, and the breadth of threescore cubits, | three rows of unpolished stones, and so rows of new timber: and the charges
5 shall be given out of the king's house. | And also let the golden and silver vessels of the temple of God, which Nabuchodonosor took out of the temple of Jerusalem, and brought to Babylon, be restored, and carried back to the temple of Jerusalem to their place, which also were placed in the temple of God.
6 Now therefore Thathanai, governor of the country beyond the river, Stharbuzanai, and your counselors the Apharsachites,
7 who are beyond the river, depart far from them, | and let that temple of God be built by the governor of the Jews, and by their ancients, that they may build that house of God in its place. |

6, 2: *Ecbatana . . . Media:* the modern Hamadan in Iran where the Persian kings passed their summers.

8 I also have commanded what must be done by those ancients of
the Jews, that the house of God may be built, to wit, that of
the king's chest, that is, of the tribute that is paid out of the
country beyond the river, the charges be diligently given to
9 those men, lest the work be hindered. | And if it shall be neces-
sary, let calves also, and lambs, and kids, for holocausts to the
God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the cus-
tom of the priests that are in Jerusalem, be given them day by
10 day, that there be no complaint in any thing. | And let them
offer oblations to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of
the king, and of his children.

11 ***The Decree of Darius*** And I have made a decree: That
if any one should attempt to alter this commandment, a beam
shall be taken from his house, and set up, and he be nailed upon
12 it, and his house be confiscated. | And may the God, that has
caused his name to dwell there, destroy all kingdoms, and the
people that shall put out their hand to resist, and to destroy the
house of God, that is in Jerusalem. I Darius have made the de-
cree, which I will have diligently complied with.
13 So then Thathanai, governor of the country beyond the river,
and Stharbuzanai, and his counselors diligently executed what
14 Darius the king had commanded. | And the ancients of the
Jews built, and prospered according to the prophecy of Aggeus
the prophet, and of Zacharias the son of Addo. And they built
and finished, by the commandment of the God of Israel, and by
the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, kings
of the Persians.

15 ***The Feast of Dedication*** And they were finishing this
house of God until the third day of the month of Adar, which
16 was in the sixth year of the reign of king Darius. | And the
children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of
the children of the captivity kept the dedication of the house of
17 God with joy. | And they offered at the dedication of the house
of God, a hundred calves, two hundred rams, four hundred
lambs, and for a sin offering for all Israel twelve he-goats, ac-
18 cording to the number of the tribes of Israel. | And they set the
priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses over
the works of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the book of
Moses.

6, 14: *Prophecy:* preaching.
6, 15: After four years of resumed building, the temple was finally completed in 515 B.C.

19 And the children of Israel of the captivity kept the phase, on
20 the fourteenth day of the first month. | For all the priests and
the Levites were purified as one man: all were clean to kill the
phase for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren
21 the priests, and themselves. | And the children of Israel that
had returned from captivity, and all that had separated themselves from the filthiness of the nations of the earth to them, to seek the Lord the God of Israel, did eat.
22 And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with
joy; for the Lord had made them joyful, and had turned the
heart of the king of Assyria to them, that he should help their
hands in the work of the house of the Lord the God of Israel.

7

1 ***Esdras Comes to Jerusalem*** Now after these things in the
reign of Artaxerxes king of the Persians, Esdras the son of
2 Saraias, the son of Azarias, the son of Helcias, | the son of
3 Sellum, the son of Sadoc, the son of Achitob, | the son of
4 Amarias, the son of Azarias, the son of Maraioth, | the son
5 of Zarahias, the son of Ozi, the son of Bocci, | the son of Abisue,
the son of Phinees, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the
6 priest from the beginning: | this Esdras went up from Babylon,
and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord
God had given to Israel. And the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. |
7 And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the
children of the priests, and of the children of the Levites, and of
the singing men, and of the porters, and of the Nathinites to
8 Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. | And
they came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, in the seventh year of
9 the king. | For upon the first day of the first month he began to
go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he
came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon
10 him. | For Esdras had prepared his heart to seek the law of the
Lord, and to do and to teach in Israel the commandments and
judgment.

11 ***The Decree of Artaxerxes*** And this is the copy of the
letter of the edict, which king Artaxerxes gave to Esdras the

7, 6: *A ready scribe:* before the exile, a scribe was a writer or copyist: after the exile, and in New Testament times a scribe was an official interpreter of the Mosaic Law. *The hand of the Lord:* a frequent expression of God's favor.

7, 8: This 900 mile journey took about four months. See Introduction to Esdras and Nehemias for opinions about the date of Esdras' mission.

priest, the scribe instructed in the words and commandments
12 of the Lord, and his ceremonies in Israel. | Artaxerxes, king
of kings, to Esdras the priest, the most learned scribe of the law
13 of the God of heaven, greeting. | It is decreed by me that all
they of the people of Israel, and of the priests and of the Levites
in my realm, that are minded to go into Jerusalem, should go
14 with you. | For you are sent from before the king, and his seven
counselors, to visit Judea and Jerusalem according to the law
15 of your God, which is in your hand. | And to carry the silver
and gold, which the king and his counselors have freely offered
16 to the God of Israel, whose tabernacle is in Jerusalem. | And
all the silver and gold that you shall find in all the province of
Babylon, and that the people is willing to offer, and that the
priests shall offer of their own accord to the house of their God,
17 which is in Jerusalem, | take freely, and buy diligently with
this money, calves, rams, lambs, with the sacrifices and libations
of them. And offer them upon the altar of the temple of your
18 God, that is in Jerusalem. | And if it seem good to you, and to
your brethren to do any thing with the rest of the silver and
19 gold, do it according to the will of your God. | The vessels also,
that are given you for the sacrifice of the house of your God,
20 deliver you in the sight of God in Jerusalem. | And whatsoever
more there shall be need of for the house of your God, how
much ever you shall have occasion to spend, it shall be given
out of the treasury, and the king's exchequer, and by me.
21 I Artaxerxes the king have ordered and decreed to all the
keepers of the public chest, that are beyond the river, that what-
soever Esdras the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of
22 heaven, shall require of you, you give it without delay: | unto
a hundred talents of silver, and unto a hundred cores of wheat,
and unto a hundred bates of wine, and unto a hundred bates of
23 oil, and salt without measure. | All that belongs to the rites of
the God of heaven, let it be given diligently in the house of the
God of heaven: lest his wrath should be enkindled against the
24 realm of the king, and of his sons. | We give you also to under-
stand concerning all the priests, and the Levites, and the singers,
and the porters, and the Nathinites, and ministers of the house
of this God, that you have no authority to impose toll or tribute,
or custom upon them.

7, 12-26: This is the letter of Artaxerxes, written in the Aramaic language.

7, 20-21: Esdras' possible requests are limited in v. 22.

7, 23: *Lest his wrath:* Artaxerxes probably desired not only the favor of another god, but a friendly Palestinian flank in case of a Persian attack on Egypt.

25 And you Esdras, according to the wisdom of your God, which
is in your hand, appoint judges and magistrates, that may judge
all the people that is beyond the river, that is: for them who
know the law of your God. Yea and the ignorant teach freely.
26 | And whosoever will not do the law of your God, and the law
of the king diligently, judgment shall be executed upon him,
either unto death, or unto banishment, or to the confiscation of
goods, or at least to prison.
27 Blessed be the Lord the God of our fathers, who had put this
in the king's heart, to glorify the house of the Lord, which is in
28 Jerusalem, | and has inclined his mercy toward me before the
king and his counselors, and all the mighty princes of the king.
And I being strengthened by the hand of the Lord my God,
which was upon me, gathered together out of Israel chief men
to go up with me.

8

1 ***The Companions of Esdras*** Now these are the chiefs of
families, and the genealogy of them, who came up with me from
2 Babylon in the reign of Artaxerxes the king. | Of the sons of
Phinees, Gersom. Of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel. Of the sons of
3 David, Hattus. | Of the sons of Sechenias, the son of Pharos,
Zacharias, and with him were numbered a hundred and fifty
4 men. | Of the sons of Phahath Moab, Eleoenai the son of
5 Zareha, and with him two hundred men. | Of the sons of
Sechenias, the son of Ezechiel, and with him three hundred men.
6 | Of the sons of Adan, Abed the son of Jonathan, and with him
7 fifty men. | Of the sons of Alam, Isaias the son of Athalias, and
8 with him seventy men. | Of the sons of Saphatia: Zebodia the
9 son of Michael, and with him eighty men. | Of the sons of
Joab, Obedia the son of Jahiel, and with him two hundred and
10 eighteen men. | Of the sons of Selomith, the son of Josphia,
11 and with him a hundred and sixty men. | Of the sons of Bebai,
Zacharias the son of Bebai, and with him eight and twenty
12 men. | Of the sons of Azgad, Joanan the son of Eccetan, and
13 with him a hundred and ten men. | Of the sons of Adonicam,
who were the last, and these are their names: Eliphelet, and
14 Jehiel, and Samaias, and with them sixty men. | Of the sons
of Begui, Uthai and Zachur, and with them seventy men.
15 And I gathered them together to the river, which runs down
to Ahava, and we stayed there three days. And I sought among
the people and among the priests for the sons of Levi, and
16 found none there. | So I sent Eliezer, and Ariel, and Semeias,
and Elnathan, and Jarib, and another Elnathan, and Nathan,
and Zacharias, and Mosollam, chief men, and Joiarib, and

17 Elnathan, wise men. | And I sent them to Eddo, who is chief
in the place of Chasphia, and I put in their mouth the words
that they should speak to Eddo, and his brethren the Nathinites
in the place of Chasphia, that they should bring us ministers of
18 the house of our God. | And by the good hand of our God
upon us, they brought us a most learned man of the sons of
Moholi the son of Levi the son of Israel, and Sarabias and his
19 sons, and his brethren, eighteen. | And Hasabias, and with him
Isaias of the sons of Merari, and his brethren, and his sons,
20 twenty. | And of the Nathinites, whom David and the princes
gave for the service of the Levites, Nathinites, two hundred and
twenty: all these were called by their names.

21 ***Esdras Proclaims a Fast*** And I proclaimed there a fast by
the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before the Lord
our God, and might ask of him a right way for us, and for our
22 children, and for all our substance. | For I was ashamed to
ask the king for aid and for horsemen to defend us from the
enemy in the way, because we had said to the king: The hand
of our God is upon all them that seek him in goodness; and his
power and strength, and wrath upon all them that forsake him.
25 | And we fasted, and besought our God for this: and it fell out
prosperously unto us.

24 And I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sarabias,
25 and Hasabias: and with them ten of their brethren. And I
weighed unto them the silver and gold, and the vessels conse-
crated for the house of our God, which the king and his coun-
selors, and his princes, and all Israel, that were found, had
26 offered. | And I weighed to their hands six hundred and fifty
talents of silver, and a hundred vessels of silver, and a hundred
27 talents of gold. | And twenty cups of gold, of a thousand
solids, and two vessels of the best shining brass, beautiful as
28 gold. | And I said to them: You are the holy ones of the Lord,
and the vessels are holy, and the silver and gold, that is freely
29 offered to the Lord the God of our fathers. | Watch them and
keep them, till you deliver them by weight before the chief of
the priests, and of the Levites, and the heads of the families of
Israel in Jerusalem, into the treasure of the house of the Lord. |
30 And the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver

8, 20: It is estimated that a total of about 5,000 people made up this caravan.

8, 21: *And I proclaimed a fast . . . afflict ourselves:* in the Old Testament, fasting is associated with humbling oneself.

and gold, and the vessels, to carry them to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

31 Then we set forward from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month to go to Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and delivered us from the hand of the enemy,
32 and of such as lay in wait by the way. | And we came to Jerusalem: and we stayed there three days.

33 ***Holy Vessels Brought into the Temple*** And on the fourth day the silver, and the gold, and the vessels were weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Urias the priest; and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinees; and with them Jozabad the son of Josue, and Noadaia the son
34 of Benoi, Levites. | According to the number and weight of
35 every thing: and all the weight was written at that time. | Moreover the children of them that had been carried away and had come out of the captivity, offered holocausts to the God of Israel: twelve calves for all the people of Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve he-goats for sin: all for a holo-
36 caust to the Lord. | And they gave the king's edicts to the lords that were from the king's court, and the governors beyond the river. And they furthered the people and the house of God.

9

1 ***Esdras Mourns for the Sins of the People*** And after these things were accomplished, the princes came to me, saying: The people of Israel, and the priests and Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, and from their abominations, namely, of the Chanaanites, and the Hethites, and the Pherezites, and the Jebusites, and the Ammonites, and
2 the Moabites, and the Egyptians, and the Amorrites. | For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons; and they have mingled the holy seed with the people of the lands. And the hand of the princes and magistrates has been
3 first in this transgression. | And when I had heard this word I rent my mantle and my coat, and plucked off the hairs of my
4 head and my beard: and I sat down mourning. | And there were assembled to me all that feared the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had come from the captivity.
5 And I sat sorrowful, until the evening sacrifice. | And at the

9, 3: *Mantle:* the tunic or undergarment. *Coat:* the long cloak. *Plucked off the hairs:* not completely. A moral ceremonious expression of sorrow is to shave the head and beard. See Job 1, 20.

9, 5: Commentators notice Esdras' psychology here (see v. 3; and 10, 1). He could have used his authority and implemented it with force.

evening sacrifice I rose up from my affliction, and having rent my mantle and my garment, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands to the Lord my God.

6 *The Prayer of Esdras* And I said: My God, I am confounded and ashamed to lift up my face to you. For our iniquities are multiplied over our heads, and our sins have grown up even unto heaven,
7 From the days of our fathers: and we ourselves also have sinned grievously unto this day. And for our iniquities we, and our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, and to the sword, and to captivity, and to spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is at this day.
8 And now as a little and for a moment has our prayer been made before the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant, and give us a pin in his holy place, and that our God would enlighten our eyes, and would give us a little life in our bondage.
9 For we are bondmen, and in our bondage our God has not forsaken us, but has extended mercy upon us before the king of the Persians, to give us life, and to set up the house of our God, and to rebuild the desolations thereof, and to give us a fence in Juda and Jerusalem.
10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments:
11 Which you have commanded by the hand of your servants the prophets, saying: The land which you go to possess, is an unclean land, according to the uncleanness of the people, and of other lands, with their abominations, who have filled it from mouth to mouth with their filth.
12 Now therefore give not your daughters to their sons, and take not their daughters for your sons, and seek not their peace, nor their prosperity for ever: that you may be strengthened, and may eat the good things of the land, and may have your children your heirs for ever.
13 And after all that has come upon us, for our most wicked deeds, and our great sin, seeing that you, our God, have saved us from our iniquity, and have given us a deliverance as at this day:
14 That we should not turn away, nor break your commandments, nor join in marriage with the people of these abomina-

He chose to attract the people and have them of their own accord put away foreign wives.

9, 8: *Pin:* probably figuratively, a foothold.

9, 9: *Fence:* probably, in a figurative sense, safety.

tions. Are you angry with us unto utter destruction, not to leave us a remnant to be saved?

15 O Lord God of Israel, you are just: for we remain yet to be saved as at this day. Behold we are before you in our sin: for there can be no standing before you in this matter.

10

1 ***Foreign Wives Are Put Away*** Now when Esdras was thus praying, and beseeching, and weeping, and lying before the temple of God, there was gathered to him of Israel an exceeding great assembly of men and women and children, and the 2 people wept with much lamentation. | And Sechenias the son of Jehiel of the sons of Elam answered, and said to Esdras: We have sinned against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: and now if there be repentance in Israel 3 concerning this, | let us make a covenant with the Lord our God, to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the will of the Lord, and of them that fear the commandment of the Lord our God: let it be done according 4 to the law. | Arise, it is your part to give orders, and we will 5 be with you. Take courage, and do it. | So Esdras arose, and made the chiefs of the priests and of the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they would do according to this word. And 6 they swore. | And Esdras rose up from before the house of God, and went to the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliasib, and entered it. He ate no bread, and drank no water: for he mourned for the transgression of them that had come out of the captivity.

7 And proclamation was made in Juda and Jerusalem to all the children of the captivity, that they should assemble to- 8 gether into Jerusalem. | And that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the ancients, all his substance should be taken away, and he should be cast out of the company of them that had returned 9 from captivity. | Then all the men of Juda and Benjamin gathered themselves together to Jerusalem within three days, in the ninth month, the twentieth day of the month: and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling, because 10 of the sin and the rain. | And Esdras the priest stood up, and said to them: You have transgressed, and taken strange wives,

10, 1-44: Mixed marriages were not forbidden in ancient Israel. See, e.g., David's foreign wives (2 Sm 3, 3). Later, the law (see Dt 7, 3-4) forbids marriage with foreign wives, who were usually more tenacious about their religion than their husbands were about Yahweh's religion.

11 to add to the sins of Israel. | And now make confession to the
Lord the God of your fathers, and do his pleasure, and separate
yourselves from the people of the land, and from your strange
12 wives. | And all the multitude answered and said with a loud
13 voice: According to your word unto us, so be it done. | But as
the people are many, and it is time of rain, and we are not able
to stand outdoors, and it is not a work of one day or two (for
14 we have exceedingly sinned in this matter), | let rulers be ap-
pointed in all the multitude. And in all our cities, let them that
have taken strange wives come at the times appointed, and with
them the ancients and the judges of every city, until the wrath of
15 our God be turned away from us for this sin. | Then Jonathan
the son of Azahel, and Jaasia the son of Thecua were appointed
over this, and Mesollam and Sebethai, Levites, helped them. |
16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Esdras the priest,
and the men heads of the families in the houses of their fathers,
and all by their names, went and sat down in the first day of the
17 tenth month to examine the matter. | And they made an end
with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day
of the first month.

18 ***The Names of the Guilty*** And there were found among
the sons of the priests that had taken strange wives: of the
sons of Josue the son of Josedec, and his brethren, Maasia, and
19 Eliezer, and Jarib, and Godolia. | And they gave their hands
to put away their wives, and to offer for their offense a ram of
20 the flock. | And of the sons of Emmer, Hanani, and Zebedia. |
21 And of the sons of Harim, Maasia, and Elia, and Semeia, and
22 Jehiel, and Ozias. | And of the sons of Pheshur, Elioenai, Maa-
23 sia, Ismael, Nathanael, Jozabed, and Elasa. | And of the sons
of the Levites, Jozabed, and Semei, and Celaia, the same is
24 Calita, Phataia, Juda, and Eliezer. | And of the singing men,
Eliasib. And of the porters, Sellum, and Telem, and Uri. |
25 And of Israel, of the sons of Pharos, Remeia, and Jezia, and
Melchia, and Miamin, and Eliezer, and Melchia, and Banea. |
26 And of the sons of Elam, Mathania, Zacharias, and Jehiel, and
27 Abdi, and Jerimoth, and Elia. | And of the sons of Zethua,
Elioenai, Eliasib, Mathania, Jerimuth, and Zabad, and Aziaza. |
28 And of the sons of Babai, Johanan, Hanania, Zabbai, Athalai. |
29 And of the sons of Bani, Mosollam, and Melluch, and Adaia,
30 Jasub, and Saal, and Ramoth. | And of the sons of Phahath,
Moab, Edna, and Chalal, Banaias, and Maasias, Mathanias,
31 Beseleel, Bennui, and Manasse. | And of the sons of Herem,

10, 19: *Gave their hands:* took an oath.

32 Eliezer, Josue, Melchias, Semeias, Simeon, | Benjamin, Mal-
33 och, Samarias. | And of the sons of Hasom, Mathanai, Matha-
34 tha, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jermai, Manasse, Semei. | Of the sons
35 of Bani, Maaddi, Amram, and Uel, | Baneas, and Badaias,
36.37 Cheliau, | Vania, Marimuth, and Eliasib, | Mathanias, Math-
38.39 ania, and Jasi, | and Bani, and Bennui, Semei, | and Sal-
40 mias, and Nathan, and Adaias, | and Mechnedebai, Sisai,
41.42 Sarai, | Ezrel, and Selemiau, Semeria, | Sellum, Amaria,
43 Joseph. | Of the sons of Nebo, Jehiel, Mathathias, Zabad, Za-
44 bina, Jeddu, and Joel, and Banaia. | All these had taken strange wives, and there were among them women that had borne children.

10, 44: The ministry of Esdras reappears in Neh 8, 1ff, which verses show Esdras working together with Nehemias.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAS

1

1 ***Nehemias Mourns, Fasts, and Prays*** The words of Nehemias the son of Helchias. And it came to pass in the month of Casleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in the castle
2 of Susa, | that Hanani one of my brethren came, he and some men of Juda; and I asked them concerning the Jews, that remained and were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem
3 | And they said to me: They that have remained, and are left of the captivity there in the province, are in great affliction and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and the
4 gates thereof are burned with fire. | And when I had heard these words, I sat down, and wept, and mourned for many days: and I fasted, and prayed before the face of the God of heaven.

5 And I said: I beseech you, O Lord God of heaven, strong, great, and terrible, who keeps covenant and mercy with those that love you and keep your commandments:

6 Let your ears be attentive, and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant, which I pray before you now, night and day, for the children of Israel your servants. And I confess the sins of the children of Israel, by which they have sinned against you: I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have been seduced by vanity, and have not kept your commandments, and ceremonies and judgments, which you have commanded your servant Moses.

8 Remember the word that you have commanded to Moses your servant, saying: If you shall transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

9 But if you return to me, and keep my commandments, and do them, though you should be led away to the uttermost parts of the world, I will gather you from everywhere, and bring you back to the place which I have chosen for my name to dwell there.

10 And these are your servants, and your people: whom you

1, 1: *Words:* the Chronicler is now using another source, the memoirs of Nehemias. *Susa:* the winter residence of the Persian kings, in modern southwestern Iran, where archeologists have unearthed Persian palaces and the famous Code of Hammurabi.

1, 2-3: Hanani may be alluding to the Samaritans' opposition as described in Esd 4, 23-24.

1, 5-11: The prayer of Nehemias is similar in structure to other Old Testament prayers, e.g., Esd 9, 6-15; Dan 9, 4-14.

have redeemed by your great strength, and by your mighty hand.

11 I beseech you, O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who desire to fear your name. And direct your servant this day: and give him mercy before this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

2

1 ***Nehemias Goes to Jerusalem*** And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it to the king. And I was as one languishing away before his face.
2 | And the king said to me: Why is your countenance sad, though you do not appear to be sick? This is not without cause, but some evil, I know not what, is in your heart. And I was
3 seized with an exceeding great fear, | and I said to the king: O king, live for ever. Why should not my countenance be sorrowful, seeing the city of the place of the sepulchers of my fathers is desolate, and the gates thereof are burned with fire? |
4 Then the king said to me: For what do you make request? And
5 I prayed to the God of heaven, and I said to the king: If it seem good to the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you would send me into Judea to the city of
6 the sepulcher of my father, and I will build it. | And the king said to me, and the queen that sat by him: For how long shall your journey be, and when will you return? And it pleased the king, and he sent me: and I fixed him a time.

7 ***Nehemias Presents the King's Letters*** And I said to the king: If it seem good to the king, let him give me letters to the governors of the country beyond the river, that they convey
8 me over till I come into Judea. | And a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, to give me timber that I may cover the gates of the tower of the house, and the walls of the city, and the house that I shall enter into. And the king gave me according to the good hand of my God with me.
9 And I came to the governors of the country beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. And the king had sent
10 with me captains of soldiers, and horsemen. | And Sanaballat

2, 10: "Sanaballat, governor of Samaria" found in the Elephantine papyri, is believed to be the same as the Sanaballet in vv. 10 and 19. These papyri, named after an island in southern Egypt where a Jewish colony in the fifth century B.C. was employed as mercenary soldiers for the Persian army, have confirmed much of the history in Esdras and Nehemias.

the Horonite, and Tobias the servant, the Ammonite, heard it, and it grieved them exceedingly, that a man had come, who
11 sought the prosperity of the children of Israel. | And I came
12 to Jerusalem, and was there three days. | And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me, and I told not any man what God had put in my heart to do in Jerusalem: and there
13 was no beast with me, but the beast that I rode upon. | And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, and before the dragon fountain, and to the dung gate: and I viewed the wall of Jerusalem which was broken down, and the gates thereof which
14 were consumed with fire. | And I passed to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's aqueduct: and there was no place
15 for the beast on which I rode to pass. | And I went up in the night by the torrent, and viewed the wall, and going back I
16 came to the gate of the valley, and returned. | But the magistrates knew not whither I went, or what I did: neither had I as yet told any thing to the Jews, or to the priests, or to the nobles, or to the magistrates, or to the rest that did the work.

17 ***Appeal of Nehemias to Rebuild the Wall*** Then I said to them: You know the affliction wherein we are, because Jerusalem is desolate, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire. Come, and let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, and let
18 us be no longer a reproach. | And I showed them how the hand of my God was good with me, and the king's words which he had spoken to me. And I said: Let us rise up, and build. And their hands were strengthened in good.
19 But Sanaballat the Horonite, and Tobias the servant, the Ammonite, and Gossem the Arabian heard of it, and they scoffed at us, and despised us, and said: What is this thing that
20 you do? Are you going to rebel against the king? | And I answered them, and said to them: The God of heaven he helps us, and we are his servants. Let us rise up and build: but you have no part, nor justice, nor remembrance in Jerusalem.

3

1 ***The Wall Is Rebuilt*** Then Eliasib the high priest arose, and his brethren the priests, and they built the flock gate: they sanctified it, and set up the doors thereof: even unto the tower of a hundred cubits they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hana-
2 neel. | And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to
3 them built Zachur the son of Amri. | But the fish gate the sons of Asnaa built: they covered it, and set up the doors thereof,

3, 1-31: The Chronicler incorporates in Nehemias' memoirs this official list of forty-two groups of builders.

and the locks, and the bars. And next to them built Marimuth
4 the son of Urias the son of Accus. | And next to him built
Mosollam the son of Barachias, the son of Merezebel. And
5 next to them built Sadoc the son of Baana. | And next to
them the Thecuites built: but their great men did not put their
6 necks to the work of their Lord. | And Joiada the son of Pha-
sea, and Mosollam the son of Besodia built the old gate: they
covered it and set up the doors thereof, and the locks, and the
7 bars. | And next to them built Meltias the Gabaonite, and
Jadon the Meronathite, the men of Gabaon and Maspha, for
8 the governor that was in the country beyond the river. | And
next to him built Eziel the son of Araia the goldsmith, and next
to him built Ananias the son of the perfumer: and they left
9 Jerusalem unto the wall of the broad street. | And next to him
built Raphaia the son of Hur, lord of the street of Jerusalem. |
10 And next to him Jedaia the son of Haromaph, over against his
own house, and next to him built Hattus the son of Hasebonia. |
11 Melchias the son of Herem, and Hasub the son of Phahath
Moab, built half the street, and the tower of the furnaces. |
12 And next to him built Sellum the son of Alohes, lord of half
13 the street of Jerusalem, he and his daughters. | And the gate
of the valley Hanun built, and the inhabitants of Zanoe: they
built it, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks, and the
bars, and a thousand cubits in the wall unto the gate of the
14 dunghill. | And the gate of the dunghill Melchias the son of
Rechab built, lord of the street of Bethacharam: he built it,
15 and set up the doors thereof, and the locks, and the bars. | And
the gate of the fountain Sellum the son of Cholhoza built, lord
of the street of Maspha: he built it, and covered it, and set up
the doors thereof, and the locks, and the bars; and the walls of
the pool of Siloe unto the king's garden, and unto the steps
that go down from the city of David.
16 After him built Nehemias the son of Azboc, lord of half
the street of Bethsur, as far as over against the sepulcher of
David, and to the pool that was built with great labor, and to
17 the house of the mighty. | After him built the Levites, Rehum
the son of Benni. After him built Hasebias, lord of half the
18 street of Ceila in his own street. | After him built their breth-
ren Bavai the son of Enadad, lord of half Ceila.
19 And next to him Aser the son of Josue, lord of Maspha,
built another measure, over against the going up of the strong
20 corner. | After him, in the mount, Baruch the son of Zachai
built another measure, from the corner to the door of the house
21 of Eliasib the high priest. | After him Merimuth the son of
Urias the son of Haccus, built another measure from the door

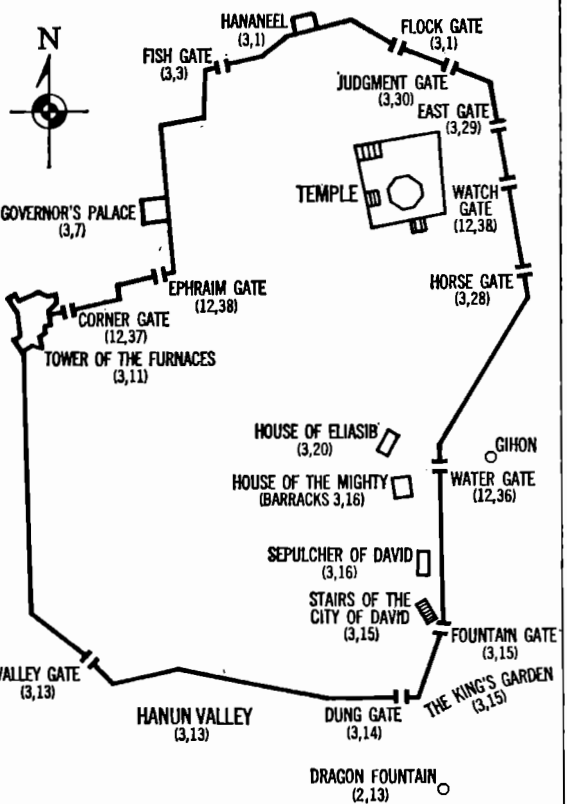
of the house of Eliasib to the end of the house of Eliasib. |
22 And after him built the priests, the men of the plains of the
23 Jordan. | After him built Benjamin and Hasub, over against their own house. And after him built Azarias the son of Ma-
24 asias the son of Ananias, over against his house. | After him built Bennui the son of Hanadad another measure, from the
25 house of Azarias unto the bending, and unto the corner. | Phalel, the son of Ozi, over against the bending and the tower, which lies out from the king's high house, that is, in the court of the prison. After him Phadaia the son of Pharos.
26 And the Nathinites dwelt in Ophel, as far as over across the water gate toward the east, and the tower that stood out. |
27 After him the Thecuites built another measure opposite the great tower that stands out unto the wall of the temple. |
28 And upward from the horse gate the priests built, every man
29 next to the other's house. | After them built Sadoc the son of Emmer opposite his house. And after him built Semaia the son
30 of Sechenias, keeper of the east gate. | After him built Hanania the son of Selemia, and Hanun the sixth son of Seleph, another measure. After him built Mosollam the son of Barachias opposite his treasury. After him Melchias the goldsmith's son built unto the house of the Nathinites and of the sellers of small wares, across the judgment gate, and up to the chamber
31 of the corner. | And within the chamber of the corner of the flock gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants built.

4

1 ***The Work Is Carried onward*** And it came to pass, that when Sanaballat heard that we were building the wall he was angry: and being moved exceedingly he scoffed at the Jews, |
2 and said before his brethren, and the multitude of the Samaritans: What are the silly Jews doing? Will the Gentiles let them alone? Will they sacrifice and make an end in a day? Are they able to raise stones out of the heaps of the rubbish,
3 which are burned? | Tobias also the Ammonite who was by him said: Let them build; if a fox go up, he will leap over their stone wall.
4 Hear you, our God, for we are despised: turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them to be despised in a land of
5 captivity. | Cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be

4, 2: *Will they sacrifice . . . day:* the original text is uncertain.
4, 3: A mockery.
4, 4-5: Parenthetical prayers characterize Nehemias' memoirs in four other places in this book.

THE JERUSALEM OF NEHEMIAS



The vague and incomplete description in the biblical narrative accounts for the different views of archeologists. For the same reason, the map is but a rough guide to the reconstruction of the wall. It began with the Flock Gate (3,1), and the procession at the dedication of the wall followed more or less the building route. See 12,31-39 n. (All references to the Book of Nehemias.)

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blotted out from before your face, because they have mocked your builders.

6 So we built the wall, and joined it all together unto the half thereof: and the heart of the people was excited to work. |
7 And it came to pass, when Sanaballat, and Tobias, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Azotians heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and the breaches began
8 to be closed, that they were exceedingly angry. | And they all assembled themselves together, to come, and to fight against Jerusalem, and to prepare ambushes.

9 *Nehemias Appoints Guards* And we prayed to our God, and set watchmen upon the wall day and night against them. |
10 And Juda said: The strength of the bearer of burdens is decayed, and the rubbish is very much; and we shall not be
11 able to build the wall. | And our enemies said: Let them not know, nor understand, till we come in the midst of them,
12 and kill them, and cause the work to cease. | And it came to pass, that when the Jews that dwelt by them came and told us ten times, out of all the places from where they came to us, |
13 I set the people in the place behind the wall round about in
14 order, with their swords, and spears, and bows. | And I looked and rose up, and I said to the chief men and the magistrates, and to the rest of the common people: Be not afraid of them. Remember the Lord who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, and your wives,
15 and your houses. | And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that the thing had been told us, that God defeated their counsel. And we returned all of us to the walls, every man to his work.

16 *The Laborers Are Armed* And it came to pass from that day forward, that half of their young men did the work, and half were ready for to fight, with spears, and shields, and bows, and coats of mail: and the rulers were behind them in all the
17 house of Juda. | Of them that built on the wall and that carried burdens, and that loaded, with one of his hands he did
18 the work, and with the other he held a sword. | For every one of the builders was girded with a sword about his reins.
19 And they built, and sounded with a trumpet by me. | And I said to the nobles, and to the magistrates, and to the rest of the common people: The work is great and wide, and we are sep-
20 arated on the wall one far from another. In whatever place you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, rally all unto us: our
21 God will fight for us. | And let us do the work: and let one

half of us hold our spears from the rising of the morning till
22 the stars appear. | At that time also I said to the people: Let
every one with his servant stay in the midst of Jerusalem;
and let us take our turns in the night, and by day, to work. |
23 Now I and my brethren, and my servants, and the watchmen
that followed me, did not put off our clothes: only every man
stripped himself when he was to be washed.

5

1 ***Nehemias Exhorts the Usurers*** Now there was a great
cry of the people, and of their wives against their brethren the
2 Jews. | And there were some that said: Our sons and our
daughters are very many. Let us take up corn for the price of
3 them, and let us eat and live. | And there were some that
said: Let us mortgage our lands, and our vineyards, and our
4 houses, and let us take corn because of the famine. | And
others said: Let us borrow money for the king's tribute, and
5 let us give up our fields and vineyards. | And now our flesh
is as the flesh of our brethren, and our children as their chil-
dren. Behold we bring into bondage our sons and our daugh-
ters, and some of our daughters are bondwomen already:
neither have we the means to redeem them; and our fields and
our vineyards other men possess.
6 And I was exceedingly angry when I heard their cry ac-
7 cording to these words. | And my heart thought with myself;
and I rebuked the nobles and magistrates, and said to them: Do
you every one exact usury of your brethren? And I gathered to-
8 gether a great assembly against them, | and I said to them:
We, as you know, have redeemed according to our ability our
brethren the Jews, that were sold to the Gentiles; and will you
then sell your brethren, for us to redeem them? And they held
9 their peace, and found not what to answer. | And I said to
them: The thing you do is not good. Why do you not walk in
the fear of our God, that we be not exposed to the reproaches of
10 the Gentiles our enemies? | Both I and my brethren, and my
servants, have lent money and corn to many: let us all agree
not to call for it again, let us forgive the debt that is owing to
11 us. Restore to them this day their fields, and their vineyards,
and their oliveyards, and their houses; and the hundredth part of
the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, which you

4, 23: *Only every man . . . washed:* the original text is obscure.
5, 1-19: Since the chapter refers to the end of Nehemias' governor-
ship, it is most likely displaced. In spite of a newly born community, the
richer Jews exploited the poorer ones.

were wont to exact of them, give it rather for them. | And they said: We will restore, and we will require nothing of them: and we will do as you say. And I called the priests and took an oath of them to do according to what I had said. | Moreover I shook my lap, and said: So may God shake every man that shall not accomplish this word, out of his house, and out of his labors. Thus may he be shaken out and become empty. And all the multitude said: Amen. And they praised God. And the people did according to what was said.

The Generosity of Nehemias And from the day, in which the king commanded me to be governor in the land of Juda, from the twentieth year even to the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, for twelve years, I and my brethren did not eat the yearly allowance that was due to the governors. | But the former governors that had been before me, were chargeable to the people; and took of them in bread, and wine, and in money, every day forty sicles: and their officers also oppressed the people. But I did not so for the fear of God. | Moreover I built in the work of the wall, and I bought no land, and all my servants were gathered together to the work. | The Jews also and the magistrates to the number of one hundred and fifty men, were at my table, besides them that came to us from among the nations that were round about us. | And there was prepared for me day by day one ox, and six choice rams, besides fowls, and once in ten days I gave store of divers wines, and many other things. Yet I did not require my yearly allowance as governor; for the people were very much impoverished. | Remember me, O my God, for good according to all that I have done for this people.

6

The Enemies Threaten Nehemias And it came to pass, when Sanaballat, and Tobias, and Gossem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had built the wall, and that there was no breach left in it (though at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), Sanaballat and Gossem sent to me, saying: Come, and let us make a league together in the villages, in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. | And I sent messengers to them, saying: I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down, lest it be neglected while I come and go down to you. | And they sent to me, according to this word, four times: and I answered them after

6, 1: Resumes the narrative of rebuilding the wall from 4, 23.

5 the same manner. ¶ And Sanaballat sent his servant to me the
fifth time according to the former word, and he had a letter
6 in his hand written in this manner: ¶ It is reported among the
Gentiles, and Gasmu has said it, that you and the Jews think
to rebel; and therefore you build the wall and have a mind
7 to set yourself king over them. For which end ¶ you have also
set up prophets, to preach of you at Jerusalem, saying: There is
a king in Judea. The king will hear of these things. Therefore
8 come now, that we may take counsel together. ¶ And I sent
to them, saying: There is no such thing done as you say, but
you feign these things out of your own heart.

9 All these men thought to frighten us, thinking that our
hands would cease from the work, and that we would leave
10 off. Wherefore I strengthened my hands the more. ¶ And I
went into the house of Samaia the son of Delaia the son of
Metabeel, privately. And he said: Let us consult together in
the house of God in the midst of the temple. And let us shut
the doors of the temple; for they will come to kill you, and in
11 the night they will come to slay you. ¶ And I said: Should
such a man as I flee? And who is there that being as I am,
12 would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. ¶ And
I understood that God had not sent him: but that he had spoken
to me as if he had been prophesying: and Tobias, and Sanaballat
13 had hired him. ¶ For he had taken money, that I being afraid
should do this thing and sin; and they might have some evil to
14 upbraid me withal. ¶ Remember me, O Lord, for Tobias and
Sanaballat, according to their works of this kind: and Noadias
the prophet, and the rest of the prophets that would have put
me in fear.

15 ***The Wall Is Finished*** But the wall was finished the five
and twentieth day of the month of Elul, in two and fifty days. ¶
16 And it came to pass when all our enemies heard of it, that all
nations which were round about us were afraid and were cast
down within themselves, for they perceived that this work was
the work of God.

17 Moreover in those days many letters were sent by the princi-

6, 10-14: Tobias and Sanaballat employed Samaia, a false prophet, to induce Nehemias to hide "in the midst of the temple" where laymen were forbidden. This breach would make him lose favor before the people.

6, 15: This rapid wall building (or repairing?), motivated by patriotism, is often compared to Herodotus' account of Themistocles' entreaty to the Athenians to build the wall of Athens.

6, 17-19: The influential Jews were the fifth column of Tobias, the Samaritan, against Nehemias and his reforms.

pal men of the Jews to Tobias, and from Tobias came letters to
18 them. | For there were many in Judea sworn to him, because
he was the son-in-law of Sechenias the son of Area, and Joha-
nan his son had taken to wife the daughter of Mosollam the
19 son of Barachias. | And they praised him also before me, and
they related my words to him. And Tobias sent letters to put
me in fear.

7

1 ***Jerusalem's Gates Are Secured*** Now after the wall was
built, and I had set up the doors, and numbered the porters and
2 singing men, and Levites, I commanded Hanani my brother, and
Hananias ruler of the house of Jerusalem (for he seemed as a
3 sincere man, and one that feared God above the rest), and
I said to them: Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened till
the sun be hot. And while they were yet standing by, the gates
were shut, and barred: and I set watchmen of the inhabitants
of Jerusalem, every one by their courses, and every man be-
fore his house that faced the wall.

4 And the city was very wide and great and the people few
5 in the midst thereof, and the houses were not built. | But God
had put in my heart, and I assembled the princes and magis-
trates and common people, to number them; and I found a
book of the number of them who came up at first, and therein
it was found written:

6 ***Those Who Came First from Babylon*** These are the
children of the province, who came up from the captivity of
them that had been carried away, whom Nabuchodonosor the
king of Babylon had carried away, and who returned into Judea,
7 every one into his own city. | Who came with Zorobabel:
Josue, Nehemias, Azarias, Raamias, Nahamani, Mardochai,
Belsam, Mespharath, Begoia, Nahum, Baana. The number of
8 the men of the people of Israel: | The children of Pharos, two
9 thousand one hundred seventy-two. | The children of Sephatia,
10 three hundred seventy-two. | The children of Area, six hun-

7, 2: *Ruler of the house:* probably means captain of the fortress.

7, 3: The gates of the city were usually opened at sunrise and closed at sunset, but they were opened later and closed earlier lest the Jerusalemites be attacked. *Yet standing:* before retiring to bed. *By their courses:* by their stations.

7, 4-69: Since Jerusalem needed more people and more dwellings, Nehemias thought it best to select one man out of ten (11, 1). He was about to take a census to carry out his plan when he found a register of the repatriated Jews. The list is almost the same as that in Esd 2.

11 dred fifty-two. | The children of Phahath Moab of the children of Josue and Joab, two thousand eight hundred eighteen. |
12 The children of Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four. |
13.14 The children of Zethua, eight hundred forty-five. | The
15 children of Zachai, seven hundred sixty. | The children of Ban-
16 nui, six hundred forty-eight. | The children of Bebai, six hun-
17 dred twenty-eight. | The children of Azgad, two thousand
18 three hundred twenty-two. | The children of Adonicam, six
19 hundred sixty-seven. | The children of Beguai, two thousand
20 sixty-seven. | The children of Adin, six hundred fifty-five. |
21 The children of Ater, children of Hezechias, ninety-eight. |
22.23 The children of Hasem, three hundred twenty-eight. | The
24 children of Besai, three hundred twenty-four. | The children of Hareph, a hundred and twelve.
25.26 The children of Gabaon, ninety-five. | The children of Beth-
27 lehem, and Netupha, a hundred eighty-eight. | The men of
28 Anathoth, a hundred twenty-eight. | The men of Bethaz-
29 moth, forty-two. | The men of Cariathiarim, Cephira, and Be-
30 roth, seven hundred forty-three. | The men of Rama and Geba,
31 six hundred twenty-one. | The men of Machmas, a hundred
32 twenty-two. | The men of Bethel and Hai, a hundred twenty-
33.34 three. | The men of the other Nebo, fifty-two. | The men
35 of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four. | The
36 children of Harem, three hundred and twenty. | The children
37 of Jericho, three hundred forty-five. | The children of Lod, of
38 Hadid and Ono, seven hundred twenty-one. | The children of Senaa, three thousand nine hundred thirty.
39 The priests: the children of Idaia in the house of Josue, nine
40 hundred and seventy-three. The children of Emmer, one thou-
41 sand fifty-two. | The children of Phashur, one thousand two
42 hundred forty-seven. | The children of Arem, one thousand
43 and seventeen. The Levites: | the children of Josue and Ced-
44 mihel, the sons | of Oduia, seventy-four. The singing men: |
45.46 the children of Asaph, a hundred forty-eight. | The porters: The children of Sellum, the children of Ater, the children of Telmon, the children of Accub, the children of Hatita, the children of Sobai, a hundred thirty-eight.
47 The Nathinites: the children of Soha, the children of Ha-
48 supha, the children of Tebbaoth. | The children of Ceros, the children of Siaa, the children of Phadon, the children of Lebana,
49 the children of Hagaba, the children of Selmai. | The children
50 of Hanan, the children of Geddel, the children of Gaher. | The children of Raaia, the children of Rasin, the children of Ne-
51 coda. The children of Gezem, the children of Asa, the children
52 of Phasea. | The children of Besai, the children of Munim, the

53 children of Nephussim. | The children of Bacbuc, the chil-
54 dren of Hacupha, the children of Harhur. | The children of
55 Besloth, the children of Mahida, the children of Harsa. | The
children of Bercos, the children of Sisara, the children of The-
56.57 ma. The children of Nasia, the children of Hatipha. | The
children of the servants of Solomon: the children of Sothai,
58 the children of Sophereth, the children of Pharida. | The chil-
dren of Jahala, the children of Darcon, the children of Jeddel. |
59 The children of Saphatia, the children of Hatil, the children of
60 Phochereth, who was born of Sabaim the son of Amon. | All
the Nathinites, and the children of the servants of Solomon,
three hundred ninety-two.

61 And these are they that came up from Telmela, Thelharsa,
Cherub, Addon, and Emmer; and could not show the house of
62 their fathers, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel: | the
children of Dalaia, the children of Tobia, the children of Ne-
63 coda, six hundred forty-two. | And of the priests: the chil-
dren of Habia, the children of Accos, the children of Berzellai,
who took a wife of the daughters of Berzellai the Galaadite; and
64 he was called by their name. | These sought their writing in the
record, and found it not: and they were cast out of the priest-
65 hood. | And Athersatha said to them, that they should not eat
of the holies of holies, until there stood up a priest learned and
skillful.

66 All the multitude as it were one man, forty-two thousand
67 three hundred sixty, | besides their menservants and women-
servants, who were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven;
and among them singing men, and singing women, two hundred
68 forty-five. | Their horses, seven hundred thirty-six. Their mules,
69 two hundred forty-five; | their camels, four hundred thirty-five.
Their asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

70 ***Contributions of the People*** And some of the heads of the
families gave unto the work. Athersatha gave into the treasure
a thousand drams of gold, fifty bowls, and five hundred and
71 thirty garments for priests. | And some of the heads of fami-
lies gave to the treasure of the work, twenty thousand drams
of gold, and two thousand two hundred pounds of silver. |
72 And that which the rest of the people gave, was twenty thou-
sand drams of gold, and two thousand pounds of silver, and
73 sixty-seven garments for priests. | And the priests, and the Le-
vites, and the porters, and the singing men, and the rest of the

7, 70: The register of names ends in v. 69, and the history of Nehemias continues with v. 70.

common people, and the Nathinites, and all Israel dwelt in their cities.

8

1 ***Esdras Reads the Law to the People*** And the seventh month came: and the children of Israel were in their cities. And all the people were gathered together as one man to the street which is before the water gate: and they spoke to Esdras the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord
2 had commanded to Israel. | Then Esdras the priest brought the law before the multitude of men and women, and all those that could understand, in the first day of the seventh month. |
3 And he read it plainly in the street that was before the water gate, from the morning until midday, before the men, and the women, and all those that could understand: and the ears of all
4 the people were attentive to the book. | And Esdras the scribe stood upon a step of wood, which he had made to speak upon. And there stood by him Mathathias, and Semeia, and Ania, and Uria, and Helcia, and Maasia, on his right hand: and on the left, Phadaia, Misael, and Melchia, and Hasum, and Hasbad-
5 ana, Zacharia and Mosollam. | And Esdras opened the book before all the people: for he was above all the people. And
6 when he had opened it, all the people stood. | And Esdras blessed the Lord the great God. And all the people answered: Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed down, and
7 adored God with their faces to the ground. | Now Josue, and Bani, and Serebia, Jamin, Accub, Sephtai, Odia, Maasia, Celtia, Azarias, Jozabed, Hanan, Phalaia, the Levites, made silence among the people to hear the law: and the people stood in their
8 place. | And they read in the book of the law of God distinctly and plainly to be understood: and they understood when it was read.

9 ***The Feast of Tabernacles Celebrated*** And Nehemias (he is Athersatha) and Esdras the priest and scribe, and the Levites who interpreted to all the people, said: This is a holy

8—10: Two reasons among others for placing these chapters on the religious reform elsewhere are: 1) Esdras reappears here in the leading role. 2) These chapters break the sequence of Nehemias' story which resumes in 11, 1. Some scholars leave 8—10 where they are, but others place them after Esd 8 or 10.

8, 1-12: See "Judaism's" birth in Introduction to Esdras and Nehemias.

8, 1: *The water gate:* probably southeast of the temple.

8, 9: *He is Athersatha:* he is governor. *The people wept:* because they broke the law.

day to the Lord our God. Do not mourn, nor weep. For all the
10 people wept, when they heard the words of the law. | And he said to them: Go, eat fat meats, and drink sweet wine, and send portions to them that have not prepared for themselves, because it is the holy day of the Lord, and be not sad: for the
11 joy of the Lord is our strength. | And the Levites stilled all the people, saying: Hold your peace, for the day is holy, and be not
12 sorrowful. | So all the people went to eat and drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth: because they understood the words that he had taught them.

13 And on the second day the chiefs of the families of all the people, the priests, and the Levites were gathered together to Esdras the scribe, that he should interpret to them the words of
14 the law. | And they found written in the law, that the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in tabernacles, on the feast, in the seventh
15 month. | And that they should proclaim and publish the word in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying: Go forth to the mount, and fetch branches of olive, and branches of beautiful wood, branches of myrtle, and branches of palm, and branches of thick trees, to make tabernacles, as it is written. |
16 And the people went forth, and brought. And they made themselves tabernacles every man on the top of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.
17 | And all the assembly of them that were returned from the captivity made tabernacles, and dwelt in tabernacles: for since the days of Josue the son of Nun the children of Israel had not done so, until that day. And there was exceeding great joy. |
18 And he read in the book of the law of God day by day, from the first day till the last. And they kept the solemnity seven days, and in the eighth day a solemn assembly according to the manner.

9

1 ***The People Repent*** And in the four and twentieth day of the month the children of Israel came together with fasting and
2 with sackcloth, and earth upon them. | And the seed of the children of Israel separated themselves from every stranger: and they stood, and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of
3 their fathers. | And they rose up to stand: and they read in the book of the law of the Lord their God, four times in the

9, 1: *Earth upon them:* the Greeks also put dust on their heads as a sign of mourning.

day, and four times they confessed, and adored the Lord their
4 God. | And there stood up upon the step of the Levites, Josue, and Bani, and Cedmihel, Sabania, Bonni, Sarebias, Bani, and Chanani: and they cried with a loud voice to the Lord their
5 God. | And the Levites, Josue and Cedmihel, Bonni, Hasebnia, Serebia, Oduia, Sebnia, and Phathahia, said: Arise, bless the Lord your God from eternity to eternity: and blessed be the high name of your glory with all blessing and praise.

6 ***Prayer of the Levites*** You, O Lord, have made heaven, and the heaven of heavens, and all the host thereof: the earth and all things that are in it: the seas and all that are therein. And you gave life to all these things, and the hosts of heaven adore you.

7 You, O Lord God, are he who chose Abram, and brought him forth out of the fire of the Chaldeans, and gave him the name of Abraham.

8 And you did find his heart faithful before you. And you made a covenant with him, to give him the land of the Chanaanite, of the Hethite, and of the Amorrite, and of the Pherezite, and of the Jebusite, and of the Gergezite, to give it to his seed. And you have fulfilled your words, because you are just.

9 And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt: and you did hear their cry by the Red Sea.

10 And you showed signs and wonders upon Pharao, and upon all his servants, and upon the people of his land: for you knew that they dealt proudly against them. And you made yourself a name, as it is at this day.

11 And you did divide the sea before them, and they passed through the midst of the sea on dry land: but their persecutors you threw into the depth, as a stone into mighty waters.

12 And in a pillar of a cloud you were their leader by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, that they might see the way by which they went.

13 You came down also to mount Sinai, and you spoke with them from heaven: and you gave them right judgments, and the law of truth, ceremonies, and good precepts.

14 You made known to them your holy sabbath, and you prescribed to them commandments, and ceremonies, and the law, by the hand of Moses your servant.

9, 6-37: The liturgical prayer is a summarized history (mainly by allusions to Gn, Ex, Dt) of the nation's infidelity to God.

9, 6-11: These verses are part of the present Jewish daily morning prayers.

9, 7: *Out of the fire:* out of the city of Ur.

15 And you gave them bread from heaven in their hunger, and brought forth water for them out of the rock in their thirst. And you said to them that they should go in, and possess the land, upon which you had lifted up your hand to give it them.
16 But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to your commandments.
17 And they would not hear, and they remembered not your wonders which you had done for them. And they hardened their necks, and gave the head to return to their bondage, as it were by contention. But you, a forgiving God, gracious, and merciful, long-suffering, and full of compassion, did not forsake them.
18 Yea, when they had made also to themselves a molten calf, and had said: This is your God, that brought you out of Egypt, and had committed great blasphemies:
19 You, in your many mercies, did not leave them in the desert. The pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day to lead them in the way, and the pillar of fire by night to show them the way by which they should go.
20 And you gave them your good Spirit to teach them; and your manna you did not withhold from their mouth; and you gave them water for their thirst.
21 Forty years did you feed them in the desert, and nothing was wanting to them: their garments did not grow old, and their feet were not worn.
22 And you gave them kingdoms, and nations, and you divided lots for them. And they possessed the land of Sehon, and the land of the king of Hesebon, and the land of Og king of Basan.
23 And you did multiply their children as the stars of heaven: and brought them to the land concerning which you had said to their fathers, that they should go in and possess it.
24 And the children came and possessed the land: and you humbled before them the inhabitants of the land, the Chanaanites, and gave them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as it pleased them.
25 And they took strong cities and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods: cisterns made by others, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance. And they ate, and were filled, and became fat, and abounded with delight in your great goodness.
26 But they provoked you to wrath, and departed from you, and threw your law behind their backs. And they killed your

prophets, who admonished them earnestly to return to you. And they were guilty of great blasphemies.

27 And you gave them into the hands of their enemies, and they afflicted them. And in the time of their tribulation they cried to you; and you heard from heaven. And according to the multitude of your tender mercies you gave them saviors, to save them from the hands of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest, they returned to do evil in your sight: and you left them in the hand of their enemies, and they had dominion over them. Then they returned, and cried to you: and you heard from heaven, and you delivered them many times in your mercies.

29 And you did admonish them to return to your law. But they dealt proudly, and hearkened not to your commandments, but sinned against your judgments, which, if a man do, he shall live in them. And they withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.

30 And you did forbear with them for many years, and you testified against them by your spirit, by the hand of your prophets. And they heard not; and you did deliver them into the hand of the people of the lands.

31 Yet in your very many mercies you did not utterly consume them, nor forsake them: because you are a merciful and gracious God.

32 Now therefore our God, great, strong, and terrible, who keeps covenant and mercy, turn not away from your face all the labor which has come upon us: upon our kings, and our princes, and our priests, and our prophets, and our fathers, and all the people, from the days of the king of Assur, until this day.

33 And you are just in all things that have cŏme upon us: because you have done truth, but we have done wickedly.

34 Our kings, our princes, our priests and our fathers have not kept your law and have not minded your commandments, and your testimonies which you have testified among them.

35 And they have not served you in their kingdoms, and in your manifold goodness, which you gave them, and in the large and fat land, which you delivered before them: nor did they return from their most wicked devices.

36 Behold we ourselves this day are bondmen: and the land, which you gave our fathers, to eat the bread thereof, and the good things thereof, and we ourselves are servants in it.

9, 29: *Which, if a man do, he shall live in them:* that is, if a man obeys your commandments, he will find life in them. *They withdrew the shoulder:* like an ox refusing to be yoked.

37 And the fruits thereof grow up for the kings, whom you have set over us for our sins; and they have dominion over our bodies, and over our beasts, according to their will, and we are in great tribulation.

38 And because of all this we ourselves make a covenant, and write it, and our princes, our Levites, and our priests sign it.

10

1 ***The Subscribers to the Covenant*** And the subscribers were Nehemias Athersatha the son of Hachelai, and Sedecias, | 2.3 Saraias, Azarias, Jeremias, | Pheshur, Amarias, Melchias, 4.5 Hattus, Sebenia, Melluch, | Harem, Merimuth, Obdias, | 6.7 Daniel, Genthon, Baruch, | Mosollam, Abia, Miamin, | 8 Maazia, Belgia, Semeia: these were priests.

9 And the Levites; Josue the son of Azanias, Bennui, of the 10 sons of Henadad, Cedmihel, | and their brethren, Sebenia, 11 Oduia, Celita, Phalaia, Hanan, | Micha, Rohob, Hasebia, | 12.13 Zachur, Serebia, Sabania, | Odaia, Bani, Baninu.

14 The heads of the people: Pharos, Phahath Moab, Elam, 15.16 Zethu, Bani, | Bonni, Azgad, Bebai, | Adonia, Begoai, 17.18 Adin, | Ater, Hezecia, Azur, | Odaia, Hasum, Besai, | 19.20 Hareph, Anathoth, Neba, | Megphias, Mosollam, Hazir, | 21.22 Mesizabel, Sadoc, Jeddua, | Pheltia, Hanan, Anaia, | 23-25 Osee, Hanania, Hasub, | Alohes, Phalea, Sobec, | Re- 26.27 hum, Hasebna, Maasia, | Echaia, Hanan, Anan, | Melluch, Haran, Baana.

28 And the rest of the people, priests, Levites, porters, and singing men, Nathinites, and all that had separated themselves from the people of the lands of the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters.

29 ***The Covenant*** All that could understand promising for their brethren, with their chief men. And they came to promise and swear that they would walk in the law of God, which he gave in the hand of Moses the servant of God: that they would do and keep all the commandments of the Lord our God, 30 and his judgments and his ceremonies. | And that we would not give our daughters to the people of the land, nor take their 31 daughters for our sons. | And if the people of the land bring in things to sell, or any things for use, to sell them on the sabbath day, that we would not buy them of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day. And that we would leave the seventh year, 32 and the exaction of every hand. | And we made ordinances for

10, 30: *The people of the lands:* the people of Ammon, Moab.

ourselves, to give the third part of a sicle every year for the work
33 of the house of our God, | for the loaves of proposition, and
for the continual sacrifice, and for a continual holocaust on the
sabbaths, on the new moons, on the set feasts, and for the holy
things, and for the sin offering: that atonement might be made
34 for Israel, and for every use of the house of our God. | And
we cast lots among the priests, and the Levites, and the people
for the offering of wood, that it might be brought into the
house of our God by the houses of our fathers at set times, from
year to year: to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it
35 is written in the law of Moses. | And that we would bring the
firstfruits of our land, and the firstfruits of all fruit of every
36 tree, from year to year, in the house of our Lord. | And the
firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the
law, and the firstlings of our oxen, and of our sheep, to be of-
fered in the house of our God, to the priests who minister in
37 the house of our God. | And that we would bring the first-
fruits of our meats, and of our libations, and the fruit of every
tree, of the vintage also and of oil to the priests, to the store-
house of our God, and the tithes of our ground to the Levites.
The Levites also shall receive the tithes of our works out of
38 all the cities. | And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with
the Levites in the tithes of the Levites, and the Levites shall
offer the tithe of their tithes in the house of our God, to the
39 storeroom into the treasure house: | for the children of Israel
and the children of Levi shall carry to the treasury the first-
fruits of corn, of wine, and of oil. And the sanctified vessels
shall be there, and the priests, and the singing men, and the
porters and ministers. And we will not forsake the house of our
God.

11

1 ***The Inhabitants of Jerusalem*** And the princes of the peo-
ple dwelt at Jerusalem: but the rest of the people cast lots, to
take one part in ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city; and
2 nine parts in the *other* cities. | And the people blessed all the
men that willingly offered themselves to dwell in Jerusalem. |
3 These therefore are the chief men of the province, who dwelt
in Jerusalem, and in the cities of Juda. And every one dwelt in

10, 36: *The firstborn of our sons:* they are to be consecrated to God according to Ex 22, 28.
10, 37-38: The giving of tithes is told as explained in Nm 18, 25-29.
11, 1: This continues the narration from 7, 4. See 7, 4-69 n.
11, 3-24: The list is about the same as in 1 Par 9, 2-19.
11, 3: *The children of the servants of Solomon:* they are listed in 7, 57.

his possession, in their cities: Israel, the priests, the Levites, the
4 Nathinites, and the children of the servants of Solomon. | And
in Jerusalem there dwelt some of the children of Juda, and
some of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Juda,
Athaias the son of Aziam, the son of Zacharias, the son of Ama-
rias, the son of Saphatias, the son of Malaleel. Of the sons of
5 Phares, Maasia the son of Baruch, the son of Cholhoza, the son
of Hazia, the son of Adaia, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zachar-
6 ias, the son of the Silonite. | All these the sons of Phares, who
dwelt in Jerusalem, *were* four hundred sixty-eight valiant men.
7 | And these are the children of Benjamin: Sellum the son of
Mosollam, the son of Joed, the son of Phadaia, the son of Col-
8 aia, the son of Masia, the son of Etheel, the son of Isaia. | And
9 after him Gebbai, Sellai, nine hundred twenty-eight. | And
Joel the son of Zechri their ruler, and Judas the son of Senua
was second over the city.

10.11 And of the priests: Idaia the son of Joarib, Jachin, | Saraia
the son of Helcias, the son of Mosollam, the son of Sadoc,
the son of Meraioth, the son of Achitob, the prince of the house
12 of God. | And their brethren that do the works of the temple,
eight hundred twenty-two. And Adaia the son of Jeroham, the
son of Phelelia, the son of Amsi, the son of Zacharias, the son
13 of Pheshur, the son of Melchias. | And his brethren the chiefs
of the fathers, two hundred forty-two. And Amassai the son of
Azreel, the son of Ahazi, the son of Mosollamoth, the son of
14 Emmer, | and their brethren who were very mighty, a hundred
twenty-eight. And their ruler Zabdiel son of the mighty.

15 And of the Levites, Semeia the son of Hasub, the son of
16 Azaricam, the son of Hasabia, the son of Boni, | and Sabathai
and Jozabed, who were over all the outward business of the
17 house of God, of the princes of the Levites. | And Mathania
the son of Micha, the son of Zebedei, the son of Asaph, was the
principal man to praise, and to give glory in prayer, and Bec-
becia the second, one of his brethren, and Abda the son of
18 Samua, the son of Galal, the son of Idithun. | All the Levites
19 in the holy city were two hundred eighty-four. | And the
porters, Accub, Telmon, and their brethren, who kept the doors,
a hundred seventy-two.

20 *The Inhabitants of other Cities* And the rest of Israel,
the priests and the Levites were in all the cities of Juda, every
21 man in his possession. | And the Nathinites that dwelt in
22 Ophel, and Siaha, and Gaspha of the Nathinites. | And the
overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem, was Azzi the son of Bani,
the son of Hasabia, the son of Mathania, the son of Micha. Of

the sons of Asaph, were the singing men in the ministry of the
23 house of God. | For the king's commandment was concerning
24 them, and an order among the singing men day by day. | And Phathahia the son of Mesezebel of the children of Zara the son of Juda was at the hand of the king, in all matters concerning the people.

25 And in the houses through all their countries, of the children of Juda, some dwelt at Cariath-Arbe, and in the villages thereof: and at Dibon, and in the villages thereof: and at Cab-
26 seel, and in the villages thereof, | and at Jesue, and at Moloda,
27 and at Bethphaleth, and at Hasersual, and at Bersabee, and in
28 the villages thereof. | And at Siceleg, and at Mochona, and in
29 the villages thereof. | And at Remmon, and at Saraa, and at
30 Jerimuth, | Zanoa, Odollam, and in their villages, at Lachis and its dependencies, and at Azeca and the villages thereof. And
31 they dwelt from Bersabee unto the valley of Ennom. | And the children of Benjamin from Geba, at Mechmas, and at Hai,
32 and at Bethel, and in the villages thereof, | at Anathoth, Nob,
33.34 Anania, | Asor, Rama, Gethaim, | Hadid, Seboim, and
35.36 Neballat, Lod, and Ono the valley of craftsmen. And of the Levites were portions of Juda and Benjamin.

12

1 ***The Priests and Levites*** Now these are the priests and the Levites, that went up with Zorobabel the son of Salathiel,
2 and Josue: Saraia, Jeremias, Esdras, | Amaria, Melluch, Hat-
3.4 tus, | Sebenias, Rheum, Merimuth, | Addo, Genthon, Abia,
5.6 Miamin, Madia, Belga, | Semeia, and Joiarib, Idaia, Sellum,
7 Amoc, Helcias, Idaia. These were the chief of the priests, and
8 of their brethren in the days of Josue. | And the Levites, Jesua, Bennui, Cedmihel, Sarebia, Juda, Mathanias. They and their
9 brethren were over the hymns. | And Becbecia, and Hanni,
10 and their brethren every one in his office. | And Josue begot Joacim, and Joacim begot Eliasib, and Eliasib begot Joiada, |
11 and Joiada begot Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jeddoa. |
12 And in the days of Joacim the priests and heads of the families
13 were: of Saraia, Maraia: of Jeremias, Hanania. | Of Esdras,
14 Mosollam; and of Amaria, Johanan. | Of Milicho, Jonathan;
15 of Sebenia, Joseph. | Of Haram, Edna; of Maraioth, Helci. |
16.17 Of Adaia, Zacharia; of Genthon, Mosollam. | Of Abia,
18 Zechri; of Miamin and Moadia, Phelti. | Of Belga, Sammua
19 of Semaia, Jonathan. | Of Joiarib, Mathanai; of Jodaia, Azzi.
20.21 | Of Sellai, Celai; of Amoc, Heber. | Of Helcias, Hasebia;

12, 1: *Went up:* from Babylon.

22 of Idaia, Nathanael. | The Levites, the chiefs of the families in
the days of Eliasib, and Joiada, and Johanan, and Jeddoa, were
recorded, and the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian. |
23 The sons of Levi, heads of the families, were written in the book
of Chronicles, even unto the days of Jonathan the son of Eliasib.
24 Now the chief of the Levites were Hasebia, Serebia, and
Josue the son of Cedmihel, and their brethren by their courses:
to praise and to give thanks according to the commandment of
25 David the man of God, and to wait equally in order. | Mathania, and Becbecia, Obedia, and Mosollam, Telmon, Accub,
were keepers of the gates and of the entrances before the gates.
26 | These were in the days of Joacim the son of Josue, the son of
Josedec, and in the days of Nehemias the governor, and of Esdras the priest and scribe.

27 ***Solemn Dedication of the Wall*** And at the dedication
of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their
places, to bring them to Jerusalem, and to keep the dedication,
and to rejoice with thanksgiving, and with singing, and with
28 cymbals and psalteries and harps. | And the sons of the singing
men were gathered together out of the plain country about Jeru-
29 salem, and out of the villages of Nethuphati, | and from the
house of Galgal, and from the countries of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singing men had built themselves villages round
30 about Jerusalem. | And the priests and the Levites were purified, and they purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.
31 And I made the princes of Juda go up upon the wall, and I
appointed two great choirs to give praise. And they went on the
32 right hand upon the wall toward the dunghill gate. | And after
33 them went Osaias and half of the princes of Juda, | and
Azarias, Esdras, and Mosollam, Judas, and Benjamin, and
34 Semeia, and Jeremias. | And of the sons of the priests with
trumpets, Zacharias the son of Jonathan, the son of Semeia, the
son of Mathania, the son of Michaia, the son of Zechur, the son
35 of Asaph, | and his brethren Semeia, and Azareel, Malalai,
Galalai, Maai, Nathanael, and Judas, and Hanani, with the
musical instruments of David the man of God: and Esdras the
36 scribe before them at the fountain gate. | And they went up
across them by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up

12, 24: *By their courses:* opposite them.

12, 27-43: The Chronicler apparently took this description principally from the memoirs of Nehemias. The symbolic meaning of the dedication was to surrender the wall to Yahweh, their protector.

12, 31-39: The two choirs walking on the city walls and meeting in front of the temple must have made an impression on the people.

of the wall of the house of David, and to the water gate eastward.

37 And the second choir of them that gave thanks went on the opposite side, and I after them; and the half of the people upon the wall, and upon the tower of the furnaces, even to the broad
38 wall, | and above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Emath, and even to the flock gate. And they stood still
39 in the watch gate. | And the two choirs of them that gave praise stood still at the house of God, and I and the half of the
40 magistrates with me. | And the priests, Eliachim, Maasia, Miamin, Michea, Elioenai, Zacharia, Hanania with trumpets,
41 | and Maasia, and Semeia, and Eleazar, and Azzi, and Johanan, and Melchia, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud,
42 and Jezraia was their overseer. | And they sacrificed on that day great sacrifices, and they rejoiced: for God had made them joyful with great joy. Their wives also and their children rejoiced; and the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

43 They appointed also in that day men over the storehouses of the treasure, for the libations, and for the firstfruits, and for the tithes: that the rulers of the city might bring them in by them in honor of thanksgiving, for the priests and Levites: for
44 Juda was joyful in the priests and Levites that assisted. | And they kept the watch of their God, and the observance of expiation. And the singing men, and the porters, according to the
45 commandment of David, and of Solomon his son: | for in the days of David and Asaph from the beginning there were chief singers appointed, to praise with canticles and give thanks to
46 God. | And all Israel, in the days of Zorobabel, and in the days of Nehemias, gave portions to the singing-men, and to the porters, day by day. And they sanctified the Levites: and the Levites sanctified the sons of Aaron.

13

1 ***Nehemias Reforms Abuses*** And on that day they read in the book of Moses in the hearing of the people. And therein was found written that the Ammonites and the Moabites should not
2 come in to the church of God for ever, | because they met not the children of Israel with bread and water: and they hired against them Balaam, to curse them, and our God turned the
3 curse into blessing. | And it came to pass, when they had heard
4 the law, that they separated every stranger from Israel. | And over this thing was Eliasib the priest, who was set over the

13, 1-2: A reference to Dt 23, 3-6.

treasury of the house of our God, and was near akin to Tobias.
5 | And he made him a great storeroom, where before him they laid up gifts, and frankincense, and vessels, and the tithes of the corn, of the wine, and of the oil, the portions of the Levites, and of the singing men, and of the porters, and the firstfruits of the priests.
6 But in all this time I was not in Jerusalem, because in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon, I went to the
7 king, and after certain days I asked the king: | and I came to Jerusalem, and I understood the evil that Eliasib had done for Tobias, to make him a storehouse in the courts of the house of
8 God. | And it seemed to me exceeding evil. And I cast forth
9 the vessels of the house of Tobias out of the storehouse. | And I commanded and they cleansed the storehouses. And I brought thither again the vessels of the house of God, the sacrifice, and
10 the frankincense. | And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: and that the Levites, and the singing men, and they that ministered had fled away every
11 man to his own country. | And I pleaded the matter against the magistrates, and said: Why have we forsaken the house of God? And I gathered them together, and I made them to stand
12 in their places. | And all Juda brought the tithe of the corn,
13 and the wine, and the oil into the storehouses. | And we set over the storehouses Selemias the priest, and Sadoc the scribe, and of the Levites Phadaia, and next to them Hanan the son of Zachur, the son of Mathania: for they were approved as faithful and to them were committed the portions of their brethren.
14 | Remember me, O my God, for this thing, and wipe not out my kindnesses, which I have done relating to the house of my God and his ceremonies.

15 ***Sabbath Violations Condemned*** In those days, I saw in Juda some treading the presses on the sabbath, and carrying sheaves, and loading asses with wine, and grapes, and figs, and all manner of freights, and bringing them into Jerusalem on the sabbath day. And I charged them that they should sell on a day
16 on which it was lawful to sell. | Some Tyrians also dwelt there, who brought fish, and all manner of wares. And they sold them
17 on the sabbaths to the children of Juda in Jerusalem. | And I rebuked the chief men of Juda, and said to them: What is this
18 evil thing that you are doing, profaning the sabbath day? | Did not our fathers do these things, and our God brought all this

13, 6ff.: After twelve years in Jerusalem, Nehemias returned to the Persian court.

evil upon us, and upon this city? And you bring more wrath
19 upon Israel by violating the sabbath. | And it came to pass,
that when the gates of Jerusalem were at rest on the sabbath
day, I spoke. And they shut the gates: and I commanded that
they should not open them till after the sabbath. And I set some
of my servants at the gates, that none should bring in freights on
20 the sabbath day. | So the merchants, and they that sold all
21 kinds of wares, stayed without Jerusalem once or twice. | And I
charged them, and I said to them: Why do you stand before the
wall? If you do so another time, I will lay hands on you. And
22 from that time they came no more on the sabbath. | I spoke
also to the Levites that they should be purified, and should come
to keep the gates, and to sanctify the sabbath day. For this also
remember me, O my God, and spare me according to the multi-
tude of your tender mercies.

23 ***Mixed Marriages Banned*** In those days also I saw Jews
that married wives, women of Azotus, and of Ammon, and of
24 Moab. | And their children spoke half in the speech of Azotus,
and could not speak the Jews' language, but they spoke accord-
25 ing to the language of this and that people. | And I chided
them, and laid my curse upon them. And I beat some of them,
and shaved off their hair, and made them swear by God that
they would not give their daughters to their sons, nor take their
26 daughters for their sons, nor for themselves, saying: | Did not
Solomon king of Israel sin in this kind of thing? And surely
among many nations, there was not a king like him. And he
was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel:
and yet women of other countries brought even him to sin. |
27 And shall we also be disobedient and do all this great evil, trans-
28 gressing against our God, and marry strange women? | And
one of the sons of Joiada the son of Eliasib the high priest, was
son-in-law to Sanaballat the Horonite: and I drove him from
29 me. | Remember them, O Lord my God, that defile the priest-
hood and the law of priests and Levites.
30 So I separated from them all strangers, and I appointed the
courses of the priests and the Levites, every man in his ministry:
31 | and for the offering of wood at times appointed, and for the
firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, unto good. Amen.

13, 31: See the praise given to Nehemias in Sir 49, 13.

THE BOOK OF TOBIAS

INTRODUCTION

During the fourth and third centuries B.C. an anonymous Jew wrote the Book of Tobias (or Tobit) probably in the Hebrew or Aramaic language. Since the original text of Tobias is lost, scholars work from different Greek translations. The disagreement on what must have constituted the original text is reflected in the variety of translations of Tobias into modern languages. Notwithstanding the disagreement about the original text, Catholics consider the Book of Tobias inspired, but Jews and Protestants do not.

The book tells the story of Tobias, a wealthy, law-abiding Jew, and of Tobias, his son. With his family, Tobias was deported to Ninive (in modern Iraq) after the Assyrians captured Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, in 722-21 B.C. In the middle of his life of charity to his fellow exiles, Tobias is struck blind. He prays for death. The scene shifts immediately to a pious relative, Sara, who also prays for death because a demon killed her seven consecutive husbands. God delivers both Tobias and Sara through the angel Raphael. The author intersperses the story with exhortations, e.g., in 4, 3-20.

The Jewish writer penned his story about four centuries after the historical setting he used. The historical setting is Ninive and the land of Media, from 734 B.C.—when the tribe of Nephthali was deported into captivity—to the fall of Ninive in 612 B.C. No one today considers this to be strict history because many historical, chronological, and geographical inaccuracies are in evidence. It seems safe to say that there is hardly anything historical except the historical setting. The scholars who claim more historicity for the book admit that they do not know where history ends and fiction begins.

The Book of Tobias is generally categorized as edifying religious literature since its most obvious purpose is to teach good deeds, such as the burial of the dead, and almsgiving. Family virtues and trust in Divine Providence are taught through the angel Raphael. The deeper purpose of the book seems to be the encouragement to the exiles to practice their faith in the face of persecution and obstacles.

The principal sources used by the writer were Old Testament books, especially Genesis, the Psalms, Proverbs, Job. Other sources were *The Story of Ahikar* (see 11, 20 n.); *The Fable of the Grateful Dead; The Egyptian Essay of Khons.*

Ahikar was the "prime minister" of king Sennacherib of Assyria. Nadan, overanxious to become prime minister, framed his kind uncle Ahikar as a betrayer to the king, but the ungrateful nephew himself was sentenced to death for his crime. This story originated in Babylon; it spread through numerous literatures of the ancient Orient. In Arabic literature the Ahikar story is adapted in *A Thousand and One Nights.* In Greek literature it is found in *The Life of Aesop,* whence, finally breaking out of the Orient, it entered French literature through La Fontaine's *Fables.* The oldest extant copy of the Ahikar story is an Aramaic papyrus of the fifth century B.C. from the Jews of Elephantine

(see Neh 2, 10 n.). Even though scholars cannot prove the historicity of Tobias as well as that of Ahikar, the inspiration and religious teaching of the former book is in no way dimmed thereby.

The Fable of the Grateful Dead is a series of variant folklore stories with a basic theme, namely, that of a merchant who risks dangers by giving a decent burial to a debtor's corpse. The debtor comes back to life as a mysterious stranger to save the merchant from peril and finds a bride for him. Other variants of the Fable speak of a dragon that kills bridegrooms, and a dog helping the hero. Cicero's *De Divinatione* is the oldest extant account of the *Fable of the Grateful Dead*. Since it is not known which of the two writings appeared first in time, it is therefore unknown whether Tobias was influenced by the Fable.

Scholars note the similarity between the cure of Sara (see 6, 8; 8, 2), and the Egyptian essay of Khons, according to which an Egyptian god exorcises a devil from a princess at Ecbatana.

It is difficult to ascertain the precise type of dependence which the author of Tobias had on his sources. One thing is clear: he made a unified story of his own and thoroughly transformed the matter he borrowed from extrabiblical literature to give his readers a spiritually fruitful book.

The Book of Tobias is a favorite in the liturgy. Some occasions when it is used are: The Mass of the Feast of the Guardian Angel; the Nuptial Mass; three different places in the Mass of the Holy Trinity, and, most fitting of all, in the Mass of the Feast of St. Raphael, the Archangel.

Main divisions of the Book of Tobias are:

1. Tobias loses his sight and wealth. Sara loses her seven husbands. God hears their prayers from different places, 1—3
2. Raphael leads young Tobias on his journey to collect his father's loan to Gabelus. On the way Tobias marries Sara, and Raphael completes the journey to the home of Gabelus, 4—9
3. The parents of Tobias lament his absence but are finally comforted at his return when Raphael restores the eyesight of the elder Tobias. Raphael identifies himself, 10—12
4. Epilogue, 13—14

1

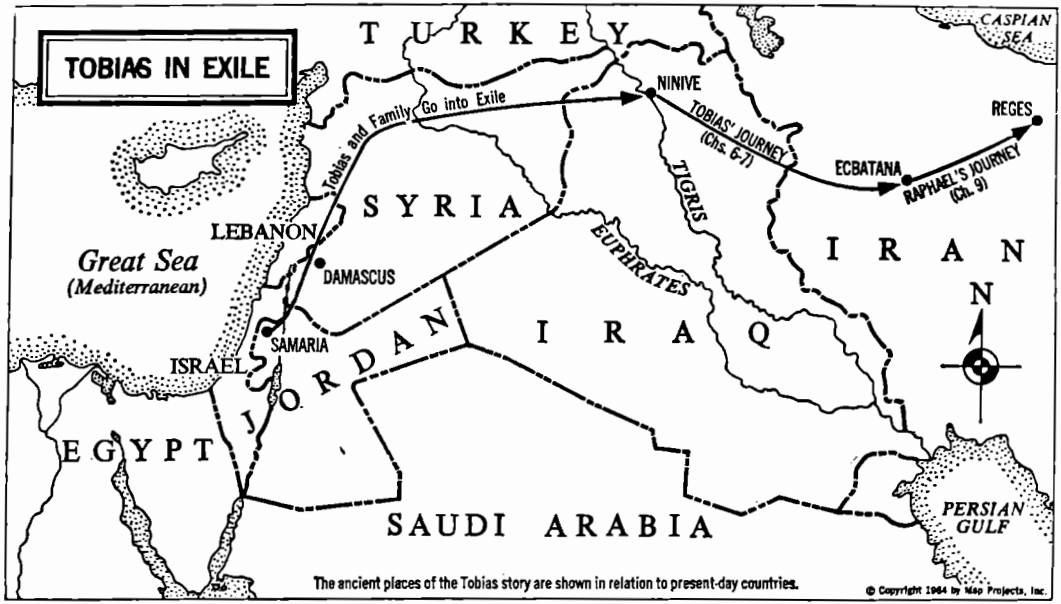
1 ***The Piety and Mercy of Tobias*** Tobias of the tribe and city of Nephtali (which is in the upper parts of Galilee above Naasson, beyond the way that leads to the west, having on the
2 right hand the city of Sephet), | when he was made captive in the days of Salmanasar king of the Assyrians, even in his cap-
3 tivity, forsook not the way of truth, | but every day gave all

1, 2: *Salmanasar:* if the author meant strict history, he would not be referring to Salmanasar V (727-722 B.C.), but to Sargon II (721-705 B.C.).

he could get to his brethren, his fellow captives, that were of
4 his kindred. | And when he was younger than any of the tribe
of Nephtali, he did no childish thing in his work.
5 Moreover when all went to the golden calves which Jeroboam
king of Israel had made, he alone fled the company of all, |
6 and went to Jerusalem to the temple of the Lord, and there
adored the Lord God of Israel, offering faithfully all his first-
7 fruits, and his tithes, | so that in the third year he gave all his
8 tithes to the proselytes and strangers. | These and such like
things did he observe when but a boy according to the law of
9 God. | But when he was a man, he took to wife Anna of his
own tribe, and had a son by her, whom he called after his own
10 name. | And from his infancy he taught him to fear God, and
to abstain from all sin.
11 And when by the captivity he with his wife and his son and
12 all his tribe was come to the city of Ninive, | (when all ate of
the meats of the Gentiles) he kept his soul and never was de-
13 filed with their meats. | And because he was mindful of the
Lord with all his heart, God gave him favor in the sight of
14 Salmanasar the king. | And he gave him leave to go wherever
15 he would, with liberty to do whatever he had a mind. | He
therefore went to all that were in captivity, and gave them
16 wholesome admonitions. | And when he came to Rages a city
of the Medes, and had ten talents of silver of that with which
17 he had been honored by the king | and when, among a great
multitude of his kindred, he saw Gabelus in want, who was one
of his tribe, taking a note of his hand he gave him the afore-
said sum of money.
18 But after a long time, Salmanasar the king being dead, when
Sennacherib his son, who reigned in his place, had a hatred
19 for the children of Israel, | Tobias daily went among all his
kindred and comforted them, and distributed to every one as he
was able, out of his goods.

20 ***Tobias Feeds the Hungry and Buries the Dead*** He fed
the hungry and gave clothes to the naked, and was careful
21 to bury the dead, and they that were slain. | And when king
Sennacherib had come back, fleeing from Judea by reason of
the slaughter that God had made about him for his blasphemy,
and being angry slew many of the children of Israel, Tobias

1, 5: A reference to 3 Kgs 12, 19ff.
1, 16: *Rages a city of the Medes:* see 5, 8 n.
1, 18: *Sennacherib his son:* Sennacherib was the son of Sargon not of Salmanasar.


TOBIAS IN EXILE
TURKEY
CASPIAN SEA
NINIVE
Tobias and Family Go into Exile
TOBIAS' JOURNEY (Chs. 6-7)
REGES
ECBATANA
RAPHAEL'S JOURNEY (Ch. 9)
SYRIA
LEBANON
Great Sea (Mediterranean)
DAMASCUS
TIGRIS
EUPHRATES
IRAN
IRAQ
N
SAMARIA
ISRAEL
JORDAN
EGYPT
SAUDI ARABIA
PERSIAN GULF
The ancient places of the Tobias story are shown in relation to present-day countries.
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22 buried their bodies. | But when it was told the king, he commanded him to be slain, and took away all his substance. |
23 But Tobias fleeing naked away with his son and with his wife,
24 lay concealed, for many loved him. | But after forty-five days,
25 the king was killed by his own sons. | And Tobias returned to his house, and all his substance was restored to him.

2

1 ***Tobias Loses His Sight*** But after this, when there was a festival of the Lord, and a good dinner was prepared in Tobias'
2 house, | he said to his son: Go, and bring some of our tribe that
3 fear God, to feast with us. | And when he had gone, returning he told him, that one of the children of Israel lay slain in the street. And he forthwith leaped up from his place at the table,
4 and left his dinner, and came fasting to the body. | And taking it up he carried it privately to his house that, after the sun was down, he might bury him cautiously.
5 And when he had hidden the body, he ate bread with mourn-
6 ing and fear, remembering the word which the Lord spoke by Amos the prophet: Your festival days shall be turned into
7 lamentation and mourning. | So when the sun was down, he
8 went and buried him. | Now all his neighbors blamed him, saying: Once already commandment was given for you to be slain because of this matter, and you scarcely escaped the sen-
9 tence of death: and yet you do again bury the dead? | But Tobias fearing God more than the king, carried off the bodies of them that were slain, and hid them in his house, and at midnight buried them.
10 Now it happened one day that, being wearied with burying, he came to his house and cast himself down by the wall and
11 slept. | And as he was sleeping, hot dung out of a swallow's
12 nest fell upon his eyes, and he was made blind. | Now this trial the Lord therefore permitted to happen to him, that an example might be given to posterity of his patience, as also of holy Job.

13 ***The Patience of Tobias*** For whereas he had always feared God from his infancy, and kept his commandments, he repined not against God because the evil of blindness had befallen him,
14 | but continued immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks
15 to God, all the days of his life. | For as the kings insulted over

2, 6: A reference to Amos 8, 10.
2, 15: *Kings:* this implies that Job's three friends were princes in their respective lands.

holy Job, so his relations and kinsmen mocked at his life, saying: | Where is your hope, for which you gave alms, and buried the dead? | But Tobias rebuked them, saying: Speak not so. | For we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from him.

Now Anna his wife went daily to weaving work, and she brought home what she could get for their living by the labor of her hands. | Whereby it came to pass that she received a young kid, and brought it home. | And when her husband heard it bleating, he said: Take heed, lest perhaps it be stolen. Restore it to its owners, for it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that comes by theft. | At these words his wife being angry answered: It is evident your hope has come to nothing, and your alms now appear. | And with these and other such like words she upbraided him.

3

The Prayer of Tobias Then Tobias sighed, and began to pray with tears, | saying: You are just, O Lord, and all your judgments are just; and all your ways mercy, and truth, and judgment. | And now, O Lord, think of me, and take not revenge of my sins: neither remember my offenses, nor those of my parents, | for we have not obeyed your commandments. Therefore are we delivered to spoil, and to captivity and death, and are made a fable, and a reproach to all nations, among which you have scattered us. | And now, O Lord, great are your judgments, because we have not done according to your precepts, and have not walked sincerely before you. | And now, O Lord, do with me according to your will, and command my spirit to be received in peace: for it is better for me to die, than to live.

Now it happened on the same day that Sara daughter of Raguel, in Rages a city of the Medes, received a reproach from one of her father's servant maids, | because she had been given to seven husbands, and a devil named Asmodeus had killed them, at their first going in unto her. | So when she reproved the maid for her fault, she answered her, saying: May we never see son, or daughter of yours upon the earth, you murderer of your husbands. | Will you kill me also, as you have already

3, 7: *Rages:* see 5, 8 n.

3, 8: *Seven husbands:* may be a symbolic number for many husbands. *Asmodeus:* the second part of the name comes from the name of a demon in Persian mythology; the derivation of the first part is disputed.

killed seven husbands? At these words she went into an upper chamber of her house, and for three days and three nights did
11 neither eat nor drink. | But continuing in prayer with tears, she besought God that he would deliver her from this reproach.

12 ***Sara's Prayer*** And it came to pass on the third day, when
13 she was making an end of her prayer, blessing the Lord, | she said: Blessed is your name, O God of our fathers: who when you have been angry, will show mercy, and in the time of tribu-
14 lation will forgive the sins of them that call upon you. | To
15 you, O Lord, I turn my face, to you I direct my eyes. | I beg, O Lord, that you loose me from the bond of this reproach, or else
16 take me away from the earth. | You know, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and have kept my soul clean from all
17 lust. | Never have I joined myself with them that play: neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in lightness.
18 | But a husband I consented to take, with your fear, not with
19 | my lust. And either I was unworthy of them, or they perhaps were not worthy of me: because perhaps you have kept me for
20.21 another man: | for your counsel is not in man's power. | But of this every one is sure who worships you: that his life, if it be under trial, shall be crowned, and if it be under tribulation, it shall be delivered, and if it be under correction, it shall be
22 allowed to come to your mercy: for you are not delighted in our being lost: because after a storm you make a calm, and after
23 tears and weeping you pour in joyfulness. | Be your name, O God of Israel, blessed for ever.
24 At that time the prayers of them both were heard in the sight
25 of the glory of the most high God. | And the holy angel of the Lord, Raphael, was sent to heal them both, whose prayers at one time were re-rehearsed in the sight of the Lord.

4

1 ***Tobias Counsels His Son*** Therefore when Tobias thought that his prayer was heard that he might die, he called to him
2 Tobias his son. | And he said to him: Hear, my son, the words of my mouth and lay them as a foundation in your heart. |
3 When God shall take my soul, you shall bury my body: and
4 you shall honor your mother all the days of her life. | For you must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for
5 you in her womb. | And when she also shall have ended the
6 time of her life, bury her by me. | And all the days of your life have God in your mind. And take heed you never consent

3, 17: *Play:* sensually.

to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord our God.
7 | Give alms out of your substance, and turn not away your face
from any poor person: for so it shall come to pass that the face
8 of the Lord shall not be turned from you. | According to your
9 ability be merciful. | If you have much, give abundantly; if you
10 have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little. | For
thus you store up to yourself a good reward for the day of
11 necessity. | Because alms deliver from all sin and from death,
12 and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness. | Alms shall be
a great confidence before the most high God, to all them that
give it.
13 Take heed to keep yourself, my son, from all fornication: and
14 besides your wife never endure to know a crime. | Never suffer
pride to reign in your mind, or in your words: for from it all
15 perdition took its beginning. | If any man has done any work
for you, immediately pay him his hire: and let not the wages
16 of your hired servant stay with you at all. | See that you never
do to another what you would hate to have done to you by
17 another. | Eat your bread with the hungry and the needy: and
18 with your garments cover the naked. | Lay out your bread and
your wine upon the burial of a just man: and do not eat and
19 drink thereof with the wicked. | Seek counsel always of a wise
20 man. | Bless God at all times: and desire of him to direct your
ways, and that all your counsels may abide in him.
21 I tell you also, my son, that I lent ten talents of silver, while
you were yet a child, to Gabelus in Rages, a city of the Medes,
22 and I have a note of his hand with me. | Now therefore in-
quire how you may go to him, and receive of him the foresaid
23 sum of money, and restore to him the note of his hand. | Fear
not, my son: we lead indeed a poor life; but we shall have many
good things, if we fear God, and depart from all sin, and do
that which is good.

5

1 ***Young Tobias Seeks a Guide*** Then Tobias answered
his father, and said: I will do all things, father, which you have
2 commanded me. | But how I shall get this money, I cannot
tell. He does not know me, and I do not know him. What token
shall I give him? Nor did I ever know the way which leads
3 there. | Then his father answered him, and said: I have a note

4, 7: *Face of the Lord . . . you:* you will not lose God's favor.
4, 18: One of several interpretations understands this as a recommendation to partake in the customary funeral feasts to console the

of his hand with me, which when you shall show it to him, he
4 will presently pay. | But go now, and seek out some faithful
man, to go with you for his hire: that you may receive it, while
5 I yet live. | Then Tobias going forth, found a beautiful young
man, standing girded, and as it were ready to walk.

6 ***The Angel Raphael*** And not knowing that he was an
angel of God, he saluted him, and said: From where are you,
7 good young man? | But he answered: Of the children of Is-
rael. And Tobias said to him: Do you know the way that leads
8 to the country of the Medes? | And he answered: I know it,
and I have often walked through all the ways thereof; and I
have abode with Gabelus our brother, who dwells at Rages a
city of the Medes, which is situated in the mount of Ecbatana.
9 | And Tobias said to him: Stay for me, I beseech you, till I
tell these same things to my father.
10 Then Tobias going in told all these things to his father. Upon
which his father, being in admiration, desired that he would
11 come in unto him. | So going in he saluted him, and said: Joy
12 be to you always. | And Tobias said: What manner of joy shall
be to me, who sits in darkness, and sees not the light of heaven?
13 | And the young man said to him: Be of good courage; your
14 cure from God is at hand. | And Tobias said to him: Can you
conduct my son to Gabelus at Rages, a city of the Medes? And
15 when you shall return, I will pay you your hire. | And the
angel said to him: I will conduct him there and bring him back
16 to you. | And Tobias said to him: I pray you, tell me, of what
17 family, or what tribe are you? And Raphael the angel answered:
Do you seek the family of him that you hire, or the hired servant
18 himself to go with your son? | But lest I should make you un-
19 easy, I am Azarias, the son of the great Ananias. | And Tobias
answered: You are of a great family. But I pray you be not
20 angry that I desired to know your family. | And the angel said
to him: I will lead your son safe, and bring him to you again
21 safe. | And Tobias answering, said: May you have a good
journey; and God be with you in your way; and his angel ac-

5, 8: *Rages a city of the Medes . . . Ecbatana:* "Rages," the city of Gabelus (1, 16f; 9, 3), is the modern Rai a few miles south of Teheran, Iran. "Ecbatana," city of Sara and Raguel, also called Rages in 3, 7; 6, 11, is the modern Hamadan (Iran), 180 miles southwest of Rai. These geographical facts do not accord with the text which situates Rages at the mount of Ecbatana. But the writer was writing fiction not strict history.

5, 18: There is no need to justify an angel's lie, if we understand that the writer is telling an edifying story.

5, 21: See a similar prayer in Gn 24, 7. 40.

22 company you. | Then all things being ready, that were to be carried in their journey, Tobias bade his father and his mother farewell: and they set out both together.
23 And when they had departed, his mother began to weep, and to say: You have taken the staff of our old age, and sent him
24 away from us. | I wish the money for which you have sent him,
25 had never been. | For our poverty was sufficient for us, that we
26 might account it as riches, that we saw our son. | And Tobias said to her: Weep not. Our son will arrive there safe, and will
27 return safe to us; and your eyes shall see him. | For I believe that the good angel of God does accompany him, and does order all things well that are done about him, so that he shall return
28 to us with joy. | At these words the mother ceased weeping, and held her peace.

6

1 ***The Angel Advises Young Tobias*** And Tobias went forward; and the dog followed him. And he lodged the first night
2 by the river of Tigris. | And he went out to wash his feet, and
3 behold a monstrous fish came up to devour him. | And Tobias being afraid of him, cried out with a loud voice, saying: Sir, he
4 comes upon me. | And the angel said to him: Take him by the gill, and draw him to you. And when he had done so, he drew him out upon the land; and he began to pant before his feet. |
5 Then the angel said to him: Take out the entrails of this fish, and lay up his heart, and his gall, and his liver for you; for
6 these are necessary for useful medicines. | And when he had done so, he roasted the flesh thereof, and they took it with them in the way. The rest they salted as much as might serve them, till they came to Rages the city of the Medes.
7 Then Tobias asked the angel, and said to him: I beseech you, brother Azarias, tell me what remedies are these things good for,
8 which you bid me to keep of the fish? | And the angel answering, said to him: If you put a little piece of its heart upon coals, the smoke thereof drives away all kind of devils, either from
9 man or from woman, so that they come no more to them. | And the gall is good for anointing the eyes, in which there is a white speck: and they shall be cured.
10 And Tobias said to him: Where will you that we lodge? |
11 And the angel answering, said: Here is one whose name is Raguel, a near kinsman of your tribe. And he has a daughter named Sara: but he has no son nor any other daughter besides

6, 8: In 8, 2 Tobias remembers this. See Essay of Khons in the Introduction.
6, 11: Raguel lives at Ecbatana, alluded to in 5, 8 n.

her. | All his substance is due to you, and you must take her
to wife. | Ask her therefore of her father, and he will give her
to you as wife.
Then Tobias answered, and said: I hear that she has been
given to seven husbands, and they all died. Moreover I have
heard, that a devil killed them. | Now I am afraid, lest the
same thing should happen to me also; and whereas I am the
only child of my parents, I should bring down their old age with
sorrow to hell. | Then the angel Raphael said to him: Hear me,
and I will show you who they are, over whom the devil can
prevail: | They who in such manner receive matrimony, as to
shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give
themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule which have not
understanding, over them the devil has power. | But you, when
you shall take her, go into the chamber, and for three days keep
yourself continent from her, and give yourself to nothing else
but to prayers with her. | And on that night lay the liver of the
fish on the fire: and the devil shall be driven away. | But the
second night, you shall be admitted into the society of the holy
Patriarchs. | And the third night, you shall obtain a blessing
that sound children may be born of you. | And when the third
night is past, you shall take the virgin with the fear of the
Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust: that in
the seed of Abraham you may obtain a blessing in children.

7

Tobias Asks Sara in Marriage And they went to Raguel,
and Raguel received them with joy. | And Raguel looking
upon Tobias, said to Anna his wife: How like is this young
man to my cousin! | And when he had spoken these words, he
said: From where are you, young men, our brethren? | But
they said: We are of the tribe of Nephtali, of the captivity of
Ninive. | And Raguel said to them: Do you know Tobias my
brother? And they said: We know him. | And when he was
speaking many good things of him, the angel said to Raguel:
Tobias, concerning whom you are inquiring, is this young man's
father. | And Raguel went to him, and kissed him with tears;
and weeping upon his neck, said: A blessing be upon you, my
son, because you are the son of a good and most virtuous man.
And Anna his wife, and Sara their daughter wept.
And after they had spoken, Raguel commanded a sheep to be

6, 15: *To hell:* to the abode of *all* the dead, both good and evil.
6, 20: Many scholars exclude this verse from the original text.

killed, and a feast to be prepared. And when he desired them to
10 sit down to dinner, | Tobias said: I will not eat nor drink here
this day, unless you first grant me my petition, and promise to
11 give me Sara your daughter. | Now when Raguel heard this,
he was afraid, knowing what had happened to those seven
husbands that went in unto her. And he began to fear lest it
might happen to him also in like manner. And as he was in
12 suspense, and gave no answer to his petition, | the angel said
to him: Be not afraid to give her to this man, for to him who
fears God is your daughter due to be his wife. Therefore an-
13 other could not have her. | Then Raguel said: I doubt not
14 but God has regarded my prayers and tears in his sight. | And
I believe he has therefore made you come to me, that this maid
might be married to one of her own kindred, according to the
law of Moses: and now doubt not but I will give her to you. |
15 And taking the right hand of his daughter, he gave it into the
right hand of Tobias, saying: The God of Abraham, and the
God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, be with you. And may he
join you together, and fulfill his blessing in you.
16 And taking paper they made a writing of the marriage. |
17.18 And afterward they made merry, blessing God. | And Raguel
called to him Anna his wife, and bade her prepare another
19 chamber. | And she brought Sara her daughter into it, and she
20 wept. | And she said to her: Be of good cheer, my daughter.
The Lord of heaven give you joy for the trouble you have
undergone.

8

1 ***Tobias and Sara Saved from the Devil*** And after they
2 had supped, they brought in the young man to her. | And
Tobias, remembering the angel's word, took out of his bag part
3 of the liver, and laid it upon burning coals. | Then the angel
Raphael took the devil, and bound him in the desert of upper
4 Egypt. | Then Tobias exhorted the virgin, and said to her:
Sara, arise, and let us pray to God today, and tomorrow, and

7, 12: The author gives the symbolic meaning of why the husbands died.

7, 14: Some Catholic scholars believe that the writer's lesson here is: the demon is God's instrument in punishing those who disobey His marriage laws. The "seven husbands" were not supposed to marry Sara because they would be violating the law spoken of in Nm 36, 8: "Therefore, every daughter who inherits property in any of the Israelite tribes shall marry someone belonging to a clan of her own ancestral tribe, in order that all the Israelites may remain in possession of their own ancestral heritage."

8, 3: It was according to the ideas of the day that devils inhabited deserts.

the next day: because for these three nights we are joined to God. And when the third night is over, we will be in our own
5 wedlock. | For we are the children of saints: and we must not
6 be joined together like heathens that know not God. | So they both arose, and prayed earnestly both together that health
7 might be given them, | and Tobias said: Lord God of our fathers, may the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains, and the rivers, and all your creatures that are in them,
8 bless you. | You made Adam of the slime of the earth, and
9 you gave him Eve for a helper. | And now, Lord, you know that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which your name may be blessed for
10 ever and ever. | Sara also said: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us: and let us grow old both together in health.
11 And it came to pass about the cock-crowing, Raguel ordered his servants to be called for. And they went with him together
12 to dig a grave. | For he said: Lest perhaps it may have happened to him, in like manner as it did to the other seven hus-
13 bands, that went in unto her. | And when they had prepared
14 the pit, Raguel went back to his wife, and said to her: | Send one of your maids, and let her see if he is dead, that I may bury
15 him before it be day. | So she sent one of her maidservants, who went into the chamber, and found them safe and sound, sleeping both together.

16 ***Raguel and Anna Rejoice*** And returning she brought the good news. And Raguel and Anna his wife blessed the Lord, |
17 and said: We bless you, O Lord God of Israel, because it has
18 not happened as we suspected. | For you have shown mercy to us, and shut out from us the enemy that persecuted us. |
19 And you have taken pity upon two only children. Make them, O Lord, bless you more fully: and to offer up to you a sacrifice of your praise, and of their health, that all nations may know: you alone are God in all the earth.
20 And immediately Raguel commanded his servants to fill up
21 the pit they had made, before it was day. | And he spoke to his wife to make ready a feast, and prepare all kind of pro-
22 visions that are necessary for such as go on a journey. | He caused also two fat kine, and four wethers to be killed, and a banquet to be prepared for all his neighbors, and all his friends.
23 | And Raguel adjured Tobias, to abide with him two weeks. |
24 And of all things which Raguel possessed, he gave one half to

8, 22: *Wethers:* castrated rams.

Tobias: and made a writing, that the half that remained should after their decease come also to Tobias.

9

1 ***The Angel Raphael Goes to Gabelus*** Then Tobias called the angel to him, whom he took to be a man, and said to
2 him: Brother Azarias, I pray you hearken to my words: | If I should give myself to be your servant, I should not make a
3 worthy return for your care. | However, I beseech you, to take with you beasts and servants, and to go to Gabelus, to Rages the city of the Medes: and to restore to him his note of hand, and receive of him the money, and desire him to come to my
4 wedding. | For you know that my father is numbering the days; and if I stay one day more, his soul will be afflicted. |
5 And indeed you see how Raguel has adjured me, whose adjuring I cannot despise.
6 Then Raphael took four of Raguel's servants, and two camels, and went to Rages the city of the Medes: and finding Gabelus, gave him his note of hand, and received of him
7 all the money. | And he told him concerning Tobias, the son of Tobias, all that had been done: and made him come with
8 him to the wedding. | And when he came into Raguel's house he found Tobias sitting at the table. And he leaped up, and they kissed each other. And Gabelus wept, and blessed God, |
9 and said: The God of Israel bless you: because you are the son of a very good and just man that fears God, and does alms-
10 deeds. | And may a blessing come upon your wife and upon
11 your parents. | And may you see your children, and your children's children, unto the third and fourth generation. And may your seed be blessed by the God of Israel, who reigns for ever
12 and ever. | And when all had said, Amen, they went to the feast: but the marriage feast they celebrated also with the fear of the Lord.

10

1 ***The Lament of Tobias' Parents*** But as Tobias made longer stay upon occasion of the marriage, Tobias his father was solicitous, saying: Why do you think my son does tarry, or why
2 is he detained there? | Is Gabelus dead, do you think, and no
3 man will pay him the money? | And he began to be exceeding sad, both he and Anna his wife with him. And they began both to weep together, because their son did not return to them on
4 the day appointed. | But his mother wept and was quite dis-

9, 3: *Rages:* see 5, 8 n.

consolate, and said: Woe, woe to me! My son, why did we send you to go to a strange country, the light of our eyes, the staff of our old age, the comfort of our life, the hope of our posterity? | 5 We having all things together in you alone, ought not to have 6 let you go from us. | And Tobias said to her: Hold your peace, and be not troubled: our son is safe. That man with whom we 7 sent him is very trusty. | Yet she could by no means be comforted, but daily running out looked round about, and went into all the ways by which there seemed any hope he might return, that she might if possible see him coming afar off.

8 But Raguel said to his son-in-law: Stay here, and I will send a messenger to Tobias your father, that you are in health. | 9 And Tobias said to him: I know that my father and mother now count the days, and their spirit is grievously afflicted within 10 them. | And when Raguel had pressed Tobias with many words, and he by no means would hearken to him, he delivered Sara unto him, and half of all his substance in menservants and womenservants, in cattle, in camels, and in kine, and in much money, and sent him away safe and joyful from him, | 11 saying: The holy angel of the Lord be with you in your journey, and bring you through safe, and that you may find all things well about your parents, and my eyes may see your children be- 12 fore I die. | And the parents taking their daughter kissed her, 13 and let her go, | admonishing her to honor her father and mother in-law, to love her husband, to take care of the family, to govern the house, and to behave herself irreprehensibly.

11

1 ***Tobias Returns*** And as they were returning they came to Charan, which is in the midway to Ninive, the eleventh day. | 2 And the angel said: Brother Tobias, you know how you left 3 your father. | If it pleases you, therefore, let us go before: and let the family follow softly after us, together with your wife, and 4 with the beasts. | And as this their going pleased him, Raphael said to Tobias: Take with you of the gall of the fish, for it will be necessary. So Tobias took some of that gall and departed. | 5 But Anna sat beside the way daily, on the top of a hill, from 6 whence she might see afar off. | And while she watched his coming from that place, she saw him afar off, and presently perceived it was her son coming. And returning she told her husband, saying: Behold your son is coming.

7 And Raphael said to Tobias: As soon as you shall come into your house, forthwith adore the Lord your God; and giving 8 thanks to him, go to your father and kiss him. | And immediately anoint his eyes with this gall of the fish, which you carry

with you. For be assured that his eyes shall be presently opened, and your father shall see the light of heaven, and shall rejoice in the sight of you.

9 Then the dog, which had been with them in the way, ran before; and coming as if he had brought the news, showed his
10 joy by his fawning and wagging his tail. | And his father who was blind, rising up, began to run, stumbling with his feet: and
11 giving a servant his hand, went to meet his son. | And receiving him kissed him, as did also his wife. And they began to
12 weep for joy. | And when they had adored God, and given him thanks, they sat down together.

13 ***Tobias Restores His Father's Sight*** Then Tobias taking
14 of the gall of the fish, anointed his father's eyes. | And he stayed about half an hour: and a white skin began to come
15 out of his eyes, like the skin of an egg. | And Tobias took hold of it, and drew it from his eyes. And immediately he recovered
16 his sight. | And they glorified God both he and his wife and all
17 that knew him. | And Tobias said: I bless you, O Lord God of Israel, because you have chastised me, and you have saved me. And behold I see Tobias my son.

18 And after seven days Sara his son's wife, and all the family arrived safe, and the cattle, and the camels, and an abundance of money of his wife's: and that money also which he had re-
19 ceived of Gabelus. | And he told his parents all the benefits of God, which he had done to him by the man that conducted him.
20 | And Achior and Nabath the kinsmen of Tobias came, rejoicing for Tobias, and congratulating with him for all the good
21 things that God had done for him. | And for seven days they feasted and rejoiced all with great joy.

12

1 ***Raphael Makes Himself Known*** Then Tobias called to him his son, and said to him: What can we give to this holy
2 man, that has come with you. | Tobias answering, said to his father: Father, what wages shall we give him? Or what can be
3 worthy of his benefits? | He conducted me and brought me

11, 13: This reflects the ancient belief that the gall of fish was a curative of diseases and eye irritations.

11, 20: This is the only quotation from the Story (or Wisdom) of Ahikar in the Douay version (which follows the Latin Vulgate). In other versions of Tobias, Ahikar appears in 1, 22; 2, 10; 11, 18; 14, 10 (some Greek versions have a long reference to Ahikar's story here). In these other versions the author of Tobias changes Ahikar into the nephew of old Tobias. (See Introduction to Tobias.)

safe again, he received the money of Gabelus, he caused me to have my wife, and he chased from her the evil spirit. He gave joy to her parents, myself he delivered from being devoured by the fish, you also he has made to see the light of heaven; and we are filled with all good things through him. What can we
4 give him sufficient for these things? | But I beseech you, my father, to desire him, that he would vouchsafe to accept one half of all things that have been brought.
5 So the father and the son calling him, took him aside, and began to desire him that he would vouchsafe to accept half of
6 all things that they had brought. | Then he said to them secretly: Bless the God of heaven, give glory to him in the sight
7 of all that live, because he has shown his mercy to you. | For it is good to hide the secret of a king: but honorable to reveal
8 and confess the works of God. | Prayer is good with fasting
9 and alms: more than to lay up treasures of gold; | for alms delivers from death: and the same is that which purges away
10 sins, and makes to find mercy and life everlasting. | But they that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul.
11 I discover then the truth unto you: and I will not hide the
12 secret from you. | When you prayed with tears and buried the dead, and left your dinner, and hid the dead by day in your house, and buried them by night, I offered your prayer to the
13 Lord. | And because you were acceptable to God, it was neces-
14 sary that temptation should prove you. | And now the Lord has sent me to heal you, and to deliver Sara your son's wife
15 from the devil: | for I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord.
16 And when they had heard these things, they were troubled, and being seized with fear they fell upon the ground on their
17 face. | And the angel said to them: Peace be to you, fear not. |
18 For when I was with you, I was there by the will of God: bless
19 him, and sing praises to him. | I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you: but I use an invisible meat and drink, which
20 cannot be seen by men. | It is time therefore that I return to him that sent me: but you bless your God, and publish all his
21 wonderful works. | And when he had said these things, he was
22 taken from their sight, and they could see him no more. | Then they, lying prostrate for three hours upon their face, blessed God: and rising up, they told all his wonderful works.

12, 15: Of the seven angels, the Bible names two others besides Raphael, namely, Gabriel and Michael, both found in Daniel and the New Testament. The relationship between angels in other religions and those of the Old Testament is still not clear to scholars.

13

1 ***Tobias, the Father, Praises God*** And Tobias the elder opening his mouth, blessed the Lord, and said: You are great,
2 O Lord, for ever, and your kingdom is unto all ages. | For you scourge, and you save; you lead down to hell, and you bring up
3 again; and there is none that can escape your hand. | Give glory to the Lord, you children of Israel: and praise him in the sight
4 of the Gentiles: | because he has therefore scattered you among the Gentiles, who know him not, that you may declare his wonderful works, and make them know that there is no other al-
5 mighty God besides him. | He has chastised us for our iniqui-
6 ties; and he will save us for his own mercy. | See then what he has done with us, and with fear and trembling give glory to him:
7 and extol the eternal King of worlds in your works. | As for me, I will praise him in the land of my captivity: because he
8 has shown his majesty toward a sinful nation. | Be converted, therefore, all you sinners, and do justice before God, believing
9 that he will show his mercy to you. And I and my soul will
10 rejoice in him. | Bless the Lord, all his elect: keep days of joy, and give glory to him.
11 Jerusalem, city of God, the Lord has chastised you for the
12 works of your hands. | Give glory to the Lord for your good things, and bless the God eternal: that he may rebuild his tabernacle in you, and may call back all the captives to you: and
13 you may rejoice for ever and ever. | You shall shine with a glorious light: and all the ends of the earth shall worship you. |
14 Nations from afar shall come to you: and shall bring gifts: and shall adore the Lord in you: and shall esteem your land as
15 holy. | For they shall call upon the great name in you. |
16 They shall be cursed that shall despise you: and they shall be condemned that shall blaspheme you: and blessed shall they
17 be that shall build you up. | But you shall rejoice in your children: because they shall all be blessed, and shall be gathered
18 together to the Lord. | Blessed are all they that love you, and
19 that rejoice in your peace. | My soul, bless you the Lord: because the Lord our God has delivered Jerusalem his city from
20 all her troubles. | Happy shall I be if there shall remain of my
21 seed, to see the glory of Jerusalem. | The gates of Jerusalem shall be built of sapphire, and of emerald: and all the walls

13, 1-23: The Canticle of Tobias is a thanksgiving hymn (vv. 1-10); while vv. 11-23 address Jerusalem. A prophet, speaking for the exiles, expresses the ideal Jerusalem to which they hope to return.

13, 2: *You lead down to hell and bring up again:* also found in 1 Sm 2, 6; and Wis 16, 13, where the meaning is given: "You have dominion over life and death." *Your hand:* your power.

22 thereof round about of precious stones. | All its streets shall be
paved with white and clean stones: and Alleluia shall be sung
23 in its streets. | Blessed be the Lord, who has exalted it: and may
he reign over it for ever and ever. Amen.

14

1 ***The Elder Tobias Dies*** And the words of Tobias were
ended. And after Tobias was restored to his sight, he lived two
and forty years, and saw the children of his grandchildren. |
2 And after he had lived a hundred and two years, he was buried
3 honorably in Ninive. | For he was six and fifty years old when
he lost the sight of his eyes, and sixty when he recovered it
4 again. | And the rest of his life was in joy, and with great
increase of the fear of God he departed in peace.
5 And at the hour of his death he called unto him his son
Tobias and his children, seven young men, his grandsons, and
6 said to them: | The destruction of Ninive is at hand: for the
word of the Lord must be fulfilled. And our brethren, that are
scattered abroad from the land of Israel, shall return to it. |
7 And all the land thereof that is desert shall be filled with people,
and the house of God which is burned in it, shall again be re-
8 built: and all that fear God shall return to it. | And the Gen-
tiles shall leave their idols, and shall come into Jerusalem, and
9 shall dwell in it. | And all the kings of the earth shall rejoice
10 in it, adoring the King of Israel. | Hearken therefore, my chil-
dren, to your father: serve the Lord in truth, and seek to do
11 the things that please him. | And command your children that
they do justice and almsdeeds, and that they be mindful of God,
and bless him at all times in truth, and with all their power. |
12 And now, children, hear me, and do not stay here: but as soon
as you shall bury your mother by me in one sepulcher, without
13 delay direct your steps to depart from here, | for I see that
its iniquity will bring it to destruction.

14 ***Young Tobias Departs from Ninive*** And it came to pass
that after the death of his mother, Tobias departed out of Nin-
ive with his wife, and children, and children's children, and

14, 1: *He lived two and forty years:* even when all the manuscripts and translations are compared, it is too difficult to learn Tobias' chronology.

14, 6-7: According to the apocalyptic style of these verses, written in the third and fourth centuries B.C., the author teaches past history, e.g., the fall of Ninive in 612 B.C., by "foretelling" it. This style is in conformity with the way the accounts of the death of the patriarchs are written in Genesis.

15 returned to his father and mother in-law. | And he found
them in health in a good old age: and he took care of them,
and he closed their eyes. And all the inheritance of Raguel's
house came to him: and he saw his children's children to the fifth
16 generation. | And after he had lived ninety-nine years in the
17 fear of the Lord, with joy they buried him. | And all his kin-
dred, and all his generation continued in good life, and in holy
conversation, so that they were acceptable both to God, and to
men, and to all that dwelt in the land.

14, 15: *Raguel's house:* in Ecbatana. See 5, 8 n.

THE BOOK OF JUDITH

INTRODUCTION

Most scholars maintain the view that an anonymous Palestinian author wrote the story of Judith, probably in Hebrew, at the end of the second century or the beginning of the first century B.C. The original Hebrew text is lost but it survives in three divergent Greek editions. This divergence accounts for the variety of translations into modern languages. However, the basic story is the same. Tiny Israel is confronted with a superior invading enemy (chs. 1—7) who is struck dead by "the hand of Juda" (chs. 8—16).

The reader of Judith easily observes historical and geographical inaccuracies. Nabuchodonosor, e.g., is called king of the Assyrians, but historically he was king of the neo-Babylonians. He began to reign about eight years after the Assyrian empire fell. In the Judith story, Nabuchodonosor, whose general is a Persian named Holofernes, defeats Arphaxad, an unknown king of Media (1, 5). [An equivalent distortion of history in our times would be to say: Kaiser Wilhelm II, emperor of the French, defeated an unknown Danish king. The Kaiser's commander in chief was General Pershing.]

The geographical inaccuracies are no less glaring. The route of Holofernes' campaigns defy the experts. Bethulia, the main city of the story, is carefully located but cannot be identified in the district where the author places it. Scholars believe that these inaccuracies would even be found in the original Hebrew text if it were extant. The inaccuracies prompt the quest for the type of literature in which Judith is written.

Hardly anyone today reads Judith as strict history. Some believe that there is an historical nucleus, embellished by various historical periods. But the existence of a precise episode forming the historical nucleus is strongly doubted. The most probable episode proposed is an expedition against Egypt by a Persian general, Holofernes, under his king, Artaxerxes III (358-336 B.C.), and some scholars believe that the author spun his Judith story from this verifiable historical incident. Another possible episode proposed is Assurbanipal's campaign in 648 B.C. against Phoenicia and Arabia. Still others believe that the author of Judith re-edited the story of Jahel, the heroine who spiked the head of Sisara, the general of the enemy forces (Jgs 4, 11-24).

Most scholars today hold that the writer had no particular historical episode in mind around which he wove his Judith story, and that he had only a semblance of an historical background. The writer did not choose the historical background of one period, e.g., the eighth to the seventh century Assyria (as in Tobias), or fifth century Persia (as in Esther). The texture of his historical backdrop was formed from Assyrian, Babylonian, Median, and Persian periods. Apparently, the writer deliberately and frequently twisted history and geography to direct his reading audience toward his religious message without historical distractions. His message seems to be: no matter how formidable the enemy is, God can crush him by choosing the most feeble of instru-

ments—"the hand of a woman" (9, 15). The unobtrusively recurring "hand" motif seems to bear out this religious lesson. Nabuchodonosor, through his general Holofernes, is represented as a personification of all-overwhelming human forces that are anti-God (e.g., 5, 29). Judith is a representation of the people of God. Her very name seems to symbolize it, for it means "The Jewess" (see 8, 1 n). It is odd that Judith and her exploits are not mentioned in any other biblical book. However, even if Judith never existed, the writer's inspired message would not lose one sparkle of its luster.

Those advocating the view that there is no particular historical episode, say: even if there had been one, the writer has obscured it in order to show that he is not interested in history but in theology. There is a variety of finer opinions among scholars in recent and present debates. Questions are raised whether it is an allegory, a parable, or a different kind of midrash. One reason why modern scholars have not settled on a definitive opinion is that there is no modern parallel to the type of literature as we have it in the Book of Judith.

Although the Jews and Protestants do not consider Judith an inspired book, the former read it in their liturgical feast of dedication, instituted by Judas Machabee, to celebrate the purification of the temple and the liberation of the nation.

Catholics use Judith in their liturgy, especially in some Marian Masses, e.g., the Epistle of the Feast of the Assumption. This is in harmonious continuity with the belief of some of the Fathers of the Church that Judith was foreshadowing the Blessed Virgin. Just as Judith cut off the head of Holofernes, so did Mary crush the head of the serpent. Just as the people of Bethulia praised Judith for generations (13, 25), so will people praise Mary for generations to come.

Main divisions of the Book of Judith are:

1. The Assyrian Invasion, 1—3
2. The Siege of Bethulia, 4—7
3. Judith's Liberation of Bethulia, 8—15
4. The Canticle of Judith, 16, 1-21
5. Victory Celebration, 16, 22-31

1

1 ***Nabuchodonosor's Victory over Arphaxad*** Now Arphaxad king of the Medes had brought many nations under his dominions: and he built a very strong city, which he called
2 Ecbatana, | of stones squared and hewed. He made the walls thereof seventy cubits broad, and thirty cubits high, and the towers thereof he made a hundred cubits high. But on the square of them, each side was extended the space of twenty feet. |
3 And he made the gates thereof according to the height of the

1, 1: *Arphaxad king of the Medes:* scholars consider this unknown king to be purposely invented by the author in accordance with his literary form. *Ecbatana:* see Tb 5, 8 n.

towers. | And he glorified as a mighty one in the force of his army and in the glory of his chariots.
Now in the twelfth year of his reign, Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians, who reigned in Ninive the great city, fought against Arphaxad and overcame him, | in the great plain which he called Ragua, about the Euphrates, and the Tigris, and the Jadason, in the plain of Erioch the king of the Elicians.
Then was the kingdom of Nabuchodonosor exalted, and his heart was elevated. And he sent to all that dwelt in Cilicia and Damascus, and Libanus, | and to the nations that are in Carmelus, and Cedar, and to the inhabitants of Galilee in the great plain of Asdrelon, | and to all that were in Samaria, and beyond the river Jordan even to Jerusalem, and all the land of Jesse till you come to the borders of Ethiopia. | To all these Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians, sent messengers. | But they all with one mind refused, and sent them back empty, and rejected them without honor. | Then king Nabuchodonosor being angry against all that land, swore by his throne and kingdom that he would revenge himself of all those countries.

2

Holofernes Leads Nabuchodonosor's Campaigns In the thirteenth year of the reign of Nabuchodonosor, the two and twentieth day of the first month, the word was given out in the house of Nabuchodonosor, king of the Assyrians, that he would revenge himself. | And he called all the ancients, and all the governors, and his officers of war, and communicated to them the secret of his counsel. | And he said that his thoughts were to bring all the earth under his empire. | And when this saying pleased them all, Nabuchodonosor, the king, called Holofernes the general of his armies, | and said to him: Go out against all the kingdoms of the west, and against them especially that despised my commandment. | Your eye shall not spare any kingdom: and all the strong cities you shall bring under my yoke.
Then Holofernes called the captains, and officers of the power of the Assyrians: and he mustered men for the expedition, as the king commanded him, a hundred and twenty thousand fighting men on foot, and twelve thousand archers, horsemen. | And he made all his warlike preparations to go before

1, 5: *Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians . . . Ninive:* see Introduction for this inaccuracy.
1, 6: The geography here is inexact.
2, 4: *Holofernes:* a Persian who lived about 350 B.C.

with a multitude of innumerable camels, with all provisions sufficient for the armies in abundance, and herds of oxen, and
9 flocks of sheep, without number. | He appointed corn to be
10 prepared out of all Syria in his passage. | But gold and silver
11 he took out of the king's house in great abundance. | And he went forth he and all the army, with the chariots, and horsemen, and archers, who covered the face of the earth, like lo-
12 custs. | And when he had passed through the borders of the Assyrians, he came to the great mountains of Ange, which are on the left of Cilicia: and he went up to all their castles, and took all the strong places.

13 ***War of Destruction*** And he took by assault the renowned city of Melothus, and pillaged all the children of Tharsis, and the children of Ismahel, who were over against the
14 face of the desert, and on the south of the land of Cellon. | And he passed over the Euphrates, and came into Mesopotamia: and he forced all the stately cities that were there, from the
15 torrent of Mambre, till one comes to the sea. | And he took the borders thereof, from Cilicia to the coasts of Japheth, which
16 are toward the south. | And he carried away all the children of Madian, and stripped them of all their riches, and all that
17 resisted him he slew with the edge of the sword. | And after these things he went down into the plains of Damascus in the days of the harvest, and he set all the corn on fire, and he
18 caused all the trees and vineyards to be cut down. | And the fear of them fell upon all the inhabitants of the land.

3

1 ***Submission of Many to Holofernes*** Then the kings and the princes of all the cities and provinces, of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Syria, Sobol, and Libya, and Cilicia sent their am-
2 bassadors, who coming to Holofernes, said: | Let your indignation toward us cease: for it is better for us to live and serve Nabuchodonosor the great king, and be subject to you, than
3 to die and to perish, or suffer the miseries of slavery. | All our cities and our possessions, all mountains and hills, and fields, and herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep, and goats, and horses,

2, 12-15: The journey described in these verses defies experts in geography. The author may be deliberately twisting geography. See map "Campaigns" of Holofernes, p. 846.

2, 13: *Cellon:* an unknown place.

2, 15: *Japheth:* not a clear indication of location.

3, 1: The more correct reading is "Mesopotamian Syria" and "Syria of Sobah."


"CAMPAIGNS" OF HOLOFERNES (Jdt 2,7-3,15)
TURKEY
CILICIA
ASSYRIA
NINIVE (Point of Departure)
MESOPOTAMIA
SYRIA
ECBATANA (1,1)
Great Sea (Mediterranean)
LEBANON
DAMASCUS
EUPHRATES
TIGRIS
IRAN
BETHULIA
SAMARIA
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
JORDAN
IRAQ
BABYLONIA
EGYPT
ISRAEL
MOAB
AMMON
SAUDI ARABIA
MADIAN
PERSIAN GULF
N
The aimlessness of the Campaign routes show that the sacred author was not writing history. The map shows the boundaries of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, the present-day countries occupying ancient Palestine and Mesopotamia.
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and camels, and all our goods, and families are in your sight. |
4.3 Let all we have be subject to your law. | Both we and our
6 children are your servants. | Come to us a peaceable lord, and
use our service as it shall please you.
7 Then he came down from the mountains with horsemen, in
great power, and made himself master of every city, and all the
8 inhabitants of the land. | And from all the cities he took
9 auxiliaries, valiant men, and chosen for war. | And so great
a fear lay upon all those provinces that the inhabitants of all
the cities, both princes and nobles, as well as the people, went
10 out to meet him at his coming. | And received him with gar-
11 lands, and lights, and dances, and timbrels, and flutes. | And
though they did these things, they could not for all that miti-
12 gate the fierceness of his heart. | For he both destroyed their
13 cities, and cut down their groves. | For Nabuchodonosor the
king had commanded him to destroy all the gods of the earth,
that he only might be called god by those nations which could
14 be brought under him by the power of Holofernes. | And when
he had passed through all Syria, Sobal, and all Apamea, and all
Mesopotamia, he came to the Idumeans into the land of Ga-
15 baa, and he took possession of their cities, and stayed there
for thirty days in which days he commanded all the troops of
his army to be united.

4

1 ***The Children of Israel Prepare to Resist*** Then the chil-
dren of Israel, who dwelt in the land of Juda, hearing these
2 things, were exceedingly afraid of him. | Dread and horror
seized upon their minds, lest he should do the same to Jeru-
salem and to the temple of the Lord that he had done to other
3 cities and their temples. | And they sent into all Samaria round
about, as far as Jericho, and seized upon all the tops of the
4 mountains. | And they compassed their towns with walls, and
5 gathered together corn for provision for war. | And Eliachim
the priest wrote to all that were opposite Esdrelon, which
faces the great plain near Dothain, and to all by whom there
might be a passage of way, that they should take possession of
the ascents of the mountains, by which there might be any way
to Jerusalem, and should keep watch where the way was nar-
6 row between the mountains. | And the children of Israel did

3, 12: *Groves:* poles representing the goddess Asherah (Ashera).
3, 14: These strange places differ from the corresponding passage in the Greek translation.
4, 3: *Seized upon:* occupied.
4, 5: *Eliachim:* the same as Joachim in 15, 9.

7 as the priest of the Lord Eliachim had appointed them. | And
all the people cried to the Lord with great earnestness, and
they humbled their souls in fastings, and prayers, both they and
their wives.
8 And the priests put on haircloths, and they caused the lit-
tle children to lie prostrate before the temple of the Lord: and
9 the altar of the Lord they covered with haircloth. | And they
cried to the Lord the God of Israel with one accord, that their
children might not be made a prey, and their wives carried off,
and their cities destroyed, and their holy things profaned, and
10 that they might not be made a reproach to the Gentiles. | Then
Eliachim the high priest of the Lord went about all Israel and
11 spoke to them, saying: Know you that the Lord will hear your
prayers, if you continue with perseverance in fastings and
12 prayers in the sight of the Lord. | Remember Moses the serv-
ant of the Lord, who overcame Amalec that trusted in his own
strength, and in his power, and in his army, and in his shields,
and in his chariots, and in his horsemen, not by fighting with
13 the sword, but by holy prayers. | So shall all the enemies
of Israel be, if you persevere in this work which you have begun.
14 | So they, being moved by this exhortation of his, prayed to
15 the Lord, and continued in the sight of the Lord. | So that even
they who offered the holocausts to the Lord, offered the sacri-
fices to the Lord girded with haircloths, and with ashes upon
16 their head. | And they all begged of God with all their heart,
that he would visit his people Israel.

5

1 ***Holofernes Is Angered*** And it was told Holofernes the
general of the army of the Assyrians, that the children of Is-
rael prepared themselves to resist, and had shut up the ways
2 of the mountains. | And he was transported with exceeding
great fury and indignation, and he called all the princes of
3 Moab and the leaders of Ammon. | And he said to them: Tell
me what is this people that besets the mountains, or what are
their cities, and of what sort, and how great? Also what is their
power, or what is their multitude, or who is the king over their
4 warfare? | And why they above all that dwell in the east, have
despised us, and have not come out to meet us, that they might
receive us with peace?

5 ***Achior Informs Holofernes about the Israelites*** Then

4, 12: *Amalec:* a reference to Ex 17, 8ff.
5, 5: *Achior:* Ahikar, the pious pagan, reappears here. He sum-

Achior captain of all the children of Ammon answering, said: If you vouchsafe, my lord, to hear, I will tell the truth in your sight concerning this people, that dwells in the mountains. 6 And there shall not a false word come out of my mouth. | This 7 people is of the offspring of the Chaldeans. | They dwelt first in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of 8 their fathers, who were in the land of the Chaldeans. | Wherefore forsaking the ceremonies of their fathers, which consisted 9 in the worship of many gods, | they worshiped one God of heaven, who also commanded them to depart from there, and to dwell in Charan. And when there was a famine over all the land, they went down into Egypt, and there for four hundred years were so multiplied that the army of them could not be 10 numbered. | And when the king of Egypt oppressed them, and made slaves of them to labor in clay and brick, in the building of his cities, they cried to their Lord, and he struck the 11 whole land of Egypt with divers plagues. | And when the Egyptians had cast them out from them, and the plague had ceased from them, and they had a mind to take them again, and 12 bring them back to their service, | the God of heaven opened the sea to them in their flight, so that the waters were made to stand firm as a wall on either side, and they walked through 13 the bottom of the sea and passed it dry foot. | And when an innumerable army of the Egyptians pursued after them in that place, they were so overwhelmed with the waters that there was not one left, to tell what had happened to posterity.

14 And after they came out of the Red Sea, they abode in the deserts of mount Sinai, in which never man could dwell, or son 15 of man rested. | There bitter fountains were made sweet for them to drink, and for forty years they received food from heav- 16 en. | Wheresoever they went in, without bow and arrow and without shield and sword, their God fought for them and over- 17 came. | And there was no one that triumphed over this people, but when they departed from the worship of the Lord their 18 God. | But as often as besides their own God, they worshiped any other, they were given to spoil, and to the sword, and to re- 19 proach. | And as often as they were penitent for having revolted from the worship of their God, the God of heaven gave 20 them power to resist. | So they overthrew the king of the Chanaanites, and of the Jebusites, and of the Pherezites, and of the Hethites, and of the Hevites, and of the Amorrites, and all the

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marizes the history of the Jews. See *The Story of Ahikar* in the Introduction to the Book of Tobias.

5, 7: A reference to Gn 11, 31.

mighty ones in Hesebon, and they possessed their lands and their cities.

21 And as long as they sinned not in the sight of their God, it
22 was well with them: for their God hates iniquity. | And even some years ago when they had revolted from the way which God had given them to walk therein, they were destroyed in battles by many nations; and very many of them were led away
23 captive into a strange land. | But of late returning to the Lord their God, from the different places wherein they were scattered, they have come together and have gone up into all these mountains, and possess Jerusalem again, where their holies are. |
24 Now therefore, my lord, search if there be any iniquity of theirs in the sight of their God. Let us go up to them, because their God will surely deliver them to you: and they shall be brought
25 under the yoke of your power. | But if there be no offense of this people in the sight of their God, we cannot resist them, because their God will defend them; and we shall be a reproach to the whole earth.

26 And it came to pass, when Achior had ceased to speak these words, all the great men of Holofernes were angry. And they
27 had a mind to kill him, saying to each other: | Who is this, that says the children of Israel can resist king Nabuchodonosor, and his armies: men unarmed, and without force, and without
28 skill in the art of war? | That Achior therefore may know that he deceives us, let us go up into the mountains. And when the bravest of them shall be taken, then shall he with them be
29 stabbed with the sword, | that every nation may know that Nabuchodonosor is god of the earth, and besides him there is no other.

6

1 ***Achior Taken to Bethulia*** And it came to pass when they had left off speaking, that Holofernes being in a violent
2 passion, said to Achior: | Because you have prophesied unto us saying, that the nation of Israel is defended by their God, to
3 show you that there is no God, but Nabuchodonosor, | when we shall slay them all as one man, then you also shall die with them by the sword of the Assyrians; and all Israel shall perish
4 with you. | And you shall find that Nabuchodonosor is lord of the whole earth. And then the sword of my soldiers shall

5, 25: The writer puts the main theme and purpose of the book on Achior's lips.

5, 29: This is an example of how the author depicts Nabuchodonosor as the personification of evil forces opposed to God.

pass through your sides; and you shall be stabbed and fall among the wounded of Israel; and you shall breathe no more
5 till you be destroyed with them. | But if you think your prophecy true, let not your countenance sink. And let the paleness that is in your face, depart from you, if you imagine these my
6 words cannot be accomplished. | And that you may know that you shall experience these things together with them, behold from this hour you shall be associated to their people, that when they shall receive the punishment they deserve from my sword, you may fall under the same vengeance.
7 Then Holofernes commanded his servants to take Achior, and to lead him to Bethulia, and to deliver him into the hands
8 of the children of Israel. | And the servants of Holofernes taking him, went through the plains: but when they came near
9 the mountains, the slingers came out against them. | Then turning out of the way by the side of the mountain, they tied Achior to a tree, hand and foot, and so left him bound with
10 ropes and returned to their master. | And the children of Israel coming down from Bethulia, came to him, and loosing him they brought him to Bethulia, and setting him in the midst of the people, asked him what was the matter that the Assyrians had left him bound.
11 In those days the rulers there were Ozias the son of Micha of the tribe of Simeon, and Charmi, called also Gothoniel. |
12 And Achior related in the midst of the ancients, and in the presence of all the people, all that he had said, being asked by Holofernes: and how the people of Holofernes would have
13 killed him for this word. | And how Holofernes himself being angry had commanded him to be delivered for this cause to the Israelites: that when he should overcome the children of Israel, then he might command Achior also himself to be put to death by diverse torments, for having said: The God of heaven is
14 their defender. | And when Achior had declared all these things, all the people fell upon their faces, adoring the Lord, and all of them together mourning and weeping poured out
15 their prayers with one accord to the Lord, | saying: O Lord God of heaven and earth, behold their pride, and look on our low condition, and have regard to the face of your saints, and show that you forsake not them that trust in you, and that you humble them that presume of themselves, and glory in their own strength.

16 ***The People Comfort Achior*** So when their weeping ended,

6, 7: *Bethulia:* the name is unknown.

9 Wherefore, that you may overcome them without joining battle, set guards at the springs that they may not draw water out of them, and you shall destroy them without sword, or at least being wearied out they will yield up their city, which they suppose, because it is situated in the mountains, to be impregnable.
10 | And these words pleased Holofernes, and his officers: and he placed all round about a hundred men at every spring.

11 ***The Distress and Prayer of the People*** And when they had kept this watch for full twenty days, the cisterns and the reserve of waters failed among all the inhabitants of Bethulia, so that there was not within the city enough to satisfy them, no not for one day, for water was daily given out to
12 the people by measure. | Then all the men and women, young men, and children, gathering themselves together to Ozias,
13 all together with one voice, | said: God be judge between us and you, for you have done evil against us, in that you would not speak peaceably with the Assyrians, and for this cause
14 God has sold us into their hands. | And therefore there is no one to help us, while we are cast down before their eyes in
15 thirst, and sad destruction. | And now assemble, all of you that are in the city, that we may of our own accord yield
16 ourselves all up to the people of Holofernes: | for it is better, that being captives we should live and bless the Lord, than that we should die, and be a reproach to all flesh, after we have
17 seen our wives and our infants die before our eyes. | We call to witness this day heaven and earth, and the God of our fathers, who takes vengeance upon us according to our sins, conjuring you to deliver now the city into the hand of the army of Holofernes, that our end may be short by the edge of the sword, which is made longer by the drought of thirst.
18 And when they had said these things, there was great weeping and lamentation of all in the assembly, and for many hours
19 with one voice they cried to God, saying: | We have sinned with our fathers, we have done unjustly, we have committed
20 iniquity. | Have you mercy on us, because you are good, or punish our iniquities by chastising us yourself: and deliver not
21 them that trust in you to a people that know you not, | that they may not say among the Gentiles: Where is their God? |
22 And when being wearied with these cries, and tired with these
23 weepings, they held their peace, | Ozias rising up all in tears, said: Be of good courage, my brethren, and let us wait these
24 five days for mercy from the Lord. | For perhaps he will put

7, 16: *Flesh:* people.

and the people's prayer, in which they continued all the
17 day, was concluded, they comforted Achior, | saying: The
God of our fathers, whose power you have set forth, will make
this return to you, that you rather shall see their destruction. |
18 And when the Lord our God shall give this liberty to his serv-
ants, let God be with you also in the midst of us: that as it
shall please you, so you with all yours may converse with us.
19 Then Ozias, after the assembly was broken up, received him
20 into his house, and made him a great supper. | And all the
ancients were invited, and they refreshed themselves together
21 after their fast was over. | And afterward all the people
were called together, and they prayed all the night long within
the church, desiring help of the God of Israel.

7

1 ***Holofernes Besieges Bethulia*** But Holofernes on the
next day gave orders to his army, to go up against Bethulia. |
2 Now there were in his troops a hundred and twenty thousand
footmen, and two and twenty thousand horsemen, besides the
preparations of those men who had been taken, and who had
been brought away out of the provinces and cities of all the
3 youth. | All these prepared themselves together to fight
against the children of Israel. And they came by the hillside
to the top, which looks toward Dothain, from the place which
is called Belma, unto Chelmon, which is opposite Esdrelon.
4 | But the children of Israel, when they saw the multitude of
them, prostrated themselves upon the ground, putting ashes
upon their heads, praying with one accord that the God of Is-
5 rael would show his mercy upon his people. | And taking
their arms of war, they posted themselves at the places, which
by a narrow pathway lead directly between the mountains, and
they guarded them all day and night.
6 Now Holofernes, in going round about, found that the
fountain which supplied them with water, ran through an aque-
duct outside the city on the south side. And he commanded
7 their aqueduct to be cut off. | Nevertheless there were springs
not far from the walls, out of which they were seen secretly
to draw water, to refresh themselves a little rather than to
8 drink their fill. | But the children of Ammon and Moab came
to Holofernes, saying: The children of Israel trust not in
their spears, nor in their arrows; but the mountains are their
defense, and the steep hills and precipices guard them. |

7, 2: *Preparations:* "baggage" is the correct word.
7, 3: Scholars believe this is a fictitious location.

a stop to his indignation, and will give glory to his own name. |
25 But if after five days be past there comes no aid, we will do
the things which you have spoken.

8

1 ***The Intervention of Judith*** Now it came to pass, that
Judith a widow heard these words; she was the daughter of
Merari, the son of Idox, the son of Joseph, the son of Ozias,
the son of Elai, the son of Jamnor, the son of Gedeon, the son
of Raphaim, the son of Achitob, the son of Melchias, the son
of Enan, the son of Nathanias, the son of Salathiel, the son
2 of Simeon, the son of Ruben, | and her husband was Ma-
3 nasses, who died in the time of the barley harvest: | for he
was standing over them that bound sheaves in the field, and
the heat came upon his head, and he died in Bethulia his own
4 city, and was buried there with his fathers. | And Judith his
5 relict was a widow now three years and six months. | And she
made herself a private chamber in the upper part of her house,
6 in which she abode shut up with her maids. | And she wore
haircloth upon her loins, and fasted all the days of her life,
except the sabbaths, and new moons, and the feasts of the
7 house of Israel. | And she was exceedingly beautiful, and her
husband left her great riches and very many servants, and large
8 possessions of herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep. | And she
was greatly renowned among all, because she feared the Lord
very much, neither was there any one that spoke an ill word of
her.

9 When therefore she had heard that Ozias had promised
that he would deliver up the city after the fifth day, she sent
10 to the ancients Chabri and Charmi. | And they came to her,
and she said to them: What is this word, by which Ozias has
consented to give up the city to the Assyrians, if within five
days there should come no aid to us?

11 ***Judith Rebukes the Ancients*** And who are you that
12 tempt the Lord? | This is not a word that may draw down
mercy, but rather that may stir up wrath, and enkindle indig
13 nation. | You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord: and

8, 1: *Judith:* the name accords well with the fictitious intent of the author because Judith is unknown in the Bible except as a name of one of Esau's Hittite wives in Gn 26, 34. In the preceding seven chapters, the author has carefully prepared the historical and psychological backdrop for Judith's first appearance.

8, 8: The French see in this verse a parallel to their national heroine, St. Joan of Arc.

you have appointed him a day, according to your pleasure. |
14 But forasmuch as the Lord is patient, let us be penitent for this
15 same thing, and with many tears let us beg his pardon. | For
God will not threaten like man, nor be inflamed to anger like
16 the son of man. | And therefore let us humble our souls be-
17 fore him, and continue in an humble spirit in his service. | Let
us ask the Lord with tears, that according to his will so he
would show his mercy to us: that as our heart is troubled by
18 their pride, so also we may glorify in our humility. | For we
have not followed the sins of our fathers, who forsook their
19 God, and worshiped strange gods, | for which crime they were
given up to their enemies, to the sword, and to pillage and to
20 confusion: but we know no other God but him. | Let us
humbly wait for his consolation, and the Lord our God will
require our blood of the afflictions of our enemies, and he will
humble all the nations that shall rise up against us, and bring
them to disgrace.

21 And now, brethren, as you are the ancients among the peo-
ple of God, and their very soul rests upon you: comfort their
hearts by your speech, that they may be mindful how our fa-
thers were tempted that they might be proved, whether they
22 worshiped their God truly. | They must remember how our
father Abraham was tempted, and being proved by many tribu-
23 lations, was made the friend of God. | So Isaac, so Jacob, so
Moses, and all that have pleased God, passed through many
24 tribulations, remaining faithful. | But they that did not re-
ceive the trials with the fear of the Lord, but uttered their im-
patience and the reproach of their murmuring against the Lord,
25 | were destroyed by the destroyer, and perished by serpents. |
26 As for us therefore let us not revenge ourselves for these things
27 which we suffer. | But esteeming these very punishments to
be less than our sins deserve, let us believe that these scourges
of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have
happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.

28 And Ozias and the ancients said to her: All things which
you have spoken are true; and there is nothing to be repre-
29 hended in your words. | Now therefore pray for us; for you
30 are a holy woman, and one fearing God. | And Judith said to
them: As you know that what I have been able to say is of
31 God, | so that which I intend to do prove to be of him, pray

8, 18: If the author really meant this to be the era of Nabuchodonosor, then Judith would be wrong in saying that the people did not practice idolatry.

8, 22: *Abraham was tempted:* tried by God in sacrificing his son (Gn 22, 1ff).

you that God may strengthen my design. | You shall stand
at the gate this night, while I will go out with my maid serv-
ant, and pray that, as you have done before, in five days the
Lord may look down upon his people Israel. | But I desire that
you search not into what I am doing; and till I bring you word
let nothing else be done but to pray for me to the Lord our
God. | And Ozias the prince of Juda said to her: Go in peace;
and the Lord be with you to take revenge of our enemies. So
returning they departed.

9

Judith's Prayer And when they had left, Judith went
into her oratory, and putting on haircloth, laid ashes on her
head, and falling down prostrate before the Lord, she cried to
the Lord, saying: | O Lord God of my father Simeon, who
gave him a sword to execute vengeance against strangers, who
had defiled by their uncleanness, and uncovered the virgin unto
confusion, | and who gave their wives to be made a prey, and
their daughters into captivity, and all their spoils to be di-
vided to your servants, who were zealous with your zeal: assist,
I beseech you, O Lord God, me a widow. | For you have done
the things of old, and you have devised one thing after another;
and what you have designed has been done: | for all your ways
are prepared; and in your providence you have placed your
judgments.

Look upon the camp of the Assyrians now, as you were
pleased to look upon the camp of the Egyptians, when they
pursued armed after your servants, trusting in their chariots,
and in their horsemen, and in a multitude of warriors. | But
you looked over their camp, and darkness wearied them. | The
deep held their feet, and the waters overwhelmed them. | So
may it be with these also, O Lord, who trust in their multitude,
and in their chariots, and in their pikes, and in their shields,
and in their arrows, and glory in their spears, | and know
not that you are our God, who destroys wars from the begin-

8, 34: *Ozias:* Judith towers above him as the true spiritual, and even military, leader.

9, 2: *Simeon:* a reference to Judith's ancestor who rallied the people to take vengeance with the "sword" for the violation of his sister Dina in Gn 34. In the Genesis episode, the people took vengeance for Dina; in the present episode, Judith obtains revenge for the people. To the author of Judith the sword of vengeance plays the same role in both episodes.

9, 10: *Destroys:* puts an end to.

11 ning. And the Lord is your name. | Lift up your arm as from the
beginning, and crush their power with your power. Let their
power fall in their wrath, who promise themselves to violate
your sanctuary, and defile the dwelling place of your name, and
to beat down with their sword the horn of your altar.
12 Bring to pass, O Lord, that his pride may be cut off
13 with his own sword. | Let him be caught in the net of his
own eyes in my regard: and do you strike him by the
14 graces of the words of my lips. | Give me constancy in my
mind, that I may despise him: and fortitude that I may over-
15 throw him. | For this will be a glorious monument for your
16 name, when he shall fall by the hand of a woman. | For your
power, O Lord, is not in a multitude, nor is your pleasure in the
strength of horses, nor from the beginning have the proud been
acceptable to you: but the prayer of the humble and the meek
17 has always pleased you. | O God of the heavens, creator of
the waters, and Lord of the whole creation, hear me a poor
wretch, making supplication to you, and presuming of your
18 mercy. | Remember, O Lord, your covenant, and put you
words in my mouth, and strengthen the resolution in my
19 heart: that your house may continue in your holiness. | And
all nations may acknowledge that you are God: and there is
no other besides you.

10

1 ***Judith Goes into the Assyrian Camp*** And it came to
pass, when she had ceased to cry to the Lord, that she rose
from the place wherein she lay prostrate before the Lord. |
2 And she called her maid, and going down into her house she
took off her haircloth, and put away the garments of her wid-
3 owhood. | And she washed her body, and anointed herself
with the best ointment, and plaited the hair of her head, and
put a bonnet upon her head, and clothed herself with the gar-
ments of her gladness, and put sandals on her feet, and took
her bracelets, and lilies, and earlets, and rings, and adorned
4 herself with all her ornaments. | And the Lord also gave her
more beauty: because all this dressing up did not proceed
from sensuality, but from virtue. And therefore the Lord in-
creased this her beauty, so that she appeared to all men's eyes
5 incomparably lovely. | And she gave to her maid a bottle of

9, 11: *The horn of the altar:* these were four protuberances on the corners of the altar. Holofernes intended to suppress the worship to Yahweh.

10, 3: *Bonnet:* something resembling a "crown" as in 16, 10. *Lilies:* perhaps a scarf with embroidered lilies.

wine to carry, and a vessel of oil, and parched corn, and dry figs, and bread and cheese, and went out.

6 And when they came to the gate of the city, they found
7 Ozias, and the ancients of the city waiting. | And when they saw her they were astonished, and admired her beauty exceed-
8 ingly. | But they asked her no question, only they let her pass, saying: The God of our fathers give you grace. And may he strengthen all the counsel of your heart with his power, that Jerusalem may glory in you; and your name may be in the
9 number of the holy and just. | And they that were there said, all with one voice: So be it, so be it.

10 But Judith praying to the Lord, passed through the gates, she
11 and her maid. | And it came to pass, when she went down the hill, about break of day, that the watchmen of the Assyrians met her, and stopped her, saying: Where do you come from?
12 Or where do you go? | And she answered: I am a daughter of the Hebrews, and I have fled from them, because I knew they would be made a prey to you, because they despised you, and would not of their own accord yield themselves, that they might
13 find mercy in your sight. | For this reason I thought with myself, saying: I will go to the presence of the prince Holofernes, that I may tell him their secrets, and show him by what way he
14 may take them, without the loss of one man of his army. | And when the men had heard her words, they beheld her face. And their eyes were amazed, for they wondered exceedingly at her beauty.

15 ***Judith Is Brought to Holofernes*** And they said to her: You have saved your life by taking this resolution, to come
16 down to our lord. | And be assured of this, that when you shall stand before him, he will treat you well: and you will be most acceptable to his heart. And they brought her to the tent of
17 Holofernes, telling him of her. | And when she came into his
18 presence, forthwith Holofernes was caught by his eyes. | And his officers said to him: Who can despise the people of the Hebrews, who have such beautiful women, that we should not think it worth our while for their sakes to fight against them?
19 | And Judith seeing Holofernes sitting under a canopy, which was woven of purple and gold, with emeralds and precious
20 stones, | after she had looked on his face, bowed down to him,

10, 7: Other references to her beauty in vv. 14, 17, 18, manifest the gifted pen of the writer who never describes Judith's beauty directly but indirectly through admirers. This effective technique has been compared to Homer who similarly "describes" Helen of Troy.

prostrating herself to the ground. And the servants of Holofernes lifted her up, by the command of their master.

11

1 ***Judith's Speech to Holofernes*** Then Holofernes said to
her: Be of good comfort, and fear not in your heart, for I have
never hurt a man that was willing to serve Nabuchodonosor
2 the king. | And if your people had not despised me, I would
3 never have lifted up my spear against them. | But now tell me,
for what cause have you left them, and why has it pleased you
4 to come to us? | And Judith said to him: Receive the words of
your handmaid; for if you will follow the words of your hand-
5 maid, the Lord will do with you a perfect thing. | For as Nab-
uchodonosor the king of the earth lives, and his power lives
which is in you for chastising of all straying souls: not only men
serve him through you, but also the beasts of the field obey him,
6 | for the industry of your mind is spoken of among all nations:
and it is told through the whole world that you only are excel-
lent, and mighty in all his kingdom; and your discipline is cried
up in all provinces.
7 It is known also what Achior said, nor are we ignorant of
8 what you have commanded to be done to him. | For it is cer-
tain that our God is so offended with sins, that he has sent word
by his prophets to the people that he will deliver them up for
9 their sins. | And because the children of Israel know they have
10 offended their God, your dread is upon them. | Moreover also a
famine has come upon them: and for drought of water they are
11 already to be counted among the dead. | And they have a de-
sign even to kill their cattle, and to drink the blood of them. |
12 And the consecrated things of the Lord their God, which God
forbade them to touch, in corn, wine, and oil, these have they
purposed to make use of, and they design to consume the things

11, 1ff: The classical moral problem in the Book of Judith is: how can an author, who is inspired by God, praise Judith's lie? If the book is interpreted as fictitious history, the difficulty loses some of its sting, but it still remains. It is argued that Judith does not lie but is adroitly ambiguous. Besides, some translations lend themselves more than others to making Judith lie. Perhaps the best answer is: The revelation of the moral evil of telling a lie in delicate circumstances was not yet made known. Even today moralists dispute just what is a lie in such delicate circumstances as espionage in war.

11, 4: Holofernes thinks of his victory over the Jews; Judith thinks of her victory over him.

11, 6: *The industry of your mind:* your resourceful mind. *Your discipline . . . provinces:* your ability in warfare is well known.

11, 12: Only the priests were allowed to eat the first fruits of corn, wine, oil, and the showbread. See Lv 24, 5-9.

which they ought not to touch with their hands. Therefore, because they do these things, it is certain they will be given up to
13 destruction. | And I, your handmaid, knowing this, have fled from them, and the Lord has sent me to tell you these very
14 things. | For I, your handmaid, worship God even now that I am with you: and your handmaid will go out, and I will pray
15 to God, | and he will tell me when he will repay them for their sins. And I will come and tell you, so that I may bring you through the midst of Jerusalem, and you shall have all the people of Israel, as sheep that have no shepherd; and there shall
16 not so much as one dog bark against you. | Because these
17 things are told me by the providence of God. | And because God is angry with them, I am sent to tell these very things to you.

18 And all these words pleased Holofernes, and his servants, and they admired her wisdom; and they said one to another:
19 | There is not such another woman upon earth in look, in
20 beauty, and in sense of words. | And Holofernes said to her: God has done well who sent you before the people, that you
21 might give them into our hands. | And because your promise is good, if your God shall do this for me, he shall also be my God, and you shall be great in the house of Nabuchodonosor, and your name shall be renowned through all the earth.

12

1 ***Judith in the Company of the Assyrians*** Then he ordered that she should go in where his treasures were laid up, and bade her tarry there. And he appointed what should be given
2 her from his own table. | And Judith answered him and said: Now I cannot eat of these things which you command to be given me, lest sin come upon me; but I will eat of the things
3 which I have brought. | And Holofernes said to her: If these things which you have brought with you fail you, what shall
4 we do for you? | And Judith said: As your soul lives, my lord, your handmaid shall not spend all these things till God do by my hand that which I have purposed. And his servants brought
5 her into the tent which he had commanded. | And when she was going in, she desired that she might have liberty to go out at
6 night and before day, to prayer, and to beseech the Lord. | And

11, 19: *Sense of words:* a better translation is "understanding of things."

12, 4: See 11, 4 n, and notice the same studied ambiguity here. *Hand:* as stated in the Introduction, the hand-of-Judith motif weaves in and out of the story to teach that God can crush opposing giant forces by the mere hand of a woman.

he commanded his chamberlains, that she might go out and in,
7 to adore her God as she pleased, for three days. | And she went
out in the nights into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself
8 in a fountain of water. | And as she came up, she prayed to the
Lord the God of Israel, that he would direct her way to the de-
9 liverance of his people. | And going in, she remained pure in
the tent, until she took her own meat in the evening.

10 ***Holofernes Invites Judith to a Banquet*** And it came to
pass on the fourth day, that Holofernes made a supper for
his servants, and said to Vagao his eunuch: Go, and persuade
that Hebrew woman to consent of her own accord to dwell with
11 me. | For it is looked upon as shameful among the Assyrians, if
a woman mock a man, by doing so as to pass free from him. |
12 Then Vagao went in to Judith, and said: Let not my good maid
be afraid to go in to my lord, that she may be honored before
his face, that she may eat with him and drink wine and be merry.
13 | And Judith answered him: Who am I, that I should gainsay
14 my lord? | All that shall be good and best before his eyes, I will
do. And whatsoever shall please him, that shall be best to me
15 all the days of my life. | And she arose and dressed herself
out with her garments, and going in she stood before his face.
16 | And the heart of Holofernes was smitten, for he was burning
17 with the desire of her. | And Holofernes said to her: Drink
now: and sit down and be merry; for you have found favor be-
18 fore me. | And Judith said: I will drink my lord, because my life
19 is magnified this day above all my days. | And she took and ate
and drank before him what her maid had prepared for her. |
20 And Holofernes was made merry on her occasion, and drank
exceeding much wine, so much as he had never drunk in his life.

13

1 ***Judith Slays Holofernes*** And when it had grown late,
his servants made haste to their lodgings: and Vagao shut the
2 chamber doors, and went his way. | And they were all over-
3 charged with wine. | And Judith was alone in the chamber. |
4 But Holofernes lay on his bed, fast asleep, being exceedingly
5 drunk. | And Judith spoke to her maid to stand outside before
6 the chamber, and to watch. | And Judith stood before the bed
7 praying with tears, and the motion of her lips in silence, | say-
ing: Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, and in this hour look

12, 15: Even according to Christian standards any woman is allowed to make herself attractive within the limits of modesty. Spying during a war was sufficient reason for Judith to put herself in an occasion of sin.

on the works of my hands, that as you have promised, you may raise up Jerusalem your city. And that I may bring to pass that which I have purposed, having a belief that it might be done
8 by you. | And when she had said this, she went to the pillar that was at his bed's head, and loosed his sword that hung tied
9 upon it. | And when she had drawn it out, she took him by the hair of his head, and said: Strengthen me, O Lord God, at this
10 hour. | And she struck twice upon his neck, and cut off his head, and took off his canopy from the pillars, and rolled away
11 his headless body. | And after a while she went out and delivered the head of Holofernes to her maid, and bade her put it into her wallet.

12 ***Judith Returns to Her People*** And they two went out according to their custom, as it were to prayer, and they passed the camp, and having compassed the valley, they
13 came to the gate of the city. | And Judith from afar off cried to the watchmen upon the walls: Open the gates, for
14 God is with us, who has shown his power in Israel. | And it came to pass, when the men had heard her voice, that they called
15 the ancients of the city. |. And all ran to meet her from the least to the greatest: for they now had no hopes that she would
16 come. | And lighting up lights they all gathered round about her. And she went up to a higher place, and commanded silence
17 to be made. And when all had held their peace, | Judith said: Praise the Lord our God, who has not forsaken them that hope
18 in him. | And by me his handmaid he has fulfilled his mercy, which he promised to the house of Israel: and he has killed the
19 enemy of his people by my hand this night. | Then she brought forth the head of Holofernes out of the wallet, and showed it them, saying: Behold the head of Holofernes the general of the army of the Assyrians, and behold his canopy, wherein he lay in his drunkenness, where the Lord our God slew him by the
20 hand of a woman. | But as the same Lord lives, his angel has been my keeper both going there and abiding there, and returning from thence. And the Lord has not suffered me his handmaid to be defiled: but has brought me back to you without pollution of sin, rejoicing for his victory, for my escape, and for your

13, 10: *Took off his canopy:* she took the mosquito net as a trophy (as v. 19 clearly indicates). Taking another's life in war is not "murder" even according to our own Christian standards.

13, 11: *Wallet:* the bag which carried her food, in 10, 5.

13, 12: The permission to go in and out of the camp (12, 5-6) was obtained in view of this occasion.

21 deliverance. | Give all of you glory to him, because he is good:
because his mercy endures for ever.
22 And they all adored the Lord, and said to her: The Lord
has blessed you by his power, because by you he has brought our
23 enemies to nought. | And Ozias, the prince of the people of
Israel, said to her: Blessed are you, O daughter, by the Lord the
24 most high God, above all women upon the earth. | Blessed be
the Lord who made heaven and earth, who has directed you to
25 the cutting off the head of the prince of our enemies. | Be-
cause he has so magnified your name this day, that your praise
shall not depart out of the mouth of men who shall be mindful
of the power of the Lord, for ever, for that you have not spared
your life, by reason of the distress and tribulation of your peo-
ple, but have prevented our ruin in the presence of our God. |
26 And all the people said: So be it. So be it.
27 And Achior being called for came, and Judith said to him:
The God of Israel, to whom you gave testimony, that he re-
venges himself of his enemies, he has cut off the head of all the
28 unbelievers this night by my hand. | And that you may find that
it is so, behold the head of Holofernes, who in the contempt of
his pride despised the God of Israel, and threatened you
with death, saying: When the people of Israel shall be taken, I
29 will command your sides to be pierced with a sword. | Then
Achior seeing the head of Holofernes, being seized with a great
fear he fell on his face upon the earth, and his soul swooned
30 away. | But after he had recovered his spirits, he fell down at
31 her feet, and reverenced her, and said: | Blessed are you by
your God in every tabernacle of Jacob, for in every nation which
shall hear your name, the God of Israel shall be magnified on
occasion of you.

14

1 ***The Israelites' Assault on the Assyrians*** And Judith said
to all the people: Hear me, my brethren; hang up this head upon
2 our walls. | And as soon as the sun shall rise, let every man
take his arms: and rush out, not as going down beneath, but as
3 making an assault. | Then the watchmen must needs run to
4 awake their prince for the battle. | And when the captains of

13, 22-25: These verses are applied to Mary in the Epistles of the Masses of Our Lady of Sorrows and the Feast of the Assumption. V. 10 of ch. 15 is added in the Epistle of the latter.

13, 23: This verse and v. 10 of ch. 15 are applied to Mary in the Gradual of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

14, 2: *Not as going . . . assault:* Judith commands them to pretend going down the mountainside as if to attack.

them shall run to the tent of Holofernes, and shall find him without his head, wallowing in his blood, fear shall fall upon
5 them. | And when you shall know that they are fleeing, go after them securely, for the Lord will destroy them under your feet.
6 And Achior seeing the power that the God of Israel had wrought, leaving the religion of the Gentiles, he believed God, and circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and was joined to the people of Israel, with all the succession of his kindred until this present day.
7 And immediately at break of day, they hung up the head of Holofernes upon the walls, and every man took his arms, and
8 they went out with a great noise and shouting. | And the
9 watchmen seeing this, ran to the tent of Holofernes. | And they that were in the tent came, and made a noise before the door of the chamber to awake him: endeavoring by art to break his rest, that Holofernes might awake, not by their calling him, but
10 by their noise. | For no man dared knock, or open and go into
11 the chamber of the general of the Assyrians. | But when his captains and tribunes had come, and all the chiefs of the army of the king of the Assyrians, they said to the chamberlains: |
12 Go in, and awake him; for the mice, coming out of their holes,
13 have presumed to challenge us to fight. | Then Vagao going into his chamber, stood before the curtain, and made a clapping with his hands, for he thought that he was sleeping with Judith.
14 | But when, with hearkening, he perceived no motion of one lying, he came near to the curtain, and lifting up, and seeing the body of Holofernes, lying upon the ground, without the head, weltering in his blood, he cried out with a loud voice, with
15 weeping, and rent his garments. | And he went into the tent
16 of Judith; and not finding her, he ran out to the people, | and said: One Hebrew woman has made confusion in the house of king Nabuchodonosor, for behold, Holofernes lies upon the
17 ground; and his head is not upon him. | Now when the chiefs of the army of the Assyrians had heard this, they all rent their garments, and an intolerable fear and dread fell upon them, and
18 their minds were troubled exceedingly. | And there was a very great cry in the midst of their camp.

15

1 ***The Assyrians Defeated*** And when all the army heard that Holofernes was beheaded, courage and counsel fled from them, and being seized with trembling and fear, they thought
2 only to save themselves by flight: | so that no one spoke to his neighbor, but hanging down the head, leaving all things behind,

they made haste to escape from the Hebrews, who, as they heard, were coming armed upon them, and fled by the ways of
3 the fields, and the paths of the hills. | So the children of Israel seeing them fleeing, followed after them. And they went
4 down sounding with trumpets and shouting after them. | And because the Assyrians were not united together, they went without order in their flight, but the children of Israel pursuing in
5 one body, defeated all that they could find. | And Ozias sent
6 messengers through all the cities and countries of Israel. | And every country, and every city, sent their chosen young men armed after them, and they pursued them with the edge of the sword until they came to the extremities of their confines. |
7 And the rest that were in Bethulia went into the camp of the Assyrians and took away the spoils which the Assyrians in their flight had left behind them: and they were laden exceedingly.
8 | But they that returned conquerors to Bethulia, brought with them all things that were theirs, so that there was no numbering of their cattle, and beasts, and all their movables, insomuch that from the least to the greatest all were made rich by their spoils.

9 ***Judith Is Praised*** And Joachim the high priest came from Jerusalem to Bethulia with all his ancients to see Judith. |
10 And when she had come out to him, they all blessed her with one voice, saying: You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the
11 joy of Israel, you are the honor of our people. | For you have done manfully, and your heart has been strengthened, because you have loved chastity, and after your husband have not known any other. Therefore also the hand of the Lord has strengthened you, and therefore you shall be blessed for ever.
12 | And all the people said: So be it. So be it.
13 And thirty days were scarce sufficient for the people of Is-
14 rael to gather up the spoils of the Assyrians. | But all those things that were proved to be the peculiar goods of Holofernes, they gave to Judith in gold, and silver and garments and precious stones, and all household stuff, and they all were deliv-
15 ered to her by the people. | And all the people rejoiced with the women, and virgins, and young men, playing on instruments and harps.

15, 8: The extrabiblical facts indicate that Holofernes was not decapitated, but returned victorious and was decorated by his king, Artaxerxes.

15, 10: See 13, 23 n.

16

1 *The Canticle of Judith* Then Judith sang this canticle to the Lord, saying:
2 Begin to give praise to the Lord with timbrels, sing to the Lord with cymbals, tune unto him a new psalm: extol and call upon his name.
3 The Lord puts an end to wars, the Lord in his name.
4 He has set his camp in the midst of his people, to deliver us from the hand of all our enemies.
5 The Assyrian came out of the mountains from the north in the multitude of his strength: his multitude stopped up the torrents, and their horses covered the valleys.
6 He bragged that he would set my borders on fire, and kill my young men with the sword, to make my infants a prey, and my virgins captives.
7 But the almighty Lord has struck him, and has delivered him into the hands of a woman, and has slain him.
8 For their mighty one did not fall by young men, neither did the sons of Titan strike him, nor tall giants oppose themselves to him, but Judith the daughter of Merari weakened him with the beauty of her face.
9 For she put off her the garments of widowhood, and put on her the garments of joy, to give joy to the children of Israel.
10 She anointed her face with ointment, and bound up her locks with a crown, and took a new robe to deceive him.
11 Her sandals ravished his eyes, her beauty made his soul her captive, with a sword she cut off his head.
12 The Persians quaked at her constancy, and the Medes at her boldness.
13 Then the camp of the Assyrians howled, when my lowly ones appeared, parched with thirst.
14 The sons of the damsels have pierced them through, and they have killed them like children fleeing away: they perished in battle before the face of the Lord my God.
15 Let us sing a hymn to the Lord, let us sing a new hymn to our God.
16 O Adonai, Lord, greatest are you, and glorious in your power: and no one can overcome you.
17 Let all your creatures serve you: because you have spoken, and they were made: you sent forth your spirit, and they were created. And there is no one that can resist your voice.
18 The mountains shall be moved from the foundations with the waters, the rocks shall melt as wax before your face.
19 But they that fear you, shall be great with you in all things.
20 Woe be to the nation that rises up against my people: for

the Lord almighty will take revenge on them. In the day of judgment he will visit them:

21 For he will give fire, and worms into their flesh, that they may burn, and may feel for ever.

22 ***Celebration of the Victory*** And it came to pass after these things, that all the people, after the victory, came to Jerusalem to adore the Lord: and as soon as they were purified, they all offered holocausts, and vows, and their promises. |
23 And Judith offered for an anathema of oblivion all the arms of Holofernes, which the people gave her, and the canopy that
24 she had taken away out of his chamber. | And the people were joyful in the sight of the sanctuary, and for three months
25 the joy of this victory was celebrated with Judith. | And after those days every man returned to his house. And Judith was made great in Bethulia; and she was most renowned in all the
26 land of Israel. | And chastity was joined to her virtue, so that she knew no man all the days of her life, after the death of
27 Manasses her husband. | And on festival days she came forth with great glory.

28 ***Judith's Death*** And she abode in her husband's house a hundred and five years, and made her handmaid free. And she
29 died, and was buried with her husband in Bethulia. | And all
30 the people mourned for seven days. | And all the time of her life there was none that troubled Israel, nor many years after
31 her death. | But the day of the festivity of this victory is received by the Hebrews in the number of holy days, and is religiously observed by the Jews from that time until this day.

16, 21: *May feel for ever:* the sense is: May they feel pain as long as they burn.

16, 22: According to Nm 31, 19 they had to purify themselves after killing the enemy in war.

16, 23: *Offered for an anathema of oblivion:* an offering to completely destroy all the belongings of Holofernes.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Esther was written in Hebrew by an anonymous Jew, about 350 B.C., against the background of the Persian capital of Susa at the time of Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.). Esther, a Jewess, became queen of Persia. The grand *vizier*, or "prime minister," Aman, fixes a date to exterminate all Jews. Esther intervenes with the king, and the Jews destroy their enemies. This victorious day was henceforth celebrated as the feast of Purim.

The author's purpose was to show God's Providence over His threatened people, and to explain the origin of the feast of Purim or "lots." (See 9, 20-32 n.) Hardly anyone today interprets Esther as a strict historical document. Some consider it pure fiction from beginning to end.

There are numerous historical inaccuracies (as pointed out in several annotations), but many scholars concede that the author freely adorned some historical facts from the court life of Xerxes. The most certain historical fact is thought to be the liberation of a group of persecuted Jews in the eastern Middle East. Yet there is no evidence outside the Bible of the massacre of Jews during the reign of Xerxes. The situation of the Jews in Susa at the time of Xerxes is historical, and the portrayal of this ruler accords well with Herodotus' sketch of him.

The influence of the Book of Esther upon the New Testament is nil. Nor does it seem to have been popular among the people who left us the Dead Sea Scrolls, for it is the only book of the Hebrew Old Testament of which not even one fragment has been found. Among the Fathers of the Church, however, Esther is considered a type of Mary. In Western literature, Jean Racine has perhaps immortalized Esther best in his moving tragedy of the same name.

Main divisions of the Book of Esther are:

1. Esther Replaces Queen Vasthi, 1—2
2. The Feud between Aman and Mardochai, 3—7
3. The Victory of Mardochai, Esther and the Jews, 8, 1—10, 3
4. Appendices, 10, 4—16, 24

1

1 ***The Feast of King Assuerus*** In the days of Assuerus,
who reigned from India to Ethiopia, over a hundred and
2 twenty-seven provinces, | when he sat on the throne of his
3 kingdom, the city Susan was the capital of his kingdom. | Now

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1, 1: *Assuerus:* the Hebrew name for the Persian king Xerxes I. This is the king whose unsuccessful campaign against the Greeks is immortalized in Herodotus' *History*.

1, 2: *Susan:* also Susa. This is modern Shush, in southwest Iran.

1, 3-4: The Persian wine banquets were famous for their extravagance.

in the third year of his reign he made a great feast for all the princes, and for his servants, for the most mighty of the Persians, and the nobles of the Medes, and the governors of the
4 provinces in his sight, | that he might show the riches of the glory of his kingdom, and the greatness, and boasting of his power, for a long time: to wit, for a hundred and fourscore
5 days. | And when the days of the feast were expired, he invited all the people that were found in Susan, from the greatest to the least; and commanded a feast to be made seven days in the court of the garden, and of the wood, which was planted by
6 the care and hand of the king. | And there were hung up on every side sky-colored, and green, and violet hangings, fastened with cords of silk, and of purple, which were put into rings of ivory, and were held up with marble pillars. The beds also were of gold and silver, placed in order upon a floor paved with porphyry and white marble, which was embellished with paint-
7 ing of wonderful variety. | And they that were invited, drank from golden cups; and the meats were brought in divers vessels, one after another. Wine also in abundance and of the best was presented, as was worthy of a king's magnificence. |
8 Neither was there any one to compel them to drink that were not willing, but as the king had appointed, who set over every table one of his nobles, that every man might take what he would. |
9 Also Vasthi the queen made a feast for the women in the palace, where king Assuerus used to dwell.

10 Now on the seventh day, when the king was merry, and after very much drinking was well warmed with wine, he commanded Mauman, and Bazatha, and Harbona, and Bagatha, and Abgatha, and Zethar, and Charcas, the seven eunuchs that
11 served in his presence, | to bring in queen Vasthi before the king, with the crown set upon her head, to show her beauty to all the people and the princes: for she was exceeding beautiful.

12 ***The Disgrace of Queen Vasthi*** But she refused, and would not come at the king's commandment, which he had sig-

1, 6: *Pillars . . . floor:* archeologists have unearthed marble pillars and mosaic pavement, not of Xerxes' palace, which was burned, but of his successors'.

1, 9: *Vasthi:* authors agree that Vasthi is a fictitious queen for, according to Herodotus, the real queen was the haughty and superstitious Amestris.

The separate banquets for the men and women were held because of large numbers, not because of any law.

1, 12: *She refused:* the author does not say why. Perhaps poetic license is used here to find an excuse to divorce her and prepare the way for Esther.

nified to her by the eunuchs. Whereupon the king, being angry,
13 and inflamed with a very great fury, | asked the wise men,
who according to the custom of the kings, were always near
his person, and all he did was by their counsel, who knew the
14 laws, and judgments of their forefathers. | (Now the chief
and nearest him were, Charsena, and Sethar, and Admatha, and
Tharsis, and Mares, and Marsana, and Mamuchan, seven
princes of the Persians, and of the Medes, who saw the face of
15 the king, and were used to sit first after him): | What sentence
ought to pass upon Vasthi the queen, who had refused to obey
the commandment of king Assuerus, which he had sent to her
16 by the eunuchs? | And Mamuchan answered, in the hearing
of the king and the princes: Queen Vasthi has not only injured
the king, but also all the people and princes that are in all
17 the provinces of king Assuerus. | For this deed of the queen
will go abroad to all women, so that they will despise their
husbands and will say: King Assuerus commanded that queen
18 Vasthi should come in to him, and she would not. | And by this
example all the wives of the princes of the Persians and the
Medes will slight the commandments of their husbands: where-
19 fore the king's indignation is just. | If it pleases you, let an
edict go out from your presence, and let it be written according
to the law of the Persians and of the Medes, which must not
be altered: that Vasthi come in no more to the king, but another
20 that is better than her, be made queen in her place. | And let
this be published through all the provinces of your empire
(which is very wide), and let all wives, as well of the greater
as of the lesser, give honor to their husbands.
21 His counsel pleased the king and the princes. And the king
22 did according to the counsel of Mamuchan. | And he sent
letters to all the provinces of his kingdom, as every nation could
hear and read, in divers languages and characters, that the
husbands should be rulers and masters in their houses: and
that this should be published to every people.

2

1 ***Esther Is Chosen Queen*** After this, when the wrath of
king Assuerus was appeased, he remembered Vasthi, and what

1, 14: *Who saw the face of the king:* that is, they could approach him freely.

1, 22: *In divers languages and characters:* the three official languages were Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian (old Babylonian).

2, 1: The king cannot reinstate his divorced wife because his edict "must not be altered" (1, 19).

she had done and what she had suffered. | And the king's
servants and his officers said: Let young women be sought for
the king, virgins and beautiful, | and let some persons be sent
through all the provinces to look for beautiful maidens and
virgins. And let them bring them to the city of Susan, and put
them into the house of the women under the hand of Egeus
the eunuch, who is the overseer and keeper of the king's women.
And let them receive women's ornaments, and other things
necessary for their use. | And whosoever among them all shall
please the king's eyes, let her be queen instead of Vasthi. The
word pleased the king: and he commanded it should be done
as they had suggested.

There was a man in the city of Susan, a Jew, named Mar-
dochai, the son of Jair, the son of Semei, the son of Cis, of the
race of Jemini, | who had been carried away from Jerusalem
at the time that Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon carried away
Jechonias king of Juda. | And he had brought up his brother's
daughter Edissa, who by another name was called Esther. Now
she had lost both her parents, and was exceeding fair and
beautiful. And her father and mother being dead, Mardochai
adopted her for his daughter. | And when the king's ordinance
was noised abroad, and according to his commandment many
beautiful virgins were brought to Susan, and were delivered
to Egeus the eunuch, Esther also among the rest of the maidens
was delivered to him to be kept in the number of the women. |
And she pleased him, and found favor in his sight. And he
commanded the eunuch to hasten the women's ornaments, and
to deliver to her her part and seven of the most beautiful maid-
ens of the king's house, and to adorn and deck out both her and
her waiting maids. | And she would not tell him her people
nor her country, for Mardochai had charged her to say nothing
at all of that. | And he walked every day before the court of

2, 2-4: According to Herodotus, Persian kings married Persians in conformity with the custom.

The motif of searching the empire for the most beautiful maiden to become the queen is common in folklore throughout the world.

2, 5: *Mardochai:* archeologists have found a text referring to a certain Mardochai who held a high position under king Xerxes I at Susa.

2, 6: The author here is making use of fiction, for if Mardochai was a boy at the time of his deportation in 597 B.C., he would have been over a century old when Xerxes became king in 486.

2, 7: *Edissa:* or in Hebrew, Hadassah, which is presently the name of the world's largest Jewish women's organization, so called because Esther is a symbol of loyalty to her people.

The Douay, following the Latin Vulgate, makes Mardochai the uncle of Esther, but other versions make him a cousin.

the house, in which the chosen virgins were kept, having a care for Esther's welfare, and desiring to know what would befall her.

12 Now when every virgin's turn came to go in to the king, after all had been done for setting them off to advantage, it was the twelfth month. So that for six months they were anointed with oil of myrrh; and for other six months they used certain
13 perfumes and sweet spices. ⌊ And when they were going in to the king, whatsoever they asked to adorn themselves they received. And being decked out, as it pleased them, they passed
14 from the chamber of the women to the king's chamber. | And she that went in at evening, came out in the morning; and from thence she was conducted to the second house, that was under the hand of Susagaz the eunuch, who had the charge over the king's concubines. Neither could she return any more to the king, unless the king desired it, and had ordered her by name to come.

15 And as the time came orderly about, the day was at hand, when Esther, the daughter of Abihail the brother of Mardochai, whom he had adopted for his daughter, was to go in to the king. But she sought not women's ornaments, but whatsoever Egeus the eunuch, the keeper of the virgins, had a mind, he gave her to adorn her: for she was exceeding fair, and her incredible beauty made her appear agreeable and amiable in the eyes
16 of all. | So she was brought to the chamber of king Assuerus, the tenth month, which is called Tebeth, in the seventh year of
17 his reign. | And the king loved her more than all the women; and she had favor and kindness before him above all the women. And he sat the royal crown on her head, and made her
18 queen instead of Vasthi. | And he commanded a magnificent feast to be prepared for all the princes, and for his servants, for the marriage and wedding of Esther. And he gave rest to all the provinces, and bestowed gifts according to princely magnificence.

19 ***Mardochai Detects a Plot to Kill the King*** And when the virgins were sought the second time, and gathered together,

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2, 12: The one-year beauty treatment is common in ancient folklore.

2, 14: The whole process of wedding night, promotion to the concubine quarters of the harem, and recall only at the command of the king is found in the *Arabian Nights*.

2, 18: *He gave rest:* a specific kind of amnesty, which is not made clear.

2, 19: The second gathering of virgins here seems without purpose.

20 Mardochai stayed at the king's gate: | neither had Esther as
yet declared her country and people, according to his com-
mandment: for whatsoever he commanded, Esther observed.
And she did all things in the same manner as she was wont at
21 that time when he brought her up, a little one. | At that time,
therefore, when Mardochai abode at the king's gate, Bagathan
and Thares, two of the king's eunuchs, who were porters, and
presided in the first entry of the palace, were angry. And they
22 designed to rise up against the king, and to kill him. | And
Mardochai had notice of it, and immediately he told it to queen
Esther, and she to the king in Mardochai's name, who had re-
23 ported the thing unto her. | It was inquired into, and found
out: and they were both hanged on a gibbet. And it was put in
the histories, and recorded in the chronicles before the king.

3

1 ***Mardochai Offends Aman*** After these things, king As-
suerus advanced Aman, the son of Amadathi, who was of the
race of Agag. And he sent his throne above all the princes that
2 were with him. | And all the king's servants that were at the
doors of the palace, bent their knees and worshiped Aman: for
so the emperor had commanded them. Only Mardochai did
3 not bend his knee, nor worship him. | And the king's servants
that were chief at the doors of the palace said to him: Why is it
4 that you alone do not observe the king's commandment? | And
when they were saying this often, and he would not hearken
to them, they told Aman, desirous to know whether he would
continue in his resolution: for he had told them that he was a
5 Jew. | Now when Aman had heard this, and had proved by

2, 20: Commentators usually agree that a Persian king would hardly marry an unidentified queen, but interpret this lack of identity as a literary necessity for the plot of the story.

2, 21: *Mardochai abode at the king's gate:* he seems to have held some official position, in view of 3, 2-3.

2, 23: Historically, Xerxes was assassinated in a court conspiracy. *Before the king:* in accordance with the king's orders.

3, 1: *Aman . . . who was of the race of Agag:* Aman was a descendant of king Agag of the Amalecites, against whom the Jews were engaged in a perennial racial feud (Dt 25, 17-19). *He set his throne . . . him:* the king suddenly made Aman his vizier or "prime minister."

3, 4: *For he had told them that he was a Jew:* it is difficult to understand why Mardochai refused a simple act of courteous homage ("worship," v. 2) to a superior when this was not against Jewish law or customs. Even later on, as vizier, Mardochai would certainly have had to "bend his knees" before the king. He refused either because Aman was an enemy of the Jews, or because of the racial feud. See 3, 1 n.

experience that Mardochai did not bend his knee to him, nor
6 worship him, he was exceeding angry. | And he counted it nothing to lay his hands upon Mardochai alone. For he had heard that he was of the nation of the Jews, and he chose rather to destroy all the nation of the Jews that were in the kingdom of Assuerus.

7 ***The Decree against the Jews*** In the first month (which is called Nisan) in the twelfth year of the reign of Assuerus, the lot was cast into an urn, which in Hebrew is called Phur, before Aman, on what day and what month the nation of the Jews should be destroyed. And there came out the twelfth
8 month, which is called Adar. | And Aman said to king Assuerus: There is a people scattered through all the provinces of your kingdom, and separated one from another, that use new laws and ceremonies, and moreover despise the king's ordinances: and you know very well that it is not expedient for your king-
9 dom that they should grow insolent by impunity. | If it pleases you, decree that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thou-
10 sand talents to your treasurers. | And the king took the ring that he used, from his own hand, and gave it to Aman, the son of Amadathi of the race of Agag, the enemy of the Jews. |
11 And he said to him: As to the money which you promise, keep it for yourself. And as to the people, do with them as seems
12 good to you. | And the king's scribes were called in the first month Nisan, on the thirteenth day of the same month: and they wrote, as Aman had commanded, to all the king's lieutenants, and to the judges of the provinces, and of divers nations, as every nation could read, and here according to their different languages, in the name of king Assuerus. And the
13 letters, sealed with his ring, | were sent by the king's messengers to all provinces, to kill and destroy all the Jews, both young and old, little children, and women, in one day, that is, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is called Adar, and to
14 make a spoil of their goods. | And the contents of the letters were to this effect, that all provinces might know and be ready

3, 7: *The lot was cast . . . which is called Adar:* substitute: "Pur, that is the lot, was cast in the presence of Aman every day for months till finally the lot fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month Adar." Pur is an Akkadian (old Babylonian) word meaning lot or destiny. See 9, 20-32 n. (Pur and Purim are considered more modern spelling than Phur and Phurim.)

3, 9: *Ten thousand talents:* this equals $18,000,000, according to some estimates.

15 for that day. | The couriers that were sent made haste to fulfill
the king's commandment. And immediately the edict was hung
up in Susan: the king and Aman feasting together, and all the
Jews that were in the city weeping.

4

1 ***Esther Learns of the Decree*** Now when Mardochai had
heard these things, he rent his garments, and put on sackcloth,
strewing ashes on his head. And he cried with a loud voice in
the street in the midst of the city, showing the anguish of his
2 mind. | And he came lamenting in this manner even to the
gate of the palace: for no one clothed with sackcloth might
3 enter the king's court. | And in all provinces, towns, and places,
to which the king's cruel edict had come, there was great mourn-
ing among the Jews, with fasting, wailing, and weeping, many
using sackcloth and ashes.
4 Then Esther's maids and her eunuchs went in, and told her.
And when she heard it she was in consternation. And she sent
a garment, to clothe him, and to take away the sackcloth, but
5 he would not receive it. | And she called for Athach the eu-
nuch, whom the king had appointed to attend upon her, and
she commanded him to go to Mardochai, and learn of him why
6 he did this. | And Athach going out went to Mardochai, who
was standing in the street of the city, before the palace gate. |
7 And Mardochai told him all that had happened, how Aman
had promised to pay money into the king's treasures, to have
the Jews destroyed.

8 ***Mardochai Asks Esther to Intervene*** He gave him al-
so a copy of the edict which was hanging up in Susan: that he
should show it to the queen, and admonish her to go in to the
9 king, and to entreat him for her people. | And Athach went
10 back and told Esther all that Mardochai had said. | She an-
11 swered him, and bade him say to Mardochai: | All the king's
servants, and all the provinces that are under his dominion,
know that whosoever, whether man, or woman, comes into the
king's inner court, who is not called for, is immediately to be
put to death without any delay: except the king shall hold out
the golden scepter to him, in token of clemency, that so he may
live. How then can I go in to the king, who for these thirty
days now have not been called unto him?

3, 15: It is historically unlikely that the Persians ever issued such a decree against the Jews because Esdras and Nehemias depict the Persians as clement toward the Jews.

4, 1: These are the customary mourning rites.

12.13 And when Mardochai had heard this, | he sent word
to Esther again, saying: Think not that you may save your life
only, because you are in the king's house, more than all the
14 Jews. | For if you will now hold your peace, the Jews shall be
delivered by some other occasion: and you, and your father's
house, shall perish. And who knows whether you have not
therefore come to the kingdom, that you might be ready in
such a time as this?
15 And again Esther sent to Mardochai in these words: |
16 Go, and gather together all the Jews whom you shall find in
Susan, and pray for me. Neither eat nor drink for three days
and three nights; and I with my handmaids will fast in like
manner, and then I will go in to the king, against the law, not
17 being called, and expose myself to death and to danger. | So
Mardochai went, and did all that Esther had commanded him.

5

1 ***The King Receives Esther Graciously*** And on the third
day Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner
court of the king's house, opposite the king's hall. Now he sat
upon his throne in the hall of the palace, across the door of the
2 house. | And when he saw Esther the queen standing, she
pleased his eyes, and he held out toward her the golden scepter
which he held in his hand. And she drew near, and kissed the
3 top of his scepter. | And the king said to her: What is your
wish, queen Esther? What do you request? If you should even
4 ask one half of the kingdom, it shall be given to you. | But she
answered: If it pleases the king, I beseech you to come to me this
day, and Aman with you, to the banquet which I have prepared.
5 | And the king said forthwith: Call Aman quickly, that he may
obey Esther's will. So the king and Aman came to the banquet
6 which the queen had prepared for them. | And the king said
to her, after he had drunk wine plentifully: What do you desire
that I shall give to you? And for what thing do you ask? Even if
you should ask the half of my kingdom, you shall have it. |
7.8 And Esther answered: My petition and request in this: | If I
have found favor in the king's sight, and if it pleases the king to
give me what I ask, and to fulfill my petition, let the king and

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4, 14: *By some other occasion:* some other way. Scholars do not know to what this alludes. *And who knows whether you have not therefore come:* maybe, Providence has made you queen to save your people at a critical moment.

4, 16: *Expose myself to death and danger:* Esther's decision of supreme self-sacrifice.

5, 8: The writer has Esther delay her request to create more suspense.

Aman come to the banquet which I have prepared them, and tomorrow I will open my mind to the king.
9 So Aman went out that day joyful and merry. And when he saw Mardochai sitting before the gate of the palace, and that he not only did not rise up to honor him, but did not so much as move from the place where he sat, he was exceedingly angry. |
10 But dissembling his anger, and returning into his house, he
11 called together to him his friends, and Zares his wife. | And he declared to them the greatness of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and with how great glory the king had advanced
12 him above all his princes and servants. | And after this he said: Queen Esther also has invited no other to the banquet with the king but me. And with her I am also to dine tomorrow with the
13 king. | And whereas I have all these things, I think I have nothing, so long as I see Mardochai the Jew sitting before the king's
14 gate. | Then Zares his wife and the rest of his friends answered him: Order a great beam to be prepared, fifty cubits high, and in the morning, speak to the king that Mardochai may be hanged upon it. And so you shall go full of joy with the king to the banquet. The counsel pleased him, and he commanded a high gibbet to be prepared.

6

1 ***The King Honors Mardochai*** That night the king passed without sleep, and he commanded the histories and chronicles of former times to be brought him. And when they were reading
2 them before him, | they came to that place where it was written how Mardochai had discovered the treason of Bagathan and
3 Thares the eunuchs, who sought to kill king Assuerus. | And when the king heard this, he said: What honor and reward has Mardochai received for this fidelity? His servants and minister
4 said to him: He has received no reward at all. | And the king said immediately: Who is in the court? For Aman was coming in to the inner court of the king's house, to speak to the king that he might order Mardochai to be hanged upon the gibbet which was
5 prepared for him. | The servants answered: Aman stands in the court. And the king said: Let him come in.

5, 9: Esther invites Aman to swell his pride, so that its bursting will be all the more dramatically humiliating.
5, 10-12: The author heightens the contrast between Aman's boasting here and his imminent degradation.
5, 14: *Fifty cubits:* about eighty-three feet. A literary exaggeration.
6, 1: The king's inability to sleep is necessary for the development of the plot. *Histories and chronicles:* see 2, 23.
6, 4: Aman must have arrived very early in the morning.

6 And when he came in, he said to him: What ought to be done
to the man whom the king is desirous to honor? But Aman
thinking in his heart, and supposing that the king would honor
7 no other but himself, | answered: The man whom the king
8 desires to honor, | ought to be clothed with the king's apparel,
and to be set upon the horse that the king rides upon, and to
9 have the royal crown upon his head. | And let the first of the
king's princes and nobles hold his horse, and going through the
street of the city, proclaim before him and say: Thus shall he be
10 honored whom the king has a mind to honor. | And the king
said to him: Make haste and take the robe and the horse, and
do as you have spoken to Mardochai the Jew, who sits before
the gates of the palace. Beware you do not pass over any of
those things which you have spoken.
11 So Aman took the robe and the horse, and arraying Mar-
dochai in the street of the city, and setting him on the horse,
went before him, and proclaimed: This honor is he worthy of,
12 whom the king has a mind to honor. | But Mardochai returned
to the palace gate; and Aman made haste to go to his house,
13 mourning and having his head covered. | And he told Zares
his wife, and his friends, all that had befallen him. And the wise
men whom he had in counsel and his wife answered him: If
Mardochai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom you have
begun to fall, you can not resist him, but you shall fall in his
14 sight. | As they were yet speaking, the king's eunuchs came,
and compelled him to go quickly to the banquet which the queen
had prepared.

7

1 ***Esther Saves Her People*** So the king and Aman went in,
2 to drink with the queen. | And the king said to her again the
second day, after he was warm with wine: What is your peti-
tion, Esther, that it may be granted you? And what will you
have me do? Even if you should ask half of my kingdom, you

6, 6: Making Aman decide the honors for his arch-enemy reveals the fine touch of the artist.

6, 8: *Upon his head:* upon the head of the horse. Pointed turbans on the horses of the king are visible on excavated Assyrian reliefs.

6, 11: Xerxes honored Mardochai, after he had agreed to dispatching an anti-Jewish edict, because the king did not realize that he had consented to the massacre of the Jews, or that Mardochai was a Jew. Aman did not name the Jews in his complaint against them (3, 8-11).

6, 12: *Mardochai returned to the palace gate:* he was not promoted to a higher position.

6, 13: See Jdt 5, 25 where the sacred writer also makes a pagan profess the victory of the Jews.

3 shall have it. | Then she answered: If I have found favor in
your sight, O king, and if it pleases you, give me my life for
4 which I ask, and my people for which I request. | For we are
given up, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to
perish. And would God we were sold for bondmen and bond-
women! The evil might be borne with, and I would have
mourned in silence, but now we have an enemy, whose cruelty
5 redounds upon the king. | And king Assuerus answered and
said: Who is this, and of what power, that he should do these
6 things? | And Esther said: It is this Aman that is our adversary
and most wicked enemy. Aman hearing this was forthwith
astonished, not being able to bear the countenance of the king
and of the queen.
7 But the king being angry rose up, and went from the place of
the banquet into the garden set with trees. Aman also rose up
to entreat Esther the queen for his life: for he understood that
8 evil was prepared for him by the king. | And when the king
came back out of the garden set with trees, and entered into the
place of the banquet, he found Aman was fallen upon the bed
on which Esther lay. And he said: He will force the queen also
in my presence, in my own house. The word was not yet gone
out of the king's mouth, and immediately they covered his face.
9 | And Harbona, one of the eunuchs that stood waiting on the
king said: Behold the gibbet which he has prepared for Mar-
dochai, who spoke for the king, stands in Aman's house, being
fifty cubits high. And the king said to him: Hang him upon it.
10 | So Aman was hanged on the gibbet, which he had prepared
for Mardochai; and the king's wrath ceased.

8

1 ***Aman's Letters Are Reversed*** On that day king Assuerus
gave the house of Aman, the Jews' enemy, to queen Esther, and
Mardochai came in before the king: for Esther had confessed to
2 him that he was her uncle. | And the king took the ring which
he had commanded to be taken again from Aman, and gave it
3 to Mardochai. And Esther set Mardochai over her house. | And

7, 3-7: Aman had deceived the king into ordering the extinction of a people which included his own queen. It is for this reason that the king is angry. He still does not realize that Esther and the condemned people are Jews. Even in Esther's request (vv. 3-4), she does not tell the king that she is Jewish. See 6, 11 n.

7, 8: *Aman was fallen upon the bed:* he was most likely pleading at the feet of the queen as she lay on her dining couch. This is a common gesture of supplication. See 8, 3; 4 Kgs 4, 27. The king purposely misconstrues the situation as an excuse to execute him. *They covered his face:* the sign of capital punishment.

not content with these things, she fell down at the king's feet and wept, and speaking to him besought him that he would give orders that the malice of Aman the Agagite, and his most wicked devices which he had invented against the Jews, should
4 be of no effect. | But he, as the manner was, held out the golden scepter with his hand, which was the sign of clemency: and she
5 arose up and stood before him, | and said: If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and my request be not disagreeable to him, I beseech you, that the former letters of Aman the traitor and enemy of the Jews, by which he commanded that they should be destroyed in all the king's provinces,
6 may be reversed by new letters: | for how can I endure the
7 murdering and slaughter of my people? | And king Assuerus answered Esther the queen, and Mardochai the Jew: I have given Aman's house to Esther, and I have commanded him to be hanged on a gibbet, because he dared lay hands on the Jews.
8 | Write therefore to the Jews, as it pleases you, in the king's name, and seal the letters with my ring: for this was the custom that no man dared gainsay the letters which were sent in the king's name, and were sealed with his ring.

9 Then the king's scribes and secretaries were called for (now it was the time of the third month which is called Sîban) the three and twentieth day of the month, and letters were written, as Mardochai had a mind, to the Jews, and to the governors, and to the deputies, and to the judges, who were rulers over the hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India even to Ethiopia: to province and province, to people and people, according to their languages and characters, and to the Jews, ac-
10 cording as they could read and hear. | And these letters which were sent in the king's name, were sealed with his ring, and sent by posts: who were to run through all the provinces, to prevent the former letters with new messages.

11 ***The Revenge of the Jews*** And the king gave orders to them, to speak to the Jews in every city, and to command them to gather themselves together, and to stand for their lives, and to kill and destroy all their enemies with their wives and chil-
12 dren and all their houses, and to take their spoil. | And one day of revenge was appointed through all the provinces, to wit, the
13 thirteenth of the twelfth month Adar. | And this was the content of the letter, that it should be notified in all lands and peo-

8, 11: Scholars agree that the author is penning fiction here when he has a Persian king ordering the execution of his own people, which amounted to "75,000" in 9, 16.

ples that were subject to the empire of king Assuerus, that the
14 Jews were ready to be revenged of their enemies. | So the swift
posts went out carrying the messages: and the king's edict was
hung up in Susan.
15 And Mardochai, going forth out of the palace and from the
king's presence, shone in royal apparel, to wit, of violet and sky
color, wearing a golden crown on his head, and clothed with a
cloak of silk and purple. And all the city rejoiced and was glad.
16 | But to the Jews a new light seemed to rise: joy, honor, and
17 dancing. | And in all peoples, cities, and provinces, wherever
the king's commandments came, there was wonderful rejoicing,
feasts and banquets, and keeping holy day: insomuch that many
of other nations and religion joined themselves to their worship
and ceremonies. For a great dread of the name of the Jews had
fallen upon all.

9

1 ***The Sons of Aman Killed*** So on the thirteenth day of
the twelfth month, which as we have said above is called Adar,
when all the Jews were designed to be massacred, and their
enemies were greedy after their blood, the case being altered, the
Jews began to have the upper hand, and to revenge themselves
2 of their adversaries. | And they gathered themselves together
in every city, and town, and place, to lay their hands on their
enemies, and their persecutors. And no one dared withstand
them: for the fear of their power had gone through every people.
3 | And the judges of the provinces, and the governors, and lieu-
tenants, and every one in dignity, that presided over every place
4 and work, extolled the Jews for fear of Mardochai: | for they
knew him to be prince of the palace, and to have great power.
And the fame of his name increased daily, and was spread
abroad through all men's mouths.
5 So the Jews made a great slaughter of their enemies, and
killed them, repaying according to what they had prepared to
6 do to them. | Insomuch that even in Susan they killed five hun-
dred men, besides the ten sons of Aman the Agagite, the enemy
7 of the Jews. Whose names are these: | Pharsandatha, and
8 Delphon, and Esphatha, | and Phoratha, and Adalia, and Arid-
9 atha, | and Phermesta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Jezatha. |
10 And when they had slain them they would not touch the spoils
11 of their goods. | And presently the number of them that were

9, 2: If this were meant as an historical event, it would be difficult to understand why the non-Jews were so feeble in resisting a minority of Jews.

killed in Susan was brought to the king. | And he said to the queen: The Jews have killed five hundred men in the city of Susan, besides the ten sons of Aman. How many do you think they have slain in all the provinces? What else do you ask, and what will you have me to command to be done? | And she answered: If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews to do tomorrow in Susan as they have done today, and that the ten sons of Aman may be hanged upon gibbets. | And the king commanded that it should be so done. And forthwith the edict was hung up in Susan: and the ten sons of Aman were hanged. | And on the fourteenth day of the month Adar, the Jews gathered themselves together and they killed in Susan three hundred men. But they took not their substance. | Moreover through all the provinces that were subject to the king's dominion, the Jews stood for their lives and slew their enemies and persecutors. Insomuch that the number of them that were killed amounted to seventy-five thousand: and no man took any of their goods.

The Feast of Purim Now the thirteenth day of the month Adar was the first day with them all of the slaughter, and on the fourteenth day they left off: which they ordained to be kept holy day, so that all times hereafter they should celebrate it with feasting, joy, and banquets. | But they that were killing in the city of Susan were employed in the slaughter on the thirteenth and fourteenth day of the same month: and on the fifteenth day they rested. And therefore they appointed that day to be a holy day of feasting and gladness. | But those Jews that dwelt in towns not walled and in villages, appointed the fourteenth day of the month Adar for banquets and gladness, so as to rejoice on that day, and send one another portions of their banquets and meats. | And Mardochai wrote all these things, and sent them comprised in letters to the Jews that abode in all the king's provinces, both those that lay near and those afar off, | that they should receive the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the month Adar for holy days, and always at the return of the

9, 20-32: This section is often interpreted thus: the inspired writer, by a literary fictional license, has Mardochai and Esther "institute" the feast of Purim. This institution by such eminent personages was the author's manner of legalizing and justifying the feast which the Jews had long been celebrating as a secular holiday in rowdy Mardi Gras fashion. (The problem of the origin of the feast itself remains unsolved.) On the occasion of adding vv. 20-32 to enlist the feast of Purim in the official Jewish calendar, where it remains to the present day, the author apparently also added 3, 7 and for the same reason.

9, 21: In the provinces or rural areas the slaughter took place on

22 year should celebrate them with solemn honor: | because on
those days the Jews revenged themselves of their enemies, and
their mourning and sorrow were turned into mirth and joy, and
that these should be days of feasting and gladness, in which
they should send one to another portions of meats, and should
give gifts to the poor.
23 And the Jews undertook to observe with solemnity all they
had begun to do at that time, which Mardochai by letters had
24 commanded to be done: | for Aman, the son of Amadathi of the
race of Agag, the enemy and adversary of the Jews, had de-
vised evil against them, to kill them and destroy them, and had
25 cast Phur, that is, the lot. | And afterward Esther went in to
the king, beseeching him that his endeavors might be made void
by the king's letters; and the evil that he had intended against
the Jews might return upon his own head. And so both he and
26 his sons were hanged upon gibbets. | And since that time these
days are called Phurim, that is, of lots: because Phur, that is,
the lot, was cast into the urn. And all things that were done are
contained in the volume of this epistle, that is, of this book: |
27 and the things that they suffered, and that were afterward
changed, the Jews took upon themselves and their seed, and
upon all that had a mind to be joined to their religion, so that it
should be lawful for none to pass these days without solemnity
which the writing testifies, and certain times require, as the years
28 continually succeed one another. | These are the days which
shall never be forgot: and which all provinces in the whole
world shall celebrate throughout all generations. Neither is there
any city wherein the days of Phurim, that is, of lots, must not
be observed by the Jews, and by their posterity, which is bound
to these ceremonies.
29 And Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mar-
dochai the Jew, wrote also a second epistle, that with all dili-
gence this day should be established a festival for the time to
30 come. | And they sent to all the Jews that were in the hundred
and twenty-seven provinces of king Assuerus, that they should
31 have peace, and receive truth. | And observe the days of lots,
and celebrate them with joy in their proper time, as Mardochai

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the thirteenth of Adar (vv. 16-17) but the celebration was held on the fourteenth (v. 19). In Susa the slaughter took place on the thirteenth and fourteenth but the celebration was held on the fifteenth (v. 18).

9, 26-27: *Because Phur, that is, the lot, was cast into the urn: . . . And all things . . . of this book: . . . And the things afterward changed:* this is best read thus: "Therefore, because of all the words of this letter and of that which they had seen concerning this matter and that which had come to them, the Jews took upon themselves. . . ."

and Esther had appointed. And they undertook them to be observed by themselves and their seed: fasts, and cries, and the days of lots. And all these things are contained in the history of this book, which is called Esther.

10

1 ***The Dream of Mardochai*** And king Assuerus made all
2 the land, and all the islands of the sea, tributary. | And his strength and his empire, and the dignity and greatness wherewith he exalted Mardochai, are written in the books of the
3 Medes, and of the Persians: and how Mardochai, of the race of the Jews, was next after king Assuerus, and great among the Jews, and acceptable to the people of his brethren, seeking the good of his people, and speaking those things which were for the welfare of his seed.
4.5 Then Mardochai said: God has done these things. | I remember a dream that I saw which signified these same things;
6 and nothing thereof has failed. | The little fountain which grew into a river, and was turned into a light, and into the sun, and abounded into many waters, is Esther, whom the king married,
7.8 and made queen. | But the two dragons are I and Aman. | The nations that were assembled are they that endeavored to destroy
9 the name of the Jews. | And my nation is Israel, who cried to the Lord, and the Lord saved his people: and he delivered us from all evils, and has wrought great signs and wonders among
10 the nations. | And he commanded that there should be two lots, one of the people of God, and the other of all the nations. |
11 And both lots came to the day appointed already from that time
12 before God to all nations. | And the Lord remembered his peo-
13 ple, and had mercy on his inheritance. | And these days shall be observed in the month of Adar, on the fourteenth, and fifteenth day of the same month, with all diligence, and joy of

10, 2: Either the author is referring to some Persian or Jewish chronicles, or he is imitating the ending of each reign in the books of Kings.

10, 4—16, 24: St. Jerome placed these chapters of unknown origin as an appendix because they were not in the Hebrew text but only in the Greek text. It is true that they are largely repetitious of 1, 1—10, 3 but the appendix was added most probably to give more of a religious tone to the book in which God is not even mentioned. The common modern Catholic opinion is that the appendix was added after the original Hebrew text (1, 1—10, 3) was written. The Church considers this appendix inspired, but the Jews and Protestants do not.

10, 10: *Two lots:* two destinies.

10, 11: A better translation is: "And both lots came at the hour and the moment and the day of judgment before God and among all the nations."

the people gathered into one assembly, throughout all the generations hereafter of the people of Israel.

11

1 ***Mardochai's Dream Foretold*** In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said he was a priest, and of the Levitical race, and Ptolemy his son brought this epistle of Phurim, which they said Lysimachus the son of
2 Ptolemy had interpreted in Jerusalem. | In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes the Great, in the first day of the month Nisan, Mardochai the son of Jair, the son of Semei, the son of
3 Cis, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Jew who dwelt in the city of Susan, a great man and among the first of the king's court, had
4 a dream. | Now he was of the number of the captives whom Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had carried away from Jerusalem with Jechonias king of Juda.
5 And this was his dream: Behold there were voices, and tumults, and thunders, and earthquakes, and a disturbance upon
6 the earth. | And behold two great dragons came forth ready to
7 fight one against another. | And at their cry all nations were
8 stirred up to fight against the nation of the just. | And that was a day of darkness and danger, of tribulation and distress, and
9 great fear upon the earth. | And the nation of the just was troubled fearing their own evils, and was prepared for death. |
10 And they cried to God: and as they were crying, a little fountain grew into a very great river, and abounded into many waters.
11 | The light and the sun rose up, and the humble were exalted, and they devoured the glorious.
12 And when Mardochai had seen this, and arose out of his bed, he was thinking what God would do: and he kept it fixed in his mind, desirous to know what the dream should signify.

12

1 ***The Conspiracy against the King Recorded*** And he abode at that time in the king's court, with Bagatha and Thara
2 the king's eunuchs, who were porters of the palace. | And when he understood their designs, and had diligently searched into their projects, he learned that they went about to lay violent
3 hands on king Artaxerxes: and he told the king thereof. | Then

11, 1: Between 144 and 48 B.C. a Jewish community living in Egypt received the Book of Esther ("epistle of Purim") from Jerusalem where it was translated ("interpreted") by Lysimachus.
11, 2-4: A free repetition of 2, 5-6.
11, 6: A repetition of 10, 7.
12, 1-3: A free repetition of 2, 21-23.

the king had them both examined, and after they had confessed,
4 commanded them to be put to death. | But the king made a
record of what was done: and Mardochai also committed the
5 memory of the thing to writing. | And the king commanded
him to abide in the court of the palace, and gave him presents
6 for the information. | But Aman the son of Amadathi the
Bugite was in great honor with the king, and sought to hurt
Mardochai and his people, because of the two eunuchs of the
king who were put to death.

13

1 ***Text of the Letter Sent by Aman*** And this was the copy
of the letter: Artaxerxes, the great king who reigns from India
to Ethiopia, to the princes and governors of the hundred and
twenty-seven provinces, that are subject to his empire, greeting.
2 Whereas I reigned over many nations, and had brought all the
world under my dominion, I was not willing to abuse the great-
ness of my power, but to govern my subjects with clemency
and lenity that they might live quietly without any terror, and
3 might enjoy peace, which is desired by all men. | But when I
asked my counselors how this might be accomplished, one that
excelled the rest in wisdom and fidelity, and was second after
4 the king, Aman by name, | told me that there was a people
scattered through the whole world, which used new laws, and
acted against the customs of all nations, despised the command-
ments of kings, and violated by their opposition the concord of
5 all nations. | Wherefore having learned this, and seeing one
nation in opposition to all mankind using perverse laws, and
going against our commandments, and disturbing the peace and
6 concord of the provinces subject to us, | we have commanded
that all whom Aman shall mark out, who is chief over all the
provinces, and second after the king, and whom we honor as a
father, shall be utterly destroyed by their enemies, with their
wives and children, and that none shall have pity on them, on
the fourteenth day of the twelfth month Adar of this present
7 year. | And that these wicked men going down to hell in one
day, may restore to our empire the peace which they had
disturbed.

8 ***Mardochai's Prayer*** But Mardochai besought the Lord,

13, 1-7: An expansion of the king's decree in 3, 12-13.

13, 7: *Hell:* abode of all the dead.

13, 8-17: The Roman Liturgy uses this, except vv. 12-14, as the Epistle of the votive Mass for pagans and for Wednesday in the second week of Lent.

9 remembering all his works, | and said: O Lord, Lord, almighty
King, for all things are in your power, and there is none that
10 can resist your will, if you determine to save Israel. | You
have made heaven and earth, and all things that are under the
11 cope of heaven. | You are Lord of all: and there is none that
12 can resist your majesty. | You know all things: and you know
that it was not out of pride and contempt, or any desire of glory,
13 that I refused to worship the proud Aman, | (for I would will-
ingly and readily for the salvation of Israel have kissed even the
14 steps of his feet), | but I feared lest I should transfer the honor
of my God to a man, and lest I should adore any one except my
15 God. | And now, O Lord, O King, O God of Abraham, have
mercy on your people, because our enemies resolve to destroy us,
16 and extinguish your inheritance. | Despise not your portion,
17 which you have redeemed for yourself out of Egypt. | Hear my
supplication, and be merciful to your lot and inheritance, and
turn our mourning into joy, that we may live and praise your
name, O Lord, and shut not the mouths of them that sing to
you.
18 And all Israel with like mind and supplication cried to the
Lord, because they saw certain death hanging over their heads.

14

1 ***The Prayer of Esther*** Queen Esther also, fearing the dan-
2 ger that was at hand, had recourse to the Lord. | And when she
had laid away her royal apparel, she put on garments suitable
for weeping and mourning. Instead of divers precious ointments,
she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she humbled
her body with fasts: and all the places in which before she
3 was accustomed to rejoice, she filled with her torn hair. | And
she prayed to the Lord the God of Israel, saying: O my Lord,
who alone are our king, help me, a desolate woman, who has no
4.5 other helper but you. | My danger is in my hands. | I have
heard of my father that you, O Lord, have taken Israel from
among all nations, and our fathers from all their predecessors,
to possess them as an everlasting inheritance. And you have
6 done to them as you have promised. | We have sinned in your
sight, and therefore you have delivered us into the hands of
7 our enemies: | for we have worshiped their gods. You are just,
8 O Lord. | And now they are not content to oppress us with most
hard bondage, but attributing the strength of their hands to the
9 power of their idols, | they design to change your promises,

13, 14: For a different version, see 3, 4 n.
14, 2: *And all the places:* of her body. *To rejoice:* to adorn.

and destroy your inheritance, and shut the mouths of them that praise you, and extinguish the glory of your temple and altar,
10 | that they may open the mouths of the Gentiles, and praise the strength of idols, and magnify for ever a carnal king.
11 Give not, O Lord, your scepter to them that are not, lest they laugh at our ruin, but turn their counsel upon themselves, and
12 destroy him that has begun to rage against us. | Remember, O Lord, and show yourself to us in the time of our tribulation and give me boldness, O Lord, king of gods, and of all power. |
13 Give me a well ordered speech in my mouth, in the presence of the lion, and turn his heart to the hatred of our enemy that both he himself may perish, and the rest that consent to him. |
14 But deliver us by your hand, and help me, who has no other helper, but you, O Lord, who has the knowledge of all things. |
15 And you know that I hate the glory of the wicked, and abhor
16 the bed of the uncircumcised, and of every stranger. | You know my necessity: that I abominate the sign of my pride and glory, which is upon my head in the days of my public appearance, and detest it as a menstruous rag, and wear it not in the
17 days of my silence; | and that I have not eaten at Aman's table nor has the king's banquet pleased me; and that I have not
18 drunk the wine of the drink offerings, | and that your handmaid has never rejoiced, since I was brought here unto this day, but
19 in you, O Lord, the God of Abraham. | O God, who are mighty above all, hear the voice of them, that have no other hope: and deliver us from the hand of the wicked. And deliver me from my fear.

15

1 ***Esther before the King*** And he commanded her (no doubt but he was Mardochai) to go to the king, and petition
2 for her people, and for her country. | Remember (said he) the days of your low estate, how you were brought up by my hand, because Aman, the second after the king, has spoken against us
3 unto death. | And do you call upon the Lord, and speak to the king for us, and deliver us from death.
4 And on the third day she laid away the garments she wore,
5 and put on her glorious apparel. | And glittering in royal robes, after she had called upon God the ruler and savior of all, she
6 took two maids with her, | and upon one of them she leaned, as if for delicateness and overmuch tenderness she were not able to
7 bear up her own body. | And the other maid followed her lady,
8 bearing up her train flowing on the ground. | But she with a rosy color in her face, and with gracious and bright eyes, hid a mind full of anguish and exceeding great fear.

9 So going in she passed through all the doors in order, and
stood before the king, where he sat upon his royal throne, clothed
with his royal robes, and glittering with gold and precious
10 stones: and he was terrible to behold. | And when he had lifted
up his countenance, and with burning eyes had shown the wrath
of his heart, the queen sunk down, and her color turned pale:
11 and she rested her weary head upon her handmaid. | And God
changed the king's spirit into mildness, and all in haste and in
fear he leaped from his throne, and holding her up in his arms,
12 till she came to herself, caressed her with these words: | What
13 is the matter, Esther? I am your brother, fear not. | You shall
not die: for this law is not made for you, but for all others. |
14.15 Come near then; and touch the scepter. | And as she held her
peace, he took the golden scepter, and laid it upon her neck, and
16 kissed her, and said: Why do you not speak to me? | She an-
swered: I saw you, my lord, as an angel of God: and my heart
17 was troubled for fear of your majesty. | For you, my lord, are
18 very admirable, and your face is full of graces. | And while
she was speaking, she fell down again, and was almost in a
19 swoon. | But the king was troubled, and all his servants com-
forted her.

16

1 ***The King's Letter in Favor of the Jews*** The great king
Artaxerxes, from India to Ethiopia, to the governors and princes
of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, which obey our com-
2 mand, sends greeting. | Many have abused unto pride the good-
ness of princes and the honor that has been bestowed upon
3 them. | And they not only endeavor to oppress the king's sub-
jects, but not bearing the glory that is given them, take in hand
4 to practice also against them that gave it. | Neither are they
content not to return thanks for benefits received, and to violate
in themselves the laws of humanity, but they think they can
5 also escape the justice of God who sees all things. | And they
break out into so great madness, as to endeavor to undermine
by lies such as observe diligently the offices committed to them,
and do all things in such manner as to be worthy of all men's
6 praise, | while with crafty fraud they deceive the ears of princes
that are well meaning, and judge of others by their own nature.
7 | Now this is proved both from ancient histories, and by the
things which are done daily, how the good designs of kings are

15, 12: *I am your brother:* an intimate term.
16, 1-24: The king's decree is an expansion of 8, 9-12.

depraved by the evil suggestions of certain men. | Wherefore we must provide for the peace of all provinces. | Neither must you think, if we command different things, that it comes of the levity of our mind, but that we give sentence according to the quality and necessity of times, as the profit of the commonwealth requires.

Now that you may more plainly understand what we say, Aman the son of Amadathi, a Macedonian both in mind and country, and having nothing of the Persian blood, but with his cruelty staining our goodness, was received being a stranger by us: | and found our humanity so great toward him, that he was called our father, and was worshiped by all as the next man after the king. | But he was so far puffed up with arrogancy as to go about to deprive us of our kingdom and life. | For, with certain new and unheard of devices, he has sought the destruction of Mardochai, by whose fidelity and good services our life was saved, and of Esther the partner of our kingdom, with all their nation: thinking that after they were slain, he might work treason against us left alone without friends, and might transfer the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians. | But we have found that the Jews, who were by that most wicked man appointed to be slain, are in no fault at all, but contrariwise, use just laws, | and are the children of the highest and greatest, and the ever living God, by whose benefit the kingdom was given both to our fathers and to us, and is kept unto this day.

Wherefore know you that those letters which he sent in our name, are void and of no effect: for which crime both he himself that devised it, and all his kindred hang on gibbets before the gates of this city Susan, not we, but God repaying him as he deserved. | But this edict, which we now send, shall be published in all cities, that the Jews may freely follow their own laws. | And you shall aid them that they may kill those who had prepared themselves to kill them, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is called Adar. | For the almighty God has turned this day of sadness and mourning into joy to them. | Wherefore you shall also count this day among other festival days, and celebrate it with all joy that it may be known also in times to come, | that all they who faithfully obey the Persians, receive a worthy reward for their fidelity. But they that are traitors to their kingdom, are destroyed for their wickedness. | And let every province and city, that will not be partaker of this solemnity, perish by the sword and by fire, and be destroyed in such manner as to be made unpassable, both to men and beasts, for an example of contempt and disobedience

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF WISDOM

There are seven inspired Wisdom (sapiential) books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (called Coheleth in the Hebrew Bible), Canticle of Canticles or Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (called Sirach or Ben Sirah in the Hebrew Bible). The last two are not recognized as inspired by Jews and Protestants.

The Israelites were born into a world wherein people already read Mesopotamian and Egyptian classics on wisdom literature. The wisdom learned by the Hebrews in Egypt may be loosely termed: "How to win friends and influence people." This included a code of private, social, and business conduct. The Hebrews baptized the Egyptian wisdom with the belief in the one true God. Skilled workers, artists, and judges who collaborated with Moses were called wise men. Later, in the tenth century, wisdom reached a new peak in king Solomon. Although Solomon himself must have written some proverbs, it is very difficult to identify them. His reputation as a wise administrator, organizer, and man of sound inborn judgment impressed his people to such an extent that future wisdom writers ascribed four of their Wisdom books to him. In the light of this, Solomon may be called the initiator of Israel's literary sapiential movement. What was said of Moses as "author" of the Pentateuch (see Introduction to the Pentateuch) goes for Solomon as author of the Wisdom Books.

After 538 B.C. wisdom literature enjoyed its golden age. Wisdom in Israel has been practical, ethical, and religious. Wisdom has been characteristically identified as "fear of the Lord," which means rendering to God his due, i.e., in practice, sanctity. Now we may understand the "leitmotiv" of sapiential literature: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning (essence) of wisdom." How superior this wisdom was in comparison with the sophisticated wisdom of the contemporary Greek philosophers! The themes most discussed by the wise men or sages were suffering and retribution, or: "why does God allow the just to suffer and the wicked to prosper?" The complete answer was to be found in the concept of eternal retribution in the last two centuries B.C. and in the New Testament. The Wisdom Books treat wisdom not only as a human quality but, more especially, as a divine quality. As an attribute of God, its first characteristic is that it is the synthesis of all divine attributes. The roles commonly assigned to omnipotence, justice, mercy, love of predilection for Israel, are indiscriminately attributed to divine wisdom. Its second characteristic is the personification of God's wisdom, e.g., like God, wisdom pre-existed and collaborated "as an architect" at the formation and in the governing of the universe.

We may have been wondering how the wise men fitted in with

the other community leaders, the priests and the prophets (Jer 18, 18). Priests taught the law and carried out the ceremonies. The prophets preached what God revealed to them directly. The sages did not insist on the cult and the law, but they were the M.A.'s of Israel, the learned scribes. They instructed, corrected, and counseled. The counseling included, at times, such diverse subjects as how to fare best in politics, and proper etiquette in child pedagogy. The pedagogical hallmark was the "mashal," i.e., a comparison, teaching a practical lesson. The mashal can be broken down to proverbs, parables, allegories, riddles, etc. What syllogism is in the pedagogy of Aristotle and of the scholastic philosophers, the mashal is in the pedagogy of the wise men.

THE BOOK OF JOB

INTRODUCTION

The ancient Semites usually embroidered upon a tale rather than created it entirely anew. Therefore, there probably was an historical Job who was known for his resignation to God.

According to the majority of scholars, a brilliant anonymous Israelite poet wrote the Book of Job in the fifth century B.C., after having found an ancient tale, written or oral, which he used as the setting of his problem in the poetic dialogue (3—31). The old story (the prose prologue in chapters 1—2 and epilogue, in 42, 7-17), was about a certain Job who was the type of an innocent sufferer.

It is too difficult to trace the modifications of this tale and how the fifth century author altered the story. There is no Old Testament book that depends so much on analysis for its meaning as Job does. Since there is no agreement on much of the analysis, there is naturally not much agreement on the finer points, at least, on the meaning of Job. The poor order of some parts and numerous unintelligible words do not help the interpretation. In the prose prologue (1—2), Satan alleges that Job is holy only because he is prosperous. God allows Satan to test Job by depriving him of everything, including his health.

In the poetic dialogue (3—31), three friends of Job try to convince him that his sufferings are punishment for his sins and that he should accept it. This is according to the teaching of the traditional view. Job denies it. Unexpectedly, Eliu enters (32—37) and tries to improve on the arguments of the three friends. Then God answers Job in two poetic speeches and Job repents (38, 1—42, 6). In the prose epilogue (42, 7-17), God rebukes the three friends and answers Job.

The literary form has been called a debate, a dialogue, or a psychological drama. None of these opinions affect the meaning of the book. What was the author's purpose in writing the book? What question was he trying to solve? In general, it was the problem of human suffering. The traditional theory of Israel and of the wisdom writers or sages was: man is, in an earthly way, rewarded for a virtuous life and punished for

an evil life. The author asked the question that was on the lips of many before, during, and after his time: Why do the just suffer and the wicked prosper? The question, therefore, may be put thus: Is God just?

Job ends by making an act of faith in God's justice. Job cannot answer his question, but he repudiates the traditional teaching of the three friends. Parenthetically, Plato reached the conclusion through the sheer logic of justice, namely, since man is not punished in this life for his evil deeds, he must be so punished in an afterlife, not just for retaliation, but for the purification of sinners. Job arrived at this brink but never made the leap.

The fuller answer to Job's problem was to come only in the New Testament, i.e., the eternal reward of the beatific vision and the resurrection of the body. And even for us, the question remains unanswered on a rational level.

If there is one biblical work which can take its place with the masterpieces of world literature, it is the Book of Job. It is the greatest poetic work of the Bible. The theme of the Book of Job, the innocent sufferer, and its literary presentation were common in the literature of antiquity. Egyptian parallels date as far back as about 800 B.C., such as *The Egyptian Tale of the Eloquent Peasant.* The most famous Mesopotamian parallel, dating from 1,000 B.C., is entitled: "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom." One important difference is that Job stresses his innocence; the "Babylonian Job," as the Mesopotamian parallel is often called, stresses his ritual acts. A recently discovered Sumerian poem resembles the Job motif even more closely than any Mesopotamian parallel. The "Sumerian Job" dates from about 1,800 B.C.

India's story of Hariscandra resembles Job. Of all the Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the closest parallel is Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound.* The probability that the biblical author depended on the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Indian, and Greek works is remote. His roots seem to stretch back into the Old Testament. Although many of these parallels are older than the biblical Job, they are inferior in depth of insight and, almost always, even in literary style.

Job's influence on modern poets is worthy of lengthy investigation. Dante's *Divine Comedy* comes closer to Job in the description of Nature than Goethe or Milton. In Goethe's *Faust* the greatness of his hero lies in his intellect; in Job, it lies in his virtue (Cheyne). Perhaps the closest parallel in English literature to Job is Milton's *Paradise Lost.* The common ground of these masterpieces is: intense emotion, sensitiveness to nature, high ideals and an elevated style. A more modern literary work is Herman Melville's *Moby Dick.*

Main divisions of the Book of Job are:

1. Prologue, 1—2
2. First Cycle of Speeches, 3—14
3. Second Cycle of Speeches, 15—21
4. Third Cycle of Speeches, 22—28
5. Job's Final Summary of His Cause, 29—31
6. Eliu's Speeches, 32—37
7. The Lord's Speech, 38, 1—42, 6
8. Epilogue, 42, 7-17

I. PROLOGUE

1

1 ***Job's Wealth and Piety*** In the land of Us there was a
blameless and upright man named Job, who feared God and
2 avoided evil. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him;
3 and he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five
hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and a great num-
ber of work animals, so that he was greater than any of the men
4 of the East. His sons used to take turns giving feasts, sending
invitations to their three sisters to eat and drink with them.
5 And when each feast had run its course, Job would send for
them and sanctify them, rising early and offering holocausts for
every one of them. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have
sinned and blasphemed God in their hearts." This Job did
habitually.

6 One day, when the sons of God came to present themselves
7 before the Lord, Satan also came among them. And the Lord
said to Satan, "Whence do you come?" Then Satan answered
the Lord and said, "From roaming the earth and patrolling it."
8 And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job,
and that there is no one on earth like him, blameless and up-
9 right, fearing God and avoiding evil?" But Satan answered the
10 Lord and said, "Is it for nothing that Job is God-fearing? | Have
you not surrounded him and his family and all that he has with
your protection? You have blessed the work of his hands, and
11 his livestock are spread over the land. But now put forth your
hand and touch anything that he has, and surely he will blas-
12 pheme you to your face." And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold,
all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand upon
his person." So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

1—2: The prologue is written for edification and not as history, since, e.g., the numbers are inflated, Satan is cast with a dash of the humoresque, which is in Goethe's *Faust* transferred in exaggerated form to Mephistopheles. In each of the four catastrophes that occur within one day, one person escapes to tell Job. Most important of all, Job is not punished, but the disinterestedness of his devotion is tested. Yet, Job upholds Yahweh's honor by remaining devoted to him. (1, 22).

1, 1: *Us:* an ancient town of Edom, probably in modern Jordan or Saudi Arabia.

1, 2-5: The background of this folktale seems to be similar to that of the patriarchs of about the fifteenth century B.C.: Job is a patriarch wealthy in material things as well as in piety.

1, 3: *Of the East:* of Palestine.

1, 6: *Sons of God:* angels file before God, who is seated on his throne like an oriental potentate.

1, 10-11: Satan here is not a tempter to evil.

13 ***The First Trial*** And so one day, while his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their
14 eldest brother, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen
15 were plowing and the asses grazing beside them, | and the Sabeans carried them off in a raid. They put the herdsmen to
16 the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was yet speaking, another came and said, "Lightning has fallen from heaven and struck the sheep and their shepherds and con-
17 sumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was yet speaking, another came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three columns, seized the camels, carried them off, and put those tending them to the sword, and I alone have escaped
18 to tell you." While he was yet speaking, another came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in
19 the house of their eldest brother, when suddenly a great wind came across the desert and smote the four corners of the house. It fell upon the young people and they are dead; and I alone
20 have escaped to tell you." Then Job began to tear his cloak and cut off his hair. He cast himself prostrate upon the ground,
21 and said, "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked I shall go back again. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"
22 In all this Job did not sin, nor did he say anything disrespectful of God.

2

1 ***The Second Trial*** Once again the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with
2 them. And the Lord said to Satan, "Whence do you come?" And Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming the
3 earth and patrolling it." And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job, and that there is no one on earth like him, faultless and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil? He still holds fast to his innocence although you incited me against

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1, 15: *Sabeans:* the term is used to mean Arabic nomads rather than raiders from the land of the Queen of Sheba.

1, 17: *Chaldeans:* the term is used to mean desert tribes who came from the Chaldeans of Babylonia, rather than the Chaldeans of Nabuchodonosor.

1, 20: These are the customary expressions of grief.

1, 21: We may consider this verse a parallel to Gn 3, 19, "dust you are. . . ." The deep truth embedded in this often quoted verse is that God is free to do what he wants with his gifts.

The proverbial patience of Job in the New Testament and among the early Christian writings comes in part from the folktale, which is best expressed by this verse.

him to ruin him without cause." And Satan answered the Lord
4 and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has will he give for his
5 life. But now put forth your hand and touch his bone and his
6 flesh, and surely he will blaspheme you to your face." And the
Lord said to Satan, "He is in your power; only spare his life."
7 So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote
Job with severe boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of
8 his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself, as he sat
9 among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, "Are you still hold-
10 ing to your innocence? Curse God and die." | But he said to
her, "Are even you going to speak as senseless women do? We
accept good things from God; and should we not accept evil?"
Through all this, Job said nothing sinful.

11 ***Job's Three Friends*** Now when three of Job's friends
heard of all the misfortune that had come upon him, they set
out each one from his own place: Eliphaz from Theman, Baldad
from Sue, and Sophar from Naama. They met and journeyed
12 together to give him sympathy and comfort. But when, at a
distance, they lifted up their eyes and did not recognize him,
they began to weep aloud; they tore their cloaks and threw dust
13 upon their heads. Then they sat down upon the ground with
him seven days and seven nights, but none of them spoke a
word to him; for they saw how great was his suffering.

II. FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES

3

1 ***Job's Plaint*** After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed
2 his day. Job spoke out and said:
3 Perish the day on which I was born, the night when they
4 said, "The child is a boy!" | May that day be darkness: let not
5 God above call for it, nor light shine upon it! | May darkness

2, 4: *Skin for skin:* a proverb here meaning that Job, due to his losses, has become pious so as not to lose more, and in the hope for a greater reward if he continues in his piety.

2, 5: Satan suggests that God now touch Job himself for the crucial test.

2, 7: *Boils:* the Hebrew word means any skin eruption. The ancients used generic words for diseases because their knowledge of medicine was very limited. It does not seem rewarding to piece together all Job's symptoms to identify the illness.

2, 8: *Ashes:* Job may have sat here to arrest the itching. In some eastern towns the "town dump" on the outskirts of town is still seen.

2, 11-13: These verses may have been aided by the author to introduce his dialogue in 3—31. The names are mostly Edomite.

and gloom claim it, clouds settle upon it, the blackness of night
6 affright it! | May obscurity seize that day; let it not occur
among the days of the year, nor enter into the count of the
7 months! | May that night be barren; let no joyful outcry greet
8 it! | Let them curse it who curse the sea, the appointed dis-
9 turbers of Leviathan! | May the stars of its twilight be dark-
ened; may it look for daylight, but have none, nor gaze on the
10 eyes of the dawn, | because it kept not shut the doors of the
womb to shield my eyes from trouble!
11 Why did I not perish at birth, come forth from the womb
16 and expire? | Or why was I not buried away like an untimely
12 birth, like babes that have never seen the light? | Wherefore did
the knees receive me? or why did I suck at the breasts?
13 For then I should have lain down and been tranquil; had I
14 slept, I should then have been at rest | with kings and counselors
15 of the earth who built where now there are ruins, or with
princes who had gold and filled their houses with silver; |
17 there the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at
18 rest. | There the captives are at ease together, and hear not the
19 voice of the slave driver. | Small and great are there the same,
and the servant is free from his master.
20 Why is light given to the toilers, and life to the bitter in
21 spirit? | They wait for death and it comes not; they search for
22 it rather than for hidden treasures, | rejoice in it exultingly,
23 and are glad when they reach the grave: | men whose path is
hidden from them, and whom God has hemmed in!
24 For sighing comes more readily to me than food, and my
25 groans well forth like water. | For what I fear overtakes me,

3, 8: *Leviathan:* a frequent term in the Old Testament, here meaning a mythological sea dragon, personified as the primeval chaos at the time of the creation of the world.

The ancients always feared the awakening of the dragon because of an efficacious curse against the existing order of things. This is the background against which Job asks that those who curse with the hope of having Leviathan reign again, which would mean the destruction of the world, may also curse the day of his birth.

3, 16: This verse has been placed between vv. 11 and 12 where it probably stood originally. There is reason to believe that here, as well as in several other places in Job, the original order of the poetic lines was accidentally disturbed in the early transmission of the text; so in chs. 12—15; 19—21; 24—31; 34; 36; 38—42. The verse numbers given in such cases are always those of the current Hebrew text, though the arrangement may differ.

3, 13: *Been tranquil:* in the nether world.

3, 20: This means: why does God make miserable people live who want to die?

3, 23: *Hemmed in:* prevented from escaping life's sorrows.

26 and what I shrink from comes upon me. | I have no peace nor
ease; I have no rest, for trouble comes!

4

1 ***Eliphaz's First Speech*** Then spoke Eliphaz the Themanite,
who said:
2 If someone attempts a word with you, will you mind? For how
3 can anyone refrain from speaking? | Behold, you have in-
structed many, and have made firm their feeble hands. |
4 Your words have upheld the stumbler; you have strengthened
5 his faltering knees. | But now that it comes to you, you are
6 impatient; when it touches yourself, you are dismayed. | Is not
your piety a source of confidence, and your integrity of life your
hope?
7 Reflect now, what innocent person perishes? Since when are
8 the upright destroyed? | As I see it, those who plow for mischief
9 and sow trouble, reap the same. | By the breath of God they
perish, and by the blast of his wrath they are consumed. |
10 Though the lion roars, though the king of beasts cries out, yet
11 the teeth of the young lions are broken; | the old lion perishes
for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.
12 For a word was stealthily brought to me, and my ear caught
13 a whisper of it. | In my thoughts during visions of the night,
14 when deep sleep falls on men, | fear came upon me, and shud-
15 dering, that terrified me to the bones. | Then a spirit passed
16 before me, and the hair of my flesh stood up. | It paused, but
its likeness I could not discern; a figure was before my eyes,
and I heard a still voice:
17 "Can a man be righteous as against God? Can a mortal be
18 blameless against his Maker? | Lo, he puts no trust in his

3, 26: It seems that already Job's first complaint is not about physical but about mental suffering.

4, 1: Eliphaz is the oldest and wisest, the most dignified and the best speaker of the three friends.

4, 7-9: Eliphaz here insinuates that Job is being punished for some wrong he did. The traditional theory of retribution underlies Eliphaz's thinking.

4, 10-11: A metaphorical way of saying that though Job roars with complaint against God (10a), his children still died (10b, 11b).

4, 12-21: The poet has Eliphaz undergo a nightly vision (12-16) in which he learns the lesson: if angels are faulty in comparison with God, how much more, then, is man who can die so fast (20-21a). Hence, accept punishment no matter how blameless you think your life was.

4, 18: *He:* God. *Servants:* a synonym for angels. The underlying popular belief here is that angels, even though superior to man, are limited in intellect and will. This is true, but we know more today about how superior angels are to man than the Israelites knew at this time.

19 servants, and with his angels he can find fault. | How much
more with those that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation
is in the dust, who are crushed more easily than the moth! |
20 Morning or evening they may be shattered; with no heed
21 paid to it, they perish forever. | The pegs of their tent are
plucked up; they die without knowing wisdom."

5

1 Call now! Will anyone respond to you? To which of the holy
2 ones will you appeal? | Nay, impatience kills the fool and
3 indignation slays the simpleton. | I have seen a fool spreading
4 his roots, but his household suddenly decayed. | His children
shall be far from safety; they shall be crushed at the gate with-
5 out a rescuer. | What they have reaped the hungry shall eat up;
[or God shall take it away by blight;] and the thirsty shall
swallow their substance.
6 For mischief comes not out of the earth, nor does trouble
7 spring out of the ground; | but man himself begets mischief,
8 as sparks fly upward. | In your place, I would appeal to God,
9 and to God I would state my plea. | [He does great things and
10 inscrutable, marvelous things without number;] | he gives rain
11 upon the earth and sends water upon the fields; | he sets up
on high the lowly, and those who mourn he exalts to safety.
12 He frustrates the plans of the cunning, so that their hands
13 achieve no success; | he catches the wise in their own ruses, and
14 the designs of the crafty are routed. | They meet with darkness
in the daytime, and at noonday they grope as though it were
15 night. | But the poor from the edge of the sword and from the
16 hand of the mighty, he saves. | Thus the unfortunate have
hope, and iniquity closes her mouth.
17 Happy is the man whom God reproves! The Almighty's
18 chastening do not reject. | For he wounds, but he binds up;
19 he smites, but his hands give healing. | Out of six troubles he
will deliver you, and at the seventh no evil shall touch you. |

4, 21a: This is an apt example for nomads to express how fast a person can die.
4, 21b: One probable meaning is: they die prematurely.
5, 1: *Holy ones:* angels.
5, 3a: A moral fool prospering.
5, 4b: *Gate:* of the city where court trials are held.
5, 6-7: Just as easily *as sparks fly upward,* man himself, not things, causes moral trouble.
5, 9: This verse is accidentally repeated here from 9, 10.
5, 17-26: Man is happy if he can profit from God's punishment.
5, 19: A proverbial expression for "many." If you are submissive, God will rescue you from many troubles.

20 In famine he will deliver you from death, and in war from the
21 threat of the sword; | from the scourge of the tongue you
shall be hidden, and shall not fear approaching ruin.
22 At destruction and want you shall laugh; the beasts of the
23 earth you need not dread. | You shall be in league with the
stones of the field, and the wild beasts shall be at peace with
24 you. | And you shall know that your tent is secure; taking
25 stock of your household, you shall miss nothing. | You shall
know that your descendants are many, and your offspring as
26 the grass of the earth. | You shall approach the grave in full
27 vigor, as a shock of grain comes in at its season. | Lo, this we
have searched out; so it is! This we have heard, and you should
know.

6

1 ***Job's First Reply*** Then Job answered and said:
2 Ah, could my anguish but be measured and my calamity
3 laid with it in the scales, | they would now outweigh the sands
4 of the sea! Because of this I speak without restraint. | For the
arrows of the Almighty pierce me, and my spirit drinks in their
5 poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me. | Does
the wild ass bray when he has grass? Does the ox low over his
6 fodder? | Can a thing insipid be eaten without salt? Is there
7 flavor in the white of an egg? | I refuse to touch them; they
are loathsome food to me.
8 Oh, that I might have my request, and that God would grant
9 what I long for: | even that God would decide to crush me,
10 that he would put forth his hand and cut me off! | Then I
should still have consolation and could exult through unremit-
ting pain, because I have not transgressed the commands of the
11 Holy One. | What strength have I that I should endure? and
12 what is my limit that I should be patient? | Have I the strength
13 of stones, or is my flesh of bronze? | Have I no helper, and

5, 23a: An allusion to the numerous stones which impeded farming. If you are submissive, the stones will not accumulate to ruin your farm lands.

5, 27: *Searched out:* studied carefully.

6—7: Job's replies are not according to the logic of a modern debater who answers one charge after another in orderly succession. Job elaborates his own view.

6, 5-6: Just as satisfied animals are quiet, so would Job be quiet if he had nothing to complain about (5), but his life is as disagreeable as eating tasteless food.

6, 8-10: Job hopes for death.

6, 11-13: Job has no more strength to live.

has advice deserted me? | A friend owes kindness to one in
despair, though he have forsaken the fear of the Almighty.
My brethren are undependable as a brook, as streams that
run dry in the wadies; | though they may be black with ice,
and absorb the snows, | yet once they shrink, they vanish; in
the heat, they disappear from their place. | Caravans turn
aside from their routes; they go into the desert and perish. |
The caravans of Thema search, the companies of Saba have
hopes; | they are disappointed, though they were confident;
they come there and are frustrated.
It is thus that you have now become for me; you see a
terrifying thing and are afraid. | Have I asked you to give me
anything, to offer a gift for me from your possessions, |
or to deliver me from the enemy, or to redeem me from oppres-
sors? | Teach me, and I will be silent; prove to me wherein I
have erred. How sickly are your self-righteous words; how
unconvincing is your argument! | Do you consider your words
as proof, but the sayings of a desperate man as wind? | You
would even cast lots for the orphan, and would barter away
your friend!
Come, now, give me your attention; surely I will not lie to
your face. | Think it over; let there be no injustice. Think it
over; I still am right. | Is there insincerity on my tongue, or
cannot my taste discern falsehood?

7

Is not man's life on earth a drudgery? Are not his days those
of a hireling? | He is a slave who longs for the shade, a hireling
who waits for his wages. | So I have been assigned months of
misery, and troubled nights have been told off for me.
If in bed I say, "When shall I arise?" Then the night drags
on; I am filled with restlessness until the dawn. | My flesh is
clothed with worms and scabs; my skin cracks and festers; |
my days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle; they come to an
end without hope. | Remember that my life is like the wind; I
shall not see happiness again. | The eye that now sees me
shall no more behold me; as you look at me, I shall be gone. |

6, 15-20: Job's friends are as disappointing as a desert brook that is dry just when caravans need it most.

6, 27: Job compares the hardness of his friends to creditors who would bargain for the orphan of a debtor to sell the child into slavery (27a), or to men who bargain over a friend (27b).

6, 28-30: Job explicitly challenges his friends. He is really innocent and he is reliable when he claims he has not sinned.

7, 1-10: Job soliloquizes on his miserable state.

9 As a cloud dissolves and vanishes, so he who goes down to the
nether world shall come up no more.
10 He shall not again return to his house; his place shall know
11 him no more. | My own utterance I will not restrain; I will
speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitter-
12 ness of my soul. | Am I the sea, or a monster of the deep, that
13 you place a watch over me? | When I say, "My bed shall
14 comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint," | then you
15 affright me with dreams and with visions terrify me, | so that
16 I should prefer choking and death rather than my pains. | I
waste away: I cannot live forever; let me alone, for my days are
but a breath.
17 What is man, that you make much of him, or pay him any
18 heed? | You observe him with each new day and try him at
19 every moment! | How long will it be before you look away
from me, and let me alone long enough to swallow my spittle?
20 | Though I have sinned, what can I do to you, O watcher of
men? Why have you set me up as an object of attack; or why
21 should I be a burden to you? Why do you not pardon my
offense, or take away my guilt? For soon I shall lie down in the
dust; and should you seek me I shall then be gone.

8

1 ***Baldad's First Speech*** Baldad the Sueite spoke out and
said:
2 How long will you utter such things? The words from your
3 mouth are like a mighty wind! | Does God pervert judgment,

7, 11-21: Job, turning from his friends, addresses God and asks why He tortures him so much.

7, 12: The sea, or deep, is personified. For the Hebrew idea of the world, see chart on p. 8.

The verse alludes to the Babylonian mythological stories of the creation. The sea was personified as a goddess (Tiamat) who gave birth to gods, one of whom defeated Tiamat and her monster helpers. The sacred writers adapted this imagery by conceiving Yahweh as defeating the personified primeval chaos. Yahweh defeats chaos, establishes order and emerges as the victor of creation. This is a poetic way of saying that God created the world. To continue the poetic imagery, Yahweh thereafter kept strict watch over the conquered sea and its monsters. See Gn 1, 2 n.

7, 18-19: Job feels that God treats him like an enemy, and rebels against the idea of a God who is *only* just.

7, 19: *To swallow my spittle:* this expression is still used in Arabic. It means "for a moment."

7, 20a: God cannot be harmed by any sin of man.

8, 2-3: Blunt in speech, Baldad is shocked at Job's questioning the justice of God.

4 and does the Almighty distort justice? | If your children have
sinned against him and he has left them in the grip of their
5 guilt, | still, if you yourself have recourse to God and make
6 supplication to the Almighty, | should you be blameless and
upright, surely now he will awake for you and restore your
7 rightful domain; | your former state will be of little moment,
for in time to come you will flourish indeed.
8 If you inquire of the former generations, and give heed to the
9 experience of the fathers | (as we are but of yesterday and
have no knowledge, because our days on earth are but a
10 shadow), | will they not teach you and tell you and utter their
11 words of understanding? | Can the papyrus grow up without
12 mire? Can the reed grass flourish without water? | While it is
13 yet green and uncut, it withers quicker than any grass. | So
is the end of everyone who forgets God, and so shall the hope
of the godless man perish.
14 His confidence is but a gossamer thread and his trust is a
15 spider's web. | He shall rely upon his family, but it shall not
16 last; he shall cling to it, but it shall not endure. | He is full
of sap before sunrise, and beyond his garden his shoots go
17 forth; | about a heap of stones are his roots entwined; among
18 the rocks he takes hold. | Yet if one tears him from his place,
19 it will disown him: "I have never seen you!" | There he lies
rotting beside the road, and out of the soil another sprouts.
20 Behold, God will not cast away the upright; neither will he
21 take the hand of the wicked. | Once more will he fill your
22 mouth with laughter, and your lips with rejoicing. | They
that hate you shall be clothed with shame, and the tent of the
wicked shall be no more.

9

1 ***Job's Second Reply*** Then Job answered and said:
2 I know well that it is so; but how can a man be justified

8, 4-7: Baldad hints that Job's misfortunes are due to the sins of his children. However, if Job repents, God will restore his prosperity. The same idea is repeated in vv. 20-22.

8, 8-10: Baldad claims to base his teaching on the forefathers of their nation.

8, 11-13: As plants need water to grow, so does man need God.

8, 14-15: The confidence of the evil man is weak.

8, 16-19: Although the evil man may prosper (v. 16), yet he will be later like fast growing roots which are speedily torn out and made to wither (17-19).

8, 20-22: See 8, 4-7 n.

9, 2b-12: Job acknowledges Baldad's statements (see 8, 3) about the justice of the Almighty and admits that no one can complain against God in court and win (2b-4; 13-21), because God is too powerful

3 before God? | Should one wish to contend with him, he could
4 not answer him once in a thousand times. | God is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who has withstood him and remained unscathed?
5 He removes the mountains before they know it; he overturns
6 them in his anger. | He shakes the earth out of its place, and
7 the pillars beneath it tremble. | He commands the sun, and it rises not; he seals up the stars.
8 He alone stretches out the heavens and treads upon the crests
9 of the sea. | He made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the
10 constellations of the south; | he does great things past finding out, marvelous things beyond reckoning.
11 Should he come near me, I see him not; should he pass by,
12 I am not aware of him; | should he seize me forcibly, who can say him nay? Who can say to him, "What are you doing?"
13 He is God and he does not relent; the helpers of Rahab bow
14 beneath him. | How much less shall I give him any answer, or
15 choose out arguments against him! | Even though I were right, I could not answer him, but should rather beg for what was due me.
16 If I appealed to him and he answered my call, I could not
17 believe that he would hearken to my words; | with a tempest he might overwhelm me, and multiply my wounds without
18 cause; | he need not suffer me to draw breath, but might fill me with bitter griefs.
19 If it be a question of strength, he is mighty; and if of judg-
20 ment, who will call him to account? | Though I were right, my own mouth might condemn me; were I innocent, he might put
21 me in the wrong. | Though I am innocent, I myself cannot know it; I despise my life.
22 It is all one! therefore I say: Both the innocent and the
23 wicked he destroys. | When the scourge slays suddenly, he
24 laughs at the despair of the innocent. | The earth is given into the hands of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges. If it is not he, who then is it?
25 My days are swifter than a runner, they flee away; they see

(5-10). As nature proves, He is vastly superior to man because He can act invisibly (11) and can treat man as He wishes with impunity (12).

9, 13: *Does not relent:* his anger. *Rahab:* most likely a personification of the primeval chaos. See 7, 12 n.

9, 20-21: Job is not consistent with his previous declaration of innocence. He muses about God's apparent arbitrariness (20b).

9, 24: Job who knows precisely that God is provident of nature and man (12, 7-10), nevertheless allows himself to challenge God with his emotional outburst: If it is not God who makes the wicked prosperous, who does?

26 no happiness; | they shoot by like skiffs of reed, like an eagle
27 swooping upon its prey. | If I say: I will forget my complain-
28 ing, I will lay aside my sadness and be of good cheer, | then
I am in dread of all my pains; I know that you will not hold
me innocent.
29 If I must be accounted guilty, why then should I strive in
30 vain? | If I should wash myself with snow and cleanse my
31 hands with lye, | yet you would plunge me in the ditch, so
that my garments would abhor me.
32 For he is not a man like myself, that I should answer him,
33 that we should come together in judgment. | Would that there
were an arbiter between us, who could lay his hand upon us
34 both | and withdraw his rod from me. Would that his terrors
35 did not frighten me; | that I might speak without being afraid
of him. Since this is not the case with me, I loathe my life.

10

1 I will give myself up to complaint; I will speak from the
2 bitterness of my soul. | I will say to God: Do not put me in the
3 wrong! Let me know why you oppose me. | Is it a pleasure for
you to oppress, to spurn the work of your hands, and smile on
the plan of the wicked?
4.5 Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as man sees? | Are your
6 days as the days of a mortal, and are your years as a man's
7 lifetime, | that you seek for guilt in me and search after my
sins, | even though you know that I am not wicked, and that
none can deliver me out of your hand?
8 Your hands have formed me and fashioned me; will you
9 then turn and destroy me? | Oh, remember that you fashioned
me from clay! Will you then bring me down to dust again? |
10 Did you not pour me out as milk, and thicken me like cheese?
11 | With skin and flesh you clothed me, with bones and sinews
12 knit me together. | Grace and favor you granted me, and your
providence has preserved my spirit.
13 Yet these things you have hidden in your heart; I know that
14 they are your purpose: | If I should sin, you would keep a
watch against me, and from my guilt you would not absolve
15 me. | If I should be wicked, alas for me, filled with ignominy

9, 27-28: Even if Job forgets his misery and gives up complaining about it (27), God will still judge him guilty (28).
9, 29-31: The same idea as in the two preceding verses.
10, 1-12: Does God oppress me because He is a sadist (3)? Or erroneously (4-7)? Or is He repentant of what He gave me (8-12)?
10, 10: The embryonic formation in the womb.

and sodden with affliction! If righteous, I dare not hold up my
16 head; | should I raise it, you hunt me like a lion. Repeatedly
17 you show your wondrous power against me, | bringing new witnesses to confront me; while you continue your displeasure with me, in waves your troops come against me.
18 Why then did you bring me forth from the womb? I should
19 have died and no eye have seen me. | I should be as though I had never lived; I should have been taken from the womb to
20 the grave. | Are not the days of my life few? Let me alone, that
21 I may recover a little | before I go whence I shall not return, to
22 the land of darkness and of gloom, | the black, disordered land where darkness is the only light.

11

1 ***Sophar's First Speech*** And Sophar the Naamaite spoke out and said:
2 Should not the man of many words be answered, or must
3 the garrulous man necessarily be right? | Shall your babblings keep men silent, and shall you deride and no one give rebuke?
4 | Shall you say: "My teaching is pure, and I am clean in your
5 sight"? | But oh, that God would speak and open his lips
6 against you | and declare to you the secrets of wisdom, that so you might know God will require of you twofold for all your guilt.
7 Can you penetrate the designs of God? Dare you vie with the
8 perfection of the Almighty? | It is higher than the heavens; what can you do? It is deeper than the nether world; what can
9 you know? | It is longer than the earth in measure, and broader
10 than the sea. | If he seize and imprison or call to judgment,
11 who then can say him nay? | For he knows the worthlessness of
12 men and sees iniquity; will he then ignore it? | Will empty man then gain understanding, and the wild jackass be made docile?
13 If you set your heart aright and stretch out your hands
14 toward him, | if you remove all iniquity from your conduct,
15 and let not injustice dwell in your tent, | surely then you may lift up your face in innocence; you may stand firm and unafraid.
16 | For then you shall forget your misery, or recall it like waters that have ebbed away.
17 Then your life shall be brighter than the noonday; its gloom
18 shall become as the morning, | and you shall be secure, because there is hope; you shall look round you and lie down in safety,
19 | and you shall take your rest with none to disturb. Many shall

11, 1-20: Sophar, the least original of the three friends, flatly diagnoses Job's misfortunes as God's punishment for his sins (e.g., v. 14).

20 entreat your favor, | but the wicked, looking on, shall be consumed with envy. Escape shall be cut off from them, they shall wait to expire.

12

1 ***Job's Third Reply*** Then Job replied and said:

2 No doubt you are the intelligent folk, and with you wisdom
3 shall die! | But I have intelligence as well as you; for who does
4 not know such things as these? | I have become the sport of my neighbors: "The one whom God answers when he calls upon him, | the just, the perfect man," is a laughingstock;
5 "the one whom God had taken into his hand!" | The undisturbed esteem my downfall a disgrace such as awaits unsteady
6 feet; | yet the tents of robbers are prosperous, and those who provoke God are secure.

7 But now ask the beasts to teach you, and the birds of the air
8 to tell you; | or the reptiles on earth to instruct you, and the fish
9 of the sea to inform you. Which of all these does not know
10 that the hand of God has done this? | In his hand is the soul of every living thing, and the life breath of all mankind. |
11 Does not the ear judge words as the mouth tastes food? |
12 So with old age is wisdom, and with length of days understanding.

13 With him are wisdom and might; his are counsel and under-
14 standing. | If he breaks a thing down, there is no rebuilding;
15 if he imprisons a man, there is no release. | He holds back the waters and there is drought; he sends them forth and they
16 overwhelm the land. | With him are strength and prudence;
18 the misled and the misleaders are his. | He loosens the bonds imposed by kings and leaves but a waistcloth to bind the king's
19.17 own loins. | He sends counselors away barefoot, | and of judges he makes fools.

20 He silences the trusted adviser, and takes discretion from the
21 aged. | He breaks down the barriers of the streams and lets
22 their never-failing waters flow away. | The recesses of the darkness he discloses, and brings the gloom forth to the light. |
23 He makes nations great and he destroys them; he spreads
24 peoples abroad and he abandons them. | He takes understand-

12, 4-6: God punishes Job but makes the wicked prosperous.
12, 7-10: Even the dumb beasts know all that is said before (vv. 4-6).
12, 13-25: Job admits God's power but not the interpretation which his friends put on it.
12, 18: He demotes kings to slaves.

25 ing from the leaders of the land, | till they grope in the darkness without light; he makes them stagger like drunken men.

13

1 Lo, all this my eye has seen; my ear has heard and perceived
2 it. | What you know, I also know; I fall not short of you. |
3 But I would speak with the Almighty; I wish to reason with
4 God. | You are glossing over falsehoods and offering vain
5 remedies, every one of you! | Oh, that you would be altogether
6 silent! This for you would be wisdom. | Hear now the rebuke
I shall utter and listen to the reproof from my lips.
7 Is it for God that you speak falsehood? Is it for him that you
8 utter deceit? | Is it for him that you show partiality? Do you
9 play advocate on behalf of God? | Will it be well when he
shall search you out? Would you impose on him as one does on
men?
10 He will openly rebuke you if even in secret you show
11 partiality. | Surely will his majesty affright you and the dread
12 of him fall upon you. | Your reminders are ashy maxims, your
fabrications are mounds of clay.
13 Be silent, let me alone! that I may speak and give vent to
14 my feelings. | I will carry my flesh between my teeth, and take
15 my life in my hand. | Slay me though he might, I will wait for
16 him; I will defend my conduct before him. | And this shall be
my salvation, that no impious man can come into his presence.
17 Pay careful heed to my speech, and give my statement a
18 hearing. | Behold, I have prepared my case, I know that I am
19 in the right. | If anyone can make a case against me, then I shall
be silent and die.
20 These things only do not use against me, then from your
21 presence I need not hide: | withdraw your hand far from me,
22 and let not the terror of you frighten me. | Then call me, and I
23 will respond; or let me speak first, and answer me. | What are
my faults and my sins? My misdeeds and my sins make known
to me!
24 Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?
25 | Will you harass a wind-driven leaf, or pursue a withered
26 straw? | For you draw up bitter indictments against me, and

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13, 4-12: Job berates the friends for mouthing traditional explanations of his suffering and thereby think they are defending God.

13, 14: Most probably 14b explains the metaphor of 14a.

13, 20—14, 22: Job, addressing God directly, proclaims his innocence in spite of sins committed in his youth (v. 26), which apparently he does not consider important.

27 punish in me the faults of my youth. | You put my feet in the stocks; you watch all my paths and trace out all my footsteps.

14

1 Man, born of woman, is short-lived and full of trouble. |
2 Like a flower that springs up and fades, swift as a shadow that
13,28 does not abide, | even so he wastes away like a rotten thing;
14,3 like a garment that the moth has consumed. | Upon such a one will you cast your eyes so as to bring me into judgment
4 before you? | Can a man be found who is clean of defilement?
5 There is none, | however short his days. You know the number of his months; you have fixed the limit which he cannot pass.
6 | Look away from him and let him be, while, like a hireling, he completes his day.
7 For a tree there is hope, if it be cut down, that it will sprout
8 again and that its tender shoots will not cease. | Even though its root grow old in the earth, and its stump die in the dust, |
9 yet at the first whiff of water it may flourish again and put
10 forth branches like a young plant. | But when a man dies, all
11 vigor leaves him; when man expires, where then is he? | As when the waters of a lake fail, or a stream grows dry and
12 parches, | so men lie down and rise not again. Till the heavens are no more, they shall not awake, nor be roused out of their sleep.
13 Oh, that you would hide me in the nether world and keep me sheltered till your wrath is past; would fix a time for me,
14 and then remember me! | When a man has died, were he to live again, all the days of my drudgery I would wait, until my
15 relief should come. | You would call, and I would answer
16 you; you would esteem the work of your hands. | Surely then you would count my steps, and not keep watch for sin in me. |
17 My misdeeds would be sealed up in a pouch, and you would cover over my guilt.
18 But as a mountain falls at last and its rock is moved from its
19 place, | as waters wear away the stones and floods wash away
20 the soil of the land, so you destroy the hope of man. | You prevail once for all against him and he passes on; with changed
21 appearance you send him away. | If his sons are honored, he is not aware of it; if they are in disgrace, he does not know

14, 3-22: Ch. 14 develops the idea that man's conduct should not overconcern God since creatures are so unimportant. V. 4 does not speak about original sin. Vv. 13-17 show that Job does not wish to return from sheol after death. In dire straits Job can think of no better refuge than sheol where he can wait till God's anger spends itself after which he would be in God's favor again.

22 about them. Only his own flesh pains him, and his soul grieves for him.

III. SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES

15

1 ***Second Speech of Eliphaz*** Then Eliphaz the Themanite spoke and said:

2 Should a wise man answer with airy opinions, or puff him-
3 self up with wind? | Should he argue in speech which does not
4 avail, and in words which are to no profit? | You in fact do away with piety, and you lessen devotion toward God, |
5 because your wickedness instructs your mouth, and you choose
6 to speak like the crafty. | Your own mouth condemns you, not I; your own lips refute you.

7 Are you indeed the first-born of mankind, or were you
8 brought forth before the hills? | Are you privy to the counsels
9 of God, and do you restrict wisdom to yourself? | What do you know that we do not know? What intelligence have you which
10 we have not? | There are gray-haired old men among us more
11 advanced in years than your father. | Are the consolations of God not enough for you, and speech that deals gently with you?

12 Why do your notions carry you away, and why do your eyes
13 blink, | so that you turn your anger against God and let such
14 words escape your mouth! | What is a man that he should be blameless, one born of woman that he should be righteous? |
15 If in his holy ones God places no confidence, and if the heavens
16 are not clean in his sight, | how much less so is the abominable, the corrupt: man, who drinks in iniquity like water!

17 I will show you, if you listen to me; what I have seen I will
18 tell— |what wise men relate and have not contradicted since
19 the days of their fathers. | To whom alone the land was given, when no foreigner moved among them.

20 The wicked man is in torment all his days, and limited years
21 are in store for the tyrant; | the sound of terrors is in his ears;
22 when all is prosperous, the spoiler comes upon him. | He despairs of escaping the darkness, and looks ever for the sword;
23 | a wanderer, food for the vultures, he knows that his destruc-
24 tion is imminent. | By day the darkness fills him with dread; distress and anguish overpower him.

25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God and bade

15: Eliphaz restates his diagnosis more forcefully: Job is suffering because he is guilty.

26 defiance to the Almighty, | one shall rush sternly upon him
with the stout bosses of his shields, like a king prepared for the
27 charge. Because he enveloped himself in his crassness and
28 made a mask for his folly, | he shall dwell in ruinous cities, in
29 houses that are deserted, that are crumbling into clay | with
no shadow to lengthen over the ground. He shall not be rich,
31 and his possessions shall not endure; | for vain shall be his
hopes.
30 A flame shall wither him up in his early growth, and with the
32 wind his blossoms shall disappear. | His stalk shall wither
33 before its time, and his branches shall be green no more. | He
shall be like a vine that sheds its grapes unripened, and like an
34 olive tree casting off its bloom. | For the breed of the impious
shall be sterile, and fire shall consume the tents of extortioners.
35 | They conceive malice and bring forth emptiness; they give
birth to failure.

16

1 ***Job's Fourth Reply*** Then Job answered and said:
2 I have heard this sort of thing many times. Wearisome com-
3 forters are you all! | Is there no end to windy words? Or what
4 sickness have you that you speak on? | I also could talk as you
do, were you in my place. I could declaim over you, or wag my
5 head at you; | I could strengthen you with talk, or shake my
6 head with silent lips. | If I speak, this pain I have will not be
checked; if I leave off, it will not depart from me.
7 But now that I am exhausted and stunned, all my company
8 has closed in on me. | My traducer speaks openly against me;
9 | I am the prey his wrath assails, he gnashes his teeth against
10 me. My enemies lord it over me; | their mouths are agape to
bite me. They smite me on the cheek insultingly; they are all
11 enlisted against me. | God has given me over to the impious;
into the clutches of the wicked he has cast me.
12 I was in peace, but he dislodged me; he seized me by the neck
and dashed me to pieces. He has set me up for a target; |
13 his arrows strike me from all directions, he pierces my sides
14 without mercy, he pours out my gall upon the ground. | He
pierces me with thrust upon thrust; he attacks me like a warrior.
15 | I have fastened sackcloth over my skin, and have laid my
16 brow in the dust. | My face is inflamed with weeping and there
17 is darkness over my eyes, | although my hands are free from
violence, and my prayer is sincere.
18 O earth, cover not my blood, nor let my outcry come to rest!

16—17: Weary Job appeals to God since his friends are of no comfort.

19 | Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my spokesman
20 is on high. | My friends it is who wrong me; before God my
21 eyes drop tears, | that he may do justice for a mortal in his
22 presence and decide between a man and his neighbor. | For
my years are numbered now, and I am on a journey from which
I shall not return.

17

1 My spirit is broken, my lamp of life extinguished; my burial
2 is at hand. | I am indeed mocked, and, as their provocation
mounts, my eyes grow dim.
3 Grant me one to offer you a pledge on my behalf: who is
4 there that will give surety for me? | You darken their minds to
5 knowledge; therefore they do not understand. | My lot is de-
6 scribed as evil, | and I am made a byword of the people; their
7 object lesson I have become. | My eye has grown blind with
8 anguish, and all my frame is shrunken to a shadow. | Upright
men are astonished at this, and the innocent aroused against the
9 wicked. | Yet the righteous shall hold to his way, and he who
has clean hands increase in strength.
10 But turn now, and come on again; for I shall not find a wise
11 man among you! | My days are passed away, my plans are at
12 an end, the cherished purposes of my heart. | Such men change
the night into day; where there is darkness they talk of
13 approaching light. | If I look for the nether world as my
14 dwelling, if I spread my couch in the darkness, | if I must call
corruption "my father," and the maggot "my mother" and "my
15 sister," | where then is my hope? and my prosperity, who shall
16 see? | Will they descend with me into the nether world? Shall
we go down together into the dust?

18

1 ***Baldad's Second Speech*** Then Baldad the Sueite replied
and said:
2 When will you put an end to words? Reflect, and then we
3 can have discussion. | Why are we accounted like the beasts,
4 their equals in your sight? | You who tear yourself in your
anger, shall the earth be neglected on your account [or the
rock be moved out of its place]?
5 Truly, the light of the wicked is extinguished; no flame
6 brightens his hearth. | The light is darkened in his tent; in

18, 5-21: Baldad, hinting at Job, describes the fate of the "impious man . . . who knows not God" (v. 21). *The first-born of death:* this means a disease (v. 13). *The king:* of sheol, i.e., most likely death (v. 14).

7 spite of him, his lamp goes out. | His vigorous steps are
hemmed in, and his own counsel casts him down.
8 For he rushes headlong into a net, and he wanders into a
9 pitfall. | A trap seizes him by the heel, and a snare lays hold of
10 him. | A noose for him is hid on the ground, and the toils for
him on the way.
11.12 On every side terrors affright him; | destruction is ready at
13 his side. | The first-born of death consumes his limbs; |
14 terror conducts him to the king. He is plucked from the
15 security of his tent; | over his abode brimstone is scattered.
16 Below, his roots dry up, and above, his branches wither. |
17 His memory perishes from the land, and he has no name on the
18 earth. | He is driven from light into darkness, and banished
out of the world.
19 He has neither son nor grandson among his people, nor any
20 survivor where once he dwelt. | They who come after shall be
appalled at his fate; they who went before are struck with
21 horror. | So is it then with the dwelling of the impious man,
and such is the place of him who knows not God!

19

1 ***Job's Fifth Reply*** Then Job answered and said:
2 How long will you vex my soul, grind me down with words?
3 | These ten times you have reviled me, have assailed me with-
4 out shame! | Be it indeed that I am at fault and that my fault
5 remains with me, | even so, if you would vaunt yourselves
6 against me and cast up to me my reproach, | know then that
God has dealt unfairly with me, and compassed me round with
his net.
7 If I cry out "Injustice!" I am not heard. I cry for help, but
8 there is no redress. | He has barred my way and I cannot pass;
9 he has veiled my path in darkness; | he has stripped me of my
10 glory, and taken the diadem from my brow. | He breaks me
down on every side, and I am gone; my hope he has uprooted
11 like a tree. | His wrath he has kindled against me; he counts
12 me among his enemies. | His troops advance as one man; they
build up their road to attack me, and they encamp around my
tent.
13 My brethren have withdrawn from me, and my friends are
14 wholly estranged. My kinsfolk and companions neglect me, and

19, 1-29: Job believes that God has only temporarily stopped being his friend. V. 9 contains two metaphors that express the humiliation of Job by God. *My flesh between my teeth:* may mean his lips have wasted away to a very thin layer between his teeth (v. 20).

15 my guests have forgotten me. | Even my handmaids treat me
16 as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. | I call my servant,
but he gives no answer, though in my speech I plead with him. |
17 My breath is abhorred by my wife; I am loathsome to the men
of my family.
18 The young children, too, despise me; when I appear, they
19 speak against me. | All my intimate friends hold me in horror;
20 those whom I loved have turned against me! | My bones cleave
to my skin, and I have escaped with my flesh between my teeth.
21 | Pity me, pity me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has
22 struck me! | Why do you hound me as though you were divine,
and insatiably prey upon me?
23 Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that
24 they were inscribed in a record: | that with an iron chisel and
25 with lead they were cut in the rock forever! | But as for me, I
know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand
27 forth upon the dust | whom I myself shall see, and not another
26 — | and from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is con-
28 sumed with longing. | But you who say, "How shall we perse-
cute him, seeing that the root of the matter is found in him?" |
29 Be afraid of the sword for yourselves, for these crimes deserve
the sword; that you may know that there is a judgment.

20

1 ***Sophar's Second Speech*** Then Sophar the Naamaite spoke and said:

3.2 A rebuke which puts me to shame I hear, | and because of
this I am disturbed. So now my thoughts provide me with an
answer, and from my understanding a spirit gives me a reply.
4 Do you not know this from olden time, since man was placed
5 upon the earth, | that the triumph of the wicked is short and
6 the joy of the impious but for a moment? | Though his pride

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19, 25-27: The Hebrew text is poorly preserved and scholars differ therefore in their translation of this passage. The problem is: when and how will God be Job's vindicator? Scholars agree that the Latin Vulgate and the Douay translation, and even this aria in Handel's *Messiah,* are incorrect in making Job express a belief in the Redeemer, presumably Christ, who will physically resurrect Job after death. There is no unanimity of opinion of what Job really means beyond his belief that God, his vindicator ("goel"), will defend the cause of his innocence. (For other uses of "goel," see Ruth 4, 4 n.) This act of faith is one of the peaks of the book. Scholars seek more specific meanings of this text, such as: Is Job wishing for a cure? For God to proclaim him innocent on earth or after his death?

20, 1-29: Sophar repeats the traditional thesis that Job suffers because of his sins. *Oil* (v. 17): olive oil which, together with "honey or milk," express agricultural prosperity.

7 mount up to the heavens and his head reach to the clouds, | yet
he perishes forever like the fuel of his fire, and the onlookers
8 say, "Where is he?" | Like a dream he takes flight and is not
9 found again; he fades away like a vision of the night. | The eye
which saw him does so no more; nor shall his dwelling again
11 behold him. | Though his frame is full of youthful vigor, this
shall lie with him in the dust.
12 Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth, and he hides it
13 under his tongue, | though he retains it and will not let it go
14 but keeps it still within his mouth, | yet in his stomach the food
15 shall turn; it shall be venom of asps inside him. | The riches
he swallowed he shall disgorge; God shall compel his belly to
16 disown them. | The poison of asps he shall drink in; the
viper's fangs shall slay him.
17 He shall see no streams of oil, no torrents of honey or milk. |
18 Restoring his gains, he shall not enjoy them; though his wealth
19 increases, he shall not rejoice. | Because he has oppressed the
21 poor, and stolen a patrimony he had not built up, | therefore
20 his prosperity shall not endure, and his hands shall yield up his
20 riches. | Though he has known no quiet in his greed, his
22 treasures shall not save him. | When he abounds to overflow-
ing, he shall be brought into straits, and nought shall be left of
his goods.
23 God shall send against him the fury of his wrath and rain
24 down his missiles of war upon him. | Should he escape the
25 iron weapon, the bow of bronze shall pierce him through; | the
dart shall come out of his back; terrors shall fall upon him. |
26 Complete darkness is in store for him; the fire which shall con-
27 sume him needs not to be fanned. The heavens shall reveal his
28 guilt, and the earth shall rise up against him. | . . . . . |
29 This is the portion of a wicked man, and the heritage appointed
him by God.

21

1 ***Job's Sixth Reply*** Then Job made reply and said:
2 At least listen to my words, and let that be the consolation
4 you offer. | Bear with me while I speak; and after I have
4 spoken, you can mock! | Is my complaint toward man? And
5 why should I not be impatient? | Look at me and be astonished,
6 put your hands over your mouths. | When I think of it, I am
dismayed, and horror takes hold on my flesh.
7 Why do the wicked survive, grow old, become mighty in

21, 1-34: Job rejects the traditional theory of his friends that God punishes the wicked on earth.

8 power? | Their progeny is secure in their sight; they see before
9 them their kinsfolk and their offspring. | Their homes are safe
10 and without fear, nor is the scourge of God upon them. | Their
bulls gender without fail; their cows calve and do not miscarry.
11 | These folk have infants numerous as lambs, and their children
12 dance. | They sing to the timbrel and harp, and make merry to
the sound of the flute.
13 They live out their days in prosperity, and tranquilly go
14 down to the nether world. | Yet they say to God, "Depart
15 from us, for we have no wish to learn your ways! | What is
the Almighty that we should serve him? And what gain shall
16 we have if we pray to him?" | If their happiness is not in their
own hands and if the counsel of the wicked is repulsive to God,
17 | how often is the lamp of the wicked put out? How often does
destruction come upon them, the portion he allots in his anger?
18 Let them be like straw before the wind, and like chaff which
19 the storm snatches away! | May God not store up the man's
misery for his children; let him requite the man himself so that
20 he feels it, | let his own eyes see the calamity, and the wrath
21 of the Almighty let him drink! | For what interest has he in
his family after him, when the number of his months is finished?
22 Can anyone teach God knowledge, seeing that he judges
23 those on high? | One dies in his full vigor, wholly at ease and
24 content; | his figure is full and nourished, and his bones are
25 rich in marrow. | Another dies in bitterness of soul, having
26 never tasted happiness. | Alike they lie down in the dust, and
worms cover them both.
27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the arguments you re-
28 hearse against me. | For you say, "Where is the house of the
29 magnate, and where the dwelling place of the wicked?" | Have
you not asked the wayfarers and do you not recognize their
30 monuments? | Nay, the evil man is spared calamity when it
32.31 comes; and on the day he is carried to the grave | who will
charge him with his conduct to his face, and for what he has
33 done who will repay him? | Sweet to him are the clods of the
valley, and over him the funeral mound keeps watch, while all
the line of mankind follows him, and the countless others who
34 have gone before. | How then can you offer me vain comfort,
while in your answers perfidy remains?

IV. THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES

22

1 ***Eliphaz's Third Speech*** Then Eliphaz the Themanite answered and said:

2 Can a man be profitable to God? Though to himself a wise
3 man be profitable, | is it of advantage to the Almighty if you
are just? Or is it a gain to him if you make your ways perfect? |
4 Is it because of your piety that he reproves you—that he enters
5 with you into judgment? | Is not your wickedness manifold?
Are not your iniquities endless?
6 You have unjustly kept your kinsmen's goods in pawn, left
7 them stripped naked of their clothing. | To the thirsty you
have given no water to drink, and from the hungry you have
8 withheld bread; | as if the land belonged to the man of might,
9 and only the privileged were to dwell in it. | You have sent
widows away empty-handed, and the resources of orphans you
10 have destroyed. | Therefore snares are round about you, and
11 a sudden terror causes you dismay, | or darkness, in which you
cannot see; a deluge of waters covers you.
12 Does not God, in the heights of the heavens, behold the stars,
13 high though they are? | Yet you say, "What does God know?
14 Can he judge through the thick darkness? | Clouds hide him
so that he cannot see; he walks upon the vault of the heavens!"
15 Do you indeed keep to the ancient way trodden by worthless
16 men, | who were snatched away before their time; whose foun-
17 dations a flood swept away? | These men said to God, "Depart
18 from us!" and, "What can the Almighty do to us?" | [Yet he
had filled their houses with good things! But far be from me
19 the mind of the impious!] | The just look on and are glad-
20 dened, and the innocent deride them: | "Truly these have been
destroyed where they stood, and such as were left, fire has
consumed!"
21 Come to terms with him to be at peace. In this shall good
22 come to you: | receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up
23 his words in your heart. | If you return to the Almighty, you
24 will be restored; if you put iniquity far from your tent, | and
treat raw gold like dust, and the fine gold of Ophir as pebbles
25 from the brook, | then the Almighty himself shall be your
gold and your sparkling silver.
26 For then you shall delight in the Almighty and you shall lift
27 up your face toward God. | You shall entreat him and he will
28 hear you, and your vows you shall fulfill. | When you make a
decision, it shall succeed for you, and upon your ways the light

22—27: The third cycle of speeches is generally considered to be disorderly in the Hebrew text.

22, 6-11: Eliphaz is straining here to find some misdeeds to explain Job's suffering and thus safeguard the traditional opinion that a person suffers because he did evil.

22, 18: This verse is partly from 21, 16.

29 shall shine. | For he brings down the pride of the haughty, but
30 the man of humble mien he saves. | God delivers him who is innocent; you shall be delivered through cleanness of hands.

23

1 ***Job's Seventh Reply*** Again Job answered and said:
2 Though I know my complaint is bitter, his hand is heavy upon
3 me in my groanings. | Oh, that today I might find him, that I
4 might come to his judgment seat! | I would set out my cause
5 before him, and fill my mouth with arguments; | I would learn the words with which he would answer, and understand what
6 he would reply to me. | Even should he contend against me with his great power, yet, would that he himself might heed
7 me! | There the upright man might reason with him, and I should once and for all preserve my rights.
8 But if I go to the east, he is not there; or to the west, I cannot
9 perceive him; | where the north enfolds him, I behold him not;
10 by the south he is veiled, and I see him not. | Yet he knows
11 my way; if he proved me, I should come forth as gold. | My foot has always walked in his steps; his way I have kept and
12 have not turned aside. | From the commands of his lips I have not departed; the words of his mouth I have treasured in my heart.
13 But he has decided, and who can say him nay? What he
14 desires, that he does. | For he will carry out what is appointed
15 for me; and many such things may yet be in his mind. | Therefore am I dismayed before him; when I take thought, I fear
16 him. | Indeed God has made my courage fail; the Almighty
17 has put me in dismay. | Yes, would that I had vanished in darkness, and that thick gloom were before me to conceal me.

24

1 Why are not times set by the Almighty, and why do his
2 friends not see his days? | The wicked remove landmarks; they
3 steal away herds and pasture them. | The asses of orphans they
4 drive away; they take the widow's ox for a pledge. | They force the needy off the road; all the poor of the land are driven into
5 hiding. | Like wild asses in the desert, these go forth to their task of seeking food; the steppe provides food for the young
6 among them; | they harvest at night in the untilled land.
7 They pass the night naked, without clothing, for they have

24, 1: Why does God not favor His friends by the speedy punishment of His enemies? (The text in order of verses in this chapter is not certain. Note the omission of v. 9 which duplicates words of vv. 2-4.)

8 no covering against the cold; | they are drenched with the rain
of the mountains, and for want of shelter they cling to the
11 rock. | Between the rows they press out the oil; they glean in
the vineyard of the wicked. They tread the wine presses, yet
10 suffer thirst, | and famished are those who carry the sheaves. |
12 From the dust the dying groan, and the souls of the wounded
cry out [yet God does not treat it as unseemly].
13 There are those who are rebels against the light; they know
14 not its ways; they abide not in its paths. | When there is no
15 light the murderer rises, to kill the poor and needy. | The eye
of the adulterer watches for the twilight; he says, "No eye will
see me." In the night the thief roams about, and he puts a mask
16 over his face; | in the dark he breaks into houses. By day they
17 shut themselves in; none of them know the light, | for daylight
they regard as darkness.

* * *

18.20 Their portion in the land is accursed, | and wickedness is
19.21.22 splintered like wood. | . . . . . | To him who rises
23 without assurance of his life | he gives safety and support. He
sustains the mighty by his strength, and his eyes are on their
24 ways. | They are exalted for a while, and then they are gone;
they are laid low and, like all others, are gathered up; like ears
of grain they shrivel.

* * *

25 If this be not so, who will confute me, and reduce my argument to nought?

25

1 ***Baldad's Third Speech*** Then Baldad the Sueite answered
and said:
2 Dominion and awesomeness are his who brings about har-
3 mony in his heavens. | Is there any numbering of his troops?
4 Yet to which of them does not his light extend? | How can a
man be just in God's sight, or how can any woman's child be
5 innocent? | Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars
6 are not clear in his sight. | How much less man, who is but a
maggot, the son of man, who is only a worm?

24, 17: The asterisks following this verse mark off a passage (vv. 18-24) that cannot be ascribed to Job with certainty. Vv. 17-24 are, in general, wholly preserved; and much of vv. 18-21 have not been translated because they are quite obscure.

24, 18—27, 21: This is the most disturbed part of the dialogue. The scholars have not yet explained it satisfactorily.

25, 2-6: Baldad wants to prove God's power which he believes has been attacked.

25, 3: *Troops:* may mean the angels.

26

1 ***Job's Reply*** Then Job spoke again and said:
2 What help you give to the powerless, what strength to the
3 feeble arm! | How you counsel, as though he had no wisdom;
4 how profuse is the advice you offer! | With whose help have
you uttered those words, and whose is the breath that comes
5 forth from you? | The shades beneath writhe in terror, the
6 waters, and their inhabitants. | Naked before him is the nether
world, and Abaddon has no covering.
7 He stretches out the North over empty space, and suspends
8 the earth over nothing at all; | he binds up the waters in his
9 clouds, yet the cloud is not rent by their weight; | he holds
back the appearance of the full moon by spreading his clouds
10 before it; | he has marked out a circle on the surface of the
deep as the boundary of light and darkness.
11 The pillars of the heavens tremble and are stunned at his
12 thunderous rebuke; | by his power he stirs up the sea, and by
13 his might he crushes Rahab; | his breath cleaves the waters; his
14 hand pierces the fleeing dragon. | Lo, these are but the outlines
of his ways, and how faint is the word we hear!

27

2 ***Job's Reply*** As God lives, who withholds my deserts, the
3 Almighty, who has made bitter my soul, | so long as I still have
4 life in me and the breath of God is in my nostrils, | my lips
5 shall not speak falsehood, nor my tongue utter deceit! | Far be
it from me to account you right; till I die I will not renounce
6 my innocence. | My justice I maintain and I will not relinquish
it; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.
11 I will teach you the manner of God's dealings, and the way
12 of the Almighty I will not conceal. | Behold, you yourselves
have all seen it; why then do you spend yourselves in idle words!

26, 1-14: This is probably to be understood as Job's reply to Sophar's speech in 27, 7-21.

26, 5: *Shades:* the dead in sheol, *the nether world,* or *Abaddon,* of v. 6.

26, 7: *The North:* the firmament of the heavens.

26, 10: *Circle:* the horizon of the ocean, which serves as the boundary for the activity of light and darkness.

26, 11: *The pillars:* see the two pillars, upholding "the vault of the heavens" (22, 14), in the chart on p. 8.

26, 12: *Rahab:* see 9, 13 n.

26, 13: *The fleeing dragon:* a synonym for Leviathan. See 3, 8 n.

27, 2-6: This is probably to be read as Job's reply to Baldad's speech of 25, 1-6. In the current Hebrew text, the heading for this chapter (27, 1, here omitted) is identical with 29, 1.

* * *

7 Let my enemy be as the wicked and my adversary as the
8 unjust! | For what can the impious man expect when he is cut
9 off, when God requires his life? | Will God then attend to his
10 cry when calamity comes upon him? | Will he then delight in
the Almighty and call upon him constantly?
13 This is the portion of a wicked man from God, the inheritance
14 an oppressor receives from the Almighty: | though his children
be many, the sword is their destiny. His offspring shall not be
15 filled with bread. | His survivors, when they die, shall have no
burial and their widows shall not be mourned.
16 Though he heap up silver like dust and store away mounds
17 of clothing, | what he has stored the just man shall wear, and
18 the innocent shall divide the silver. | He builds his house as of
19 cobwebs, or like a booth put up by the vine-keeper. | He lies
down a rich man, one last time; he opens his eyes and nothing
20 remains to him. | Terrors rush upon him by day; at night the
21 tempest carries him off. | The storm wind seizes him and he
disappears; it sweeps him out of his place.

* * *

28

1 There is indeed a mine for silver, and a place for gold which
2 men refine. | Iron is taken from the earth, and copper is melted
4.5 out of stone. | . . . . . | The earth, though out of it
6 comes forth bread, is in fiery upheaval underneath. | Its stones
are the source of sapphires, and there is gold in its dust.
12 But whence can wisdom be obtained, and where is the place
13 of understanding? | Man knows nothing to equal it, nor is it to
15 be had in the land of the living. | Solid gold cannot purchase

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27, 7-21: This is probably to be read as Sophar's third speech. The asterisks are present to indicate it is not likely that the sacred writer intended these words to be ascribed to Job.

27, 15: *No burial:* see Ct 6, 3 n.

27, 21: The Hebrew has two more verses: v. 22, "He hurls it against him relentlessly, though from its stroke he strives to flee," which does not fit the present context; and v. 23, which is a variant form of v. 21.

28, 1-28: Note the changed order of verses and the omission of the textually uncertain v. 4. Most scholars believe that the famous wisdom poem of this chapter, which is not connected with the rest of Job, was composed independently of the Book of Job by another hand and added later. The poem means that man cannot mine wisdom as he mines metals (vv. 1-6), nor buy it (vv. 13-19), nor find it "in the land of the living" (v. 13). Only God knows where wisdom is and He tells man where to find it, "in the fear of the Lord" (v. 28) for which expression see Prv 1, 7 n.

16 it, nor can its price be paid with silver. | It cannot be bought
with gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire. |
17 Gold or crystal cannot equal it, nor can golden vessels reach its
18 worth. | Neither coral nor jasper should be thought of; it
19 surpasses pearls and | Arabian topaz.
20 Whence, then, comes wisdom, and where is the place of
21 understanding? | It is hid from the eyes of any beast; from the
7 birds of the air it is concealed. | The path to it no bird of prey
8 knows, nor has the hawk's eye seen that path. | The proud
beasts have not trodden it, nor has the lion gone that way. |
14 The abyss declares, "It is not in me"; and the sea says, "I have
22 it not." | Abaddon and Death say, "Only by rumor have we
heard of it."
23 God knows the way to it; it is he who is familiar with its
24 place. | For he beholds the ends of the earth and sees all that is
9 under the heavens. | He sets his hand to the flinty rock, and
10 overturns the mountains at their foundations. | He splits chan-
11 nels in the rocks; his eyes behold all that is precious. | He probes
the wellsprings of the streams, and brings hidden things to light.
25 He has weighed out the wind, and fixed the scope of the
3 waters; | he has set a boundary for the darkness; to the farthest
26 confines he penetrates. | When he made rules for the rain and
27 a path for the thunderbolts, | then he saw wisdom and appraised
28 it, gave it its setting, knew it through and through. | And to
man he said: Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and
avoiding evil is understanding.

V. JOB'S FINAL SUMMARY OF HIS CAUSE

29

1 Job took up his theme anew and said:
2 Oh, that I were as in the months past! as in the days when
3 God watched over me, | while his lamp shone above my head,
4 and by his light I walked through darkness; | as I was in
5 my flourishing days, when God sheltered my tent; | when the
Almighty was yet with me, and my children were round about
6 me; | when my footsteps were bathed in milk, and the rock
flowed with streams of oil.
7 Then when I went forth to the gate of the city and set up
8 my seat in the square, | the young men saw me and withdrew,

29, 2-20: Job reminisces over the time when he was happy, respected, and influential.

29, 3: *Lamp:* just as a lamp illuminates a room, so did God illuminate Job's life.

29, 6: Hyperbolic expressions of prosperity as in 20, 17 n.

9 while the elders rose up and stood; | the chief men refrained
10 from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands; | the
voice of the princes was silenced, and their tongues stuck to the
21 roofs of their mouths. | For me they listened and waited; they
were silent for my counsel.
22 Once I spoke, they said no more, but received my pronounce-
23 ment drop by drop. | They waited for me as for the rain; they
24 drank in my words like the late rains. | When I smiled on them
25 they were reassured; | mourners took comfort from my cheerful
glance. I chose out their way and presided; I took a king's place
in the armed forces.
11 Whoever heard of me blessed me; those who saw me com-
12 mended me. | For I rescued the poor who cried out for help,
13 the orphans, and the unassisted; | the blessing of those in ex-
tremity came upon me, and the heart of the widow I made
joyful.
14 I wore my honesty like a garment; justice was my robe and
15 my turban. | I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame was I;
16 | I was a father to the needy; the rights of the stranger I stud-
17 ied, | and I broke the jaws of the wicked man; from his teeth
I forced the prey.
18 Then I said: "In my own nest I shall grow old; I shall multi-
19 ply years like the phoenix. | My root is spread out to the waters;
20 the dew rests by night on my branches. | My glory is fresh
within me, and my bow is renewed in my hand!"

30

1 But now they hold me in derision who are younger in years
than I; whose fathers I should have disdained to rank with the
2 dogs of my flock. | To me the strength of their hands meant
nought; their vigor had perished through want and hunger. |
3 They fled to dry and barren ground, a land of waste and deso-
4 lation. | They plucked saltwort and shrubs; the roots of the
5 broom plant were their food. | They were banished from
6 among men, with an outcry like that against a thief, | to dwell
on the slopes of the wadies, in caves of sand and stone; |

29, 18: *Phoenix:* according to ancient fables, it lived long and perished with its nest.
29, 19: Symbols of prosperity.
29, 20: *Bow:* symbol of power.
30, 1-31: Describes Job's fall from glory.
30, 4: *Saltwort . . . broom plant:* saltwort is found in salt marshes and is very sour to the taste. It is eaten by the extremely poor as a cooked vegetable. Broom plant is the juniper or brushwood, a figure of bitterness and poverty, because its bitter-tasting roots are practically inedible.

among the bushes they raised their raucous cry; under the nettles
they huddled together. | Irresponsible, nameless men, they were
driven out of the land.
Yet now they sing of me in mockery; I am become a byword
among them. | They abhor me, they stand aloof from me, they
do not hesitate to spit in my face! | Indeed, they have loosed
their bonds; they lord it over me, and have thrown off restraint
in my presence. | To subvert my paths they rise up; they build
their approaches for my ruin. | To destroy me, they attack
with none to stay them; | as through a wide breach they
advance. Amid the uproar they come on in waves; | over me
rolls the terror. My dignity is borne off on the wind, and my
welfare vanishes like a cloud. | One with great power lays hold
of my clothing; by the collar of my tunic he seizes me: | he has
cast me into the mire; I am leveled with the dust and ashes. |
I cry to you, but you do not answer me; you stand off and look
at me, | then you turn upon me without mercy and with your
strong hand you buffet me. | You raise me up and drive me
before the wind; I am tossed about by the tempest.
Indeed I know you will turn me back in death to the destined
place of everyone alive. | Yet should not a hand be held out to
help a wretched man in his calamity? | Or have I not wept for
the hardships of others; was not my soul grieved for the desti-
tute? | Yet when I looked for good, then evil came; when I
expected light, then came darkness.
My soul ebbs away from me; | within me is a seething
that will not be stilled. | My gnawing pains take no rest by
night; days of affliction have come upon me. | I go about in
gloom, without the sun; I rise up in public to voice my grief. |
I have become the brother of jackals, companion to the ostrich. |
My blackened skin falls away from me; the heat scorches my
very frame. | My harp is turned to mourning, and my reed pipe
to sounds of weeping.

31

But what is man's lot from God above, his inheritance from
the Almighty on high? | Is it not calamity for the unrighteous,
and woe for evildoers? | Does he not see my ways, and number

30, 18-23: God treats Job roughly.

31, 2-37: This is the famous soliloquy of Job's examination of conscience, one of the Old Testament ethical summits. Job again proclaims his innocence and, therefore, his suffering is unmerited. This solemn confession is comparable to the Negative Confession of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

6 all my steps? | Let God weigh me in the scales of justice; thus
will he know my innocence!
5 If I have walked in falsehood and my foot has hastened to
7 deceit; | if my steps have turned out of the way, and my heart
8 has followed my eyes, or any stain clings to my hands, | then
may I sow, but another eat of it, or may my planting be rooted
up!
38 If my land has cried out against me till its very furrows
40 complained; | if I have eaten its produce without payment and
10 grieved the hearts of its tenants; | then let the thistles grow
instead of wheat and noxious weeds instead of barley!
1 If I have made an agreement with my eyes and entertained
9 any thoughts against a maiden; | if my heart has been enticed
toward a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door;
10 | then may my wife grind for another, and may others cohabit
11 with her! | For that would be heinous, a crime to be condemned;
12 | a fire that should burn down to the abyss till it consumed all
my possessions to the roots.
13 Had I refused justice to my manservant or to my maid, when
14 they had a claim against me, | what then should I do when
God rose up; what could I answer when he demanded an
5 account? | Did not he who made me in the womb make him?
Did not the same One fashion us before our birth?
6 Have I denied anything to the poor, or allowed the eyes of
7 the widow to languish | while I ate my portion alone, with no
8 share in it for the fatherless, | though like a father God has
reared me from my youth, guiding me even from my mother's
womb?
9 What wanderer have I seen without clothing, or poor man
10 without covering, | whose limbs have not blessed me when
warmed with the fleece of my sheep?
11 If I have raised my hand against the innocent because I saw
12 that I had supporters at the gate, | then may my arm fall from
13 the shoulder, my forearm be broken at the elbow! | For the
dread of God will be upon me, and his majesty will overpower
me.
14 Had I put my trust in gold or called fine gold my security; |
15 or had I rejoiced that my wealth was great, or that my hand
had acquired abundance—
16 Had I looked upon the sun as it shone, or the moon in the
17 splendor of its progress, | and had my heart been secretly

31, 21: *Gate;* see 5, 4b n.
31, 26-28: Job was never a sun or moon worshiper. *Waft them a kiss:* an idolatrous gesture.

enticed to waft them a kiss with my hand; | this too would be
a crime for condemnation, for I should have denied God above.
Had I rejoiced at the destruction of my enemy or exulted
when evil fell upon him, | even though I had not suffered my
mouth to sin by uttering a curse against his life—
Had not the men of my tent exclaimed, "Who has not been
fed with his meat!" | Because no stranger lodged in the street,
but I opened my door to wayfarers—
Had I, out of human weakness, hidden my sins and buried
my guilt in my bosom | because I feared the noisy multitude
and the scorn of the tribes terrified me—then I should have
remained silent, and not come out of doors!
Oh, that I had one to hear my case, and that my accuser
would write out his indictment! | Surely, I should wear it on
my shoulder or put it on me like a diadem; | of all my steps I
should give him an account; like a prince I should present
myself before him. This is my final plea; let the Almighty an-
swer me! The words of Job are ended.

VI. ELIU'S SPEECHES

32

Then the three men ceased to answer Job, because he was
righteous in his own eyes. But the anger of Eliu, son of Barachel
the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was kindled. He was angry
with Job for considering himself rather than God to be in the
right. He was angry also with the three friends because they had
not found a good answer and had not condemned Job. But since
these men were older than he, Eliu bided his time before ad-
dressing Job. When, however, Eliu saw that there was no reply
in the mouths of the three men, his wrath was inflamed. So Eliu,
son of Barachel the Buzite, spoke out and said:

I am young and you are very old; therefore I held back and
was afraid to declare to you my knowledge. | Days should

31, 36: *Wear it on my shoulder:* wear it with pride.

31, 37: *Prince:* not like a cringing lawbreaker.

32—37: The majority of biblical scholars consider the six chapters of Eliu's four speeches (32—33; 34; 35; 36—37) as an addition to the book of Job by a different hand. Eliu's speeches interrupt Job's challenge to God (31, 37), and God's reply (ch. 38). Eliu's style and vocabulary differ from the rest of the book. The problem of the Eliu speeches is: Why did the author add these speeches here? Some say that Eliu's contribution to the traditional theory of the three friends against Job is the discipline of suffering, i.e., God instructs man through suffering. Other scholars say that this notion was already embodied in the dialogue. However, chs. 32—33 are the most important of Eliu's speeches.

8 speak, I thought, and many years teach wisdom! | But it is a
spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him under-
9 standing. | It is not those of many days who are wise, nor the
10 aged who understand the right. | Therefore I say, hearken to
me; let me too set forth my knowledge!
11 Behold, I have waited for your discourses, and have given
12 ear to your arguments. | Yes, I followed you attentively as you
searched out what to say; and behold, there is none who has
convicted Job, not one of you who could refute his statements. |
13 Yet do not say, "We have met wisdom. God may vanquish him
14 but not man!" | For had he addressed his words to me, I should
not then have answered him as you have done.
15 They are dismayed, they make no more reply; words fail
16 them. | Must I wait? Now that they speak no more, and have
17 ceased to make reply, | I too will speak my part; I also will
show my knowledge!
18 For I am full of matters to utter; the spirit within me com-
19 pels me. | Like a new wineskin with wine under pressure,
20 my bosom is ready to burst. | Let me speak and obtain relief;
21 let me open my lips, and make reply. | I would not be partial
22 to anyone, nor give flattering titles to any. | For I know nought
of flattery; if I did, my Maker would soon take me away.

33

1 Therefore, O Job, hear my discourse, and hearken to all my
2 words. | Behold, now I open my mouth; my tongue and my
3 voice form words. | I will state directly what is in my mind,
4 my lips shall utter knowledge sincerely; | for the spirit of God
has made me, the breath of the Almighty keeps me alive.
5 If you are able, refute me; draw up your arguments and
6 stand forth. | Behold I, like yourself, have been taken from the
7 same clay by God. | Therefore no fear of me should dismay
you, nor should my presence weigh heavily upon you.
8 But you have said in my hearing, as I listened to the sound of
9 your words: | "I am clean and without transgression; I am
10 innocent; there is no guilt in me. | Yet he invents pretexts
11 against me and reckons me as his enemy. | He puts my feet
in the stocks; he watches all my ways!"
12 In this you are not just, let me tell you; for God is greater
13 than man. | Why, then, do you make complaint against him
14 that he gives no account of his doings? | For God does speak,
perhaps once, or even twice, though one perceive it not.
15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, [when deep sleep falls
16 upon men] as they slumber in their beds, | it is then he opens

17 the ears of men and as a warning to them, terrifies them; | by
turning man from evil and keeping pride away from him, |
18 he withholds his soul from the pit and his life from passing to
the grave.
19 Or a man is chastened on his bed by pain and unceasing
20 suffering within his frame, | so that to his appetite food be-
comes repulsive, and his senses reject the choicest nourish-
21 ment. | His flesh is wasted so that it cannot be seen, and his
22 bones, once invisible, appear; | his soul draws near to the pit,
his life to the place of the dead.
23 If then there be for him an angel, one out of a thousand, a
mediator, to show him what is right for him and bring the man
24 back to justice, | he will take pity on him and say, "Deliver
him from going down to the pit; I have found him a ransom."
25 Then his flesh shall become soft as a boy's; he shall be again
26 as in the days of his youth. | He shall pray and God will favor
27 him; he shall see God's face with rejoicing. | He shall sing
before men and say, "I sinned and did wrong, yet he has not
28 punished me accordingly. | He delivered my soul from passing
to the pit, and I behold the light of life."
29 Lo, all these things God does, twice, or thrice, for a man, |
30 bringing back his soul from the pit to the light, in the land of
31 the living. | Be attentive, O Job; listen to me! Be silent and I
32 will speak. | If you have aught to say, then answer me. Speak
33 out! I should like to see you justified. | If not, then do you
listen to me; be silent while I teach you wisdom.

34

1 Then Eliu continued and said:
2 Hear, O wise men, my discourse, and you that have knowl-
3 edge, hear me! | For the ear tests words, as the taste does food. |
4 Let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn between
5 us what is good. | For Job has said, "I am innocent, but God
6 has taken what is my due. | Notwithstanding my right I am
set at nought; in my wound the arrow rankles, sinless though
I am."
7 What man is like Job? He drinks in blasphemies like water, |
8 keeps company with evildoers and goes along with wicked
9 men, | when he says, "It profits a man nought that he is pleas-
ing to God."
10 Therefore, men of understanding, hearken to me: far be it
from God to do wickedness; far from the Almighty to do wrong!
11 | Rather, he requites men for their conduct, and brings home to

33, 18: *Pit:* used several times, and here meaning sheol.

12 a man his way of life. | Surely, God cannot act wickedly, the
13 Almighty cannot violate justice. | Who gave him government
14 over the earth, or who else set all the land in its place? | If he
were to take back his spirit to himself, withdraw to himself his
15 breath, | all flesh would perish together, and man would return
to the dust.
16 Now, do you, O Job, hear this! Hearken to the words I
17 speak! | Can an enemy of justice indeed be in control, or will
18 you condemn the supreme Just One, | who says to a king, "You
19 are worthless!" and to nobles, "You are wicked!" | Who neither favors the person of princes, nor respects the rich more
20 than the poor? For they are all the work of his hands: | in a
moment they die, even at midnight. He brings on nobles, and
takes them away, removing the powerful without lifting a
21 hand; | for his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he beholds
all his steps.
22 There is no darkness so dense that evildoers can hide in it. |
23 Therefore he discerns their works; he turns at night and crushes
23 them. | For he forewarns no man of his time to come before
24 God in judgment. | Without a trial he breaks the mighty, and
27 sets others in their stead, | because they turned away from him
28 and heeded none of his ways, | but caused the cries of the poor
to reach him, so that he heard the plea of the afflicted.
29 If he remains tranquil, who then can condemn? If he hides
30.31 his face who then can behold him? | ..... | When
32 anyone says to God, "I was misguided; I will offend no more. |
Teach me wherein I have sinned; if I have done wrong, I will do
33 so no more," | would you then say that God must punish, since
you reject what he is doing? It is you who must choose, not I;
speak, therefore, what you know.
34 Men of understanding will say to me, every wise man who
35 hears my views: | "Job speaks without intelligence, and his
36 words are without sense." | Let Job be tried to the limit, since
37 his answers are those of the impious; | for he is adding rebellion to his sin by brushing off our arguments and addressing
many words to God.

35

1 Then Eliu proceeded and said:
2 Do you think it right to say, "I am just rather than God?" |
3 To say, "What does it profit me; what advantage have I more

34, 29. 30: The extant Hebrew text of these verses (as also of v. 26, which is not contained in the CCD translation) gives several added phrases that either represent duplication or are very obscure.

than if I had sinned?" | I have words for a reply to you and
your three companions as well. | Look up to the skies and
behold; regard the heavens high above you. | If you sin, what
injury do you do to God? Even if your offenses are many, how
do you hurt him? | If you are righteous, what do you give him,
or what does he receive from your hand? | Your wickedness
can affect only a man like yourself; and your justice only a
fellow human being.

In great oppression men cry out; they call for help because
of the power of the mighty, | saying, "Where is God, my
Maker, who has given visions in the night, | taught us rather
than the beasts of the earth, and made us wise rather than the
birds of the heavens?" | Though thus they cry out, he answers
not against the pride of the wicked.

But it is idle to say God does not hear or that the Almighty
does not take notice. | Even though you say that you see him
not, the case is before him; with trembling should you wait
upon him. | But now that you have done otherwise, God's
anger punishes, nor does he show concern that a man will die. |
Yet Job to no purpose opens his mouth, and without knowledge
multiplies words.

36

Eliu proceeded further and said:

Wait yet a little and I will instruct you, for there are still
words to be said on God's behalf. | I will bring my knowledge
from afar, and to my Maker I will accord the right. | For in-
deed, my theme cannot fail me: the one perfect in knowledge I
set before you.

Behold, God rejects the obstinate in heart; he preserves not
the life of the wicked. | He withholds not the just man's rights,
but grants vindication to the oppressed, | and with kings upon
thrones he sets them, exalted forever.

Or if they are bound with fetters and held fast by bonds of
affliction, | then he makes known to them what they have done
and their sins of boastful pride. | He opens their ears to correc-
tion and exhorts them to turn back from evil.

If they obey and serve him, they spend their days in pros-

35, 4: *A reply to you:* Eliu refers to Job's statement that the innocent suffer as much as the wicked, and especially to Eliphaz's words in 22, 2-3.

35, 14-15: The text here is uncertain. It seems to indicate that Job should have realized God's indifference is only apparent, and that, because he has not done so, God will punish him.

36, 5-21: Perhaps this section should be read between vv. 6 and 7 of ch. 34.

12 perity, their years in happiness. | But if they obey not, they
perish; they die for lack of knowledge.
13 The impious in heart lay up anger for themselves; they cry
14 not for help when he enchains them; | therefore they expire in
15 youth, and perish among the reprobate. | But he saves the un-
fortunate through their affliction, and instructs them through
16-21 distress. | . . . . . | Take heed, turn not to evil; for
you have preferred carousal to affliction.
22 Behold, God is sublime in his power. What teacher is there
23 like him? | Who prescribes for him his conduct, or who can
24 say, "You have done wrong"? | Remember, you should extol
25 his work, which men have praised in song. | All men contem-
plate it; man beholds it from afar.
26 Lo, God is great beyond our knowledge; the number of his
27 years is past seaching out. | He holds in check the waterdrops
28 that filter in rain through his mists, | till the skies run with
31 them and the showers rain down on mankind. | For by these
he nourishes the nations, and gives them food in abundance.
29-30 Lo! he spreads the clouds in layers as the carpeting of his
32 tent. | In his hands he holds the lightning, and he commands it
33 to strike the mark. | His thunder speaks for him and incites the
fury of the storm.

37

1 At this my heart trembles and leaps out of its place, |
2 to hear his angry voice as it rumbles forth from his mouth! |
3 Everywhere under the heavens he sends it, with his lightning,
4 to the ends of the earth. | Again his voice roars—the majestic
sound of his thunder.
5 He does great things beyond our knowing; wonders past our
6 searching out. | For he says to the snow, "Fall to the earth";
7 likewise to his heavy, drenching rain. | He shuts up all man-
8 kind indoors; | the wild beasts take to cover and remain quietly
in their dens.
9 Out of its chamber comes forth the tempest; from the north
10 winds, the cold. | With his breath God brings the frost, and
11 the broad waters become congealed. | With hail, also, the

36, 16-20: The Hebrew text here is in disorder.
36, 31: *These:* refers to *the showers* of v. 28, if the verse order indicated above is correct.
36, 29-30: Because of the uncertainty of the text, no translation of these verses has received unanimous approval from the scholars.
37, 2: *Voice:* the thunder.
37, 9: *Chamber:* wherein, according to popular belief, the storms were kept enclosed.

clouds are laden, as they scatter their flashes of light. | He it is
who changes their rounds, according to his plans, in their task
upon the surface of the earth, | whether for punishment or
mercy, as he commands.
Hearken to this, O Job! Stand and consider the wondrous
works of God! | Do you know how God lays his commands
upon them, and makes the light shine forth from his clouds? |
Do you know how the clouds are banked, the wondrous work of
him who is perfect in knowledge? | You, whom the streams of
water fail when a calm from the south comes over the land, |
do you spread out with him the firmament of the skies, hard as
a brazen mirror?
Teach us then what we shall say to him; we cannot, for the
darkness, make our plea. | Will he be told about it when I
speak, or when a man says he is being destroyed? | Nay, rather,
it is as the light which men see not while it is obscured among
the clouds, till the wind comes by and sweeps the clouds away.
From the North the splendor comes, surrounding God's awe-
some majesty! | The Almighty! we cannot discover him, pre-
eminent in power and judgment; his great justice owes no one
an accounting. | Therefore men revere him, though none can
see him, however wise their hearts.

VII. THE LORD'S SPEECH

38

Then the Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said:
Who is this that obscures divine plans with words of igno-
rance? | Gird up your loins now, like a man; I will question
you, and you tell me the answers! | Where were you when I
founded the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. | Who

37, 22: *North:* God's dwelling. *The splendor:* of God.

38—41: The position of the two Yahweh speeches, 38—39, and 40—41, with Job's replies, is a stroke of genius. The polemic wrangling of the dialogue sprinkled with Job's obstinate intent to meet and dispute with God are artistic preparations for Yahweh to appear "out of the storm" (38, 1) and dwarf the eloquent Job into speechless submission. It seems that, for this dramatic reason, among others, it is better to maintain that the same author who wrote the dialogue also wrote these two Yahweh speeches. However, most scholars hold that at least some parts of these two speeches were by the original fifth century author.

The first speech of the Lord excels any other biblical or non-biblical description of God as creator. Behind the words of the Lord we see the author adoring in profound awe God's wisdom and power in creation—the purpose of the two Yahweh speeches. Perhaps the second speech is given to stress God's power. See 40, 15—41, 26 n.

38, 3: *Gird up your loins:* prepare yourself for the debate.

determined its size; do you know? Who stretched out the meas-
6 uring line for it? | Into what were its pedestals sunk, and who
7 laid the cornerstone, | while the morning stars sang in chorus
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
8 And who shut within doors the sea, when it burst forth
9 from the womb; | when I made the clouds its garment and
10 thick darkness its swaddling bands? | When I set limits for it
11 and fastened the bar of its door, | and said: Thus far shall you
come but no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stilled!
12 Have you ever in your lifetime commanded the morning and
13 shown the dawn its place | for taking hold of the ends of the
14 earth, till the wicked are shaken from its surface? | The earth
is changed as is clay by the seal, and dyed as though it were a
15 garment; | but from the wicked the light is withheld, and the
arm of pride is shattered.
16 Have you entered into the sources of the sea, or walked
17 about in the depths of the abyss? | Have the gates of death
been shown to you, or have you seen the gates of darkness? |
18 Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Tell me, if
19 you know all: | which is the way to the dwelling place of light,
20 and where is the abode of darkness, | that you may take them
to their boundaries and set them on their homeward paths? |
21 You know, because you were born before them, and the number
of your years is great!
22 Have you entered the storehouse of the snow, and seen the
23 treasury of the hail | which I have reserved for times of stress,
24 for the days of war and of battle? | Which way to the parting
of the winds, whence the east wind spreads over the earth?
25 Who has laid out a channel for the downpour and for the
26 thunderstorm a path | to bring rain to no man's land, the un-
27 peopled wilderness; | to enrich the waste and desolate ground
till the desert blooms with verdure?
28 Has the rain a father; or who has begotten the drops of
29 dew? | Out of whose womb comes the ice, and who gives the
30 hoarfrost its birth in the skies, | when the waters lie covered
as though with stone that holds captive the surface of the deep?
31 Have you fitted a curb to the Pleiades, or loosened the bonds
32 of Orion? | Can you bring forth the Mazzaroth in their season,
33 or guide the Bear with its train? | Do you know the ordinances
of the heavens; can you put into effect their plan on the earth?

38, 7: *Sons of God:* angels as in 1, 6.
38, 21: A masterly divine irony.
38, 32: *Mazzaroth:* a Hebrew word probably signifying a southern constellation.

34 Can you raise your voice among the clouds, or veil yourself
35 in the waters of the storm? | Can you send forth the lightnings
37 on their way, or will they say to you, "Here we are"? | Who counts the clouds in his wisdom? Or who tilts the water jars of
38 heaven | so that the dust of earth is fused into a mass and its clods made solid?
39 Do you hunt the prey for the lioness or appease the hunger
40 of her cubs, | while they crouch in their dens, or lie in wait in
41 the thicket? | Who provides nourishment for the ravens when their young ones cry out to God, and they rove abroad without food?

39

1 Do you know about the birth of the mountain goats, watch
2 for the birth pangs of the hinds, | number the months that they
3 must fulfill, and fix the time of their bringing forth? | They crouch down and bear their young; they deliver their progeny in
4 the desert. | When their offspring thrive and grow, they leave and do not return.
5 Who has given the wild ass his freedom, and who has loosed
6 him from bonds? | I have made the wilderness his home and
7 the salt flats his dwelling. | He scoffs at the uproar of the city,
8 and hears no shouts of a driver. | He ranges the mountains for pasture and seeks out every path of green.
9 Will the wild ox consent to serve you, and to pass the nights
10 by your manger? | Will a rope bind him in the furrow, and will
11 he harrow the valleys after you? | Will you trust him for his
12 great strength and leave to him the fruits of your toil? | Can you rely on him to thresh out your grain and gather in the yield of your threshing floor?
38,36 Who puts wisdom in the heart, and gives the cock its
39,13 understanding? | The wings of the ostrich beat idly; her
14 plumage is lacking in pinions. | When she leaves her eggs on
15 the ground and deposits them in the sand, | unmindful that a foot may crush them, that the wild beasts may trample them, |
16 she cruelly disowns her young and ruthlessly makes nought of
17 her brood; | for God has withheld wisdom from her and has
18 given her no share in understanding. | Yet in her swiftness of foot she makes sport of the horse and his rider.
19 Do you give the horse his strength, and endow his neck with

38, 34: *Veil yourself . . . storm:* wrap yourself in a cloud, as God comes in a theophany.
38, 35: *Here we are:* at your service.
39, 13a: Her wings do not help her fly but to run (v. 18).
39, 19-25: The famous description of a war horse.

splendor? | Do you make the steed to quiver while his thun-
derous snorting spreads terror? | He jubilantly paws the plain
and rushes in his might against the weapons. | He laughs at
fear and cannot be deterred; he turns not back from the sword.
| Around him rattles the quiver, flashes the spear and the
javelin. | Frenzied and trembling he devours the ground; he
holds not back at the sound of the trumpet, | but at each blast
he cries, "Aha!" Even from afar he scents the battle, the roar
of the chiefs and the shouting.
Is it by your discernment that the hawk soars, that he spreads
his wings toward the south? | Does the eagle fly up at your
command to pass the night at his lofty nest? | The pinnacle
of the cliffs is his stronghold; | from thence he watches for his
prey; his eyes behold it afar off. | His young ones greedily
drink blood; where the slain are, there is he.

40

The Lord then said to Job:
Will we have arguing with the Almighty by the critic? Let
him who would correct God give answer!
Then Job answered the Lord and said:
Behold, I am of little account; what can I answer you? I put
my hand over my mouth. | Though I have spoken once, I will
not do so again; though twice, I will do so no more.
Then the Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said:
Gird up your loins now, like a man. I will question you, and
you tell me the answers! | Would you refuse to acknowledge
my right? Would you condemn me that you may be justified?
Have you an arm like that of God, or can you thunder with
a voice like his? | Adorn yourself with grandeur and majesty,
and array yourself with glory and splendor. | Let loose the
fury of your wrath; | tear down the wicked and shatter them.
Bring down the haughty with a glance; | bury them in the dust
together; in the hidden world imprison them. | Then will I too
acknowledge that your own right hand can save you.
See, besides you I made Behemoth, that feeds on grass like
an ox. | Behold the strength in his loins, and his vigor in the
sinews of his belly. | He carries his tail like a cedar; the sinews

40, 4b: A sign of deep respect.
40, 15—41, 26: God's wisdom, but especially His power, as illustrated by the hippopotamus (40, 15-23) and the crocodile (40, 25—41, 26) are meant to show how inferior man is by contrast to God. In a prescientific age it was natural to turn to nature for such comparisons.
40, 15: *Behemoth:* commonly interpreted as hippopotamus.

18 of his thighs are like cables. | His bones are like tubes of
bronze; his frame is like iron rods.
19 He came at the beginning of God's ways, and was made the
20 taskmaster of his fellows; | for the produce of the mountains is
brought to him, and of all wild animals he makes sport. |
21 Under the lotus trees he lies, in coverts of the reedy swamp. |
22 The lotus trees cover him with their shade; all about him are
23 the poplars on the bank. | If the river grows violent, he is not
disturbed; he is tranquil though the torrent surges about his
mouth.
25 Can you lead about Leviathan with a hook, or curb his
26 tongue with a bit? | Can you put a rope into his nose, or pierce
27 through his cheek with a gaff? | Will he then plead with you,
28 time after time, or address you with tender words? | Will he
make an agreement with you that you may have him as a slave
29 forever? | Can you play with him, as with a bird? Can you put
30 him in leash for your maidens? | Will the traders bargain
for him? Will the merchants divide him up?
31 Can you fill his hide with barbs, or his head with fish spears?
32 | Once you but lay a hand upon him, no need to recall any
other conflict!

41

2 Is he not relentless when aroused; who then dares stand
1 before him? | Whoever might vainly hope to do so need only
3 see him to be overthrown. | Who has assailed him and come
off safe—who under all the heavens?
4 I need hardly mention his limbs, his strength, and the fitness
5 of his armor. | Who can strip off his outer garment, or pene-
6 trate his double corselet? | Who can force open the doors of
7 his mouth, close to his terrible teeth? | Rows of scales are on
8 his back, tightly sealed together; | they are fitted each so close
9 to the next that no space intervenes; | so joined one to another
that they hold fast and cannot be parted.
10 When he sneezes, light flashes forth; his eyes are like those
11 of the dawn. | Out of his mouth go forth firebrands; sparks
12 of fire leap forth. | From his nostrils issues steam, as from a

40, 24: This verse is omitted in the translation because it seems out of place here and duplicates parts of vv. 26 and 28.

40, 25: *Leviathan:* is here described as a crocodile for which the Hebrews had no term. Stripped of the poetic imagery (for which see 7, 12 n), the sense is: Can you, Job, create the world as I did?

40, 30: The crocodile is too mighty to be sold like an ordinary fish.

41, 10b: In Egyptian hieroglyphics the eyes of a crocodile represent the dawn.

13 seething pot or bowl. | His breath sets coals afire; a flame pours
from his mouth.
14 Strength abides in his neck, and terror leaps before him. |
15.16 His heart is hard as stone; his flesh, as the lower millstone. |
17 When he rises up, the mighty are afraid; the waves of the sea
fall back.
18 Should the sword reach him, it will not avail; nor will the
19 spear, nor the dart, nor the javelin. | He regards iron as straw,
20 and bronze as rotten wood. | The arrow will not put him to
21 flight; slingstones used against him are but straws. | Clubs he
esteems as splinters; he laughs at the crash of the spear.
22 His belly is sharp as pottery fragments; he spreads like a
23 threshing sledge upon the mire. | He makes the depths boil like
24 a pot; the sea he churns like perfume in a kettle. | Behind him
he leaves a shining path; you would think the deep had the
25 hoary head of age. | Upon the earth there is not his like, in-
26 trepid he was made. | All, however lofty, fear him; he is king
over all proud beasts.

42

1 Then Job answered the Lord and said:
2 I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of
3 yours can be hindered. | I have dealt with great things that I
do not understand; things too wonderful for me, which I can-
4 not know. | I had heard of you by word of mouth, but now my
6 eye has seen you. | Therefore I disown what I have said, and
repent in dust and ashes.

VIII. EPILOGUE

7 ***Job's Restoration*** And it came to pass after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Themanite, "I am angry with you and with your two friends;

41, 17: The text here is uncertain.

42, 2-6: In the current Hebrew text, this final utterance of Job is interrupted by words ascribed to God (vv. 3-4) which are in large part a duplication of 38, 2-3.

God does not answer Job's questions in His two speeches nor does He accept the traditional opinion of the friends (42, 7), but He overawes Job with examples of His wisdom and power. Therefore, because He does not punish the wicked, it does not mean that He is powerless or unjust. Job believes that God is acting correctly and his submissive attitude shows that he is consoled because he knows that God loves him, and not because his good conduct merited this love, for Yahweh never mentions his innocent conduct in spite of Job's insistence on it.

42, 7-17: Since the Prologue (chs. 1—2) and the Epilogue comprise

for you have not spoken rightly concerning me, as has my
8 servant Job. Now, therefore, take seven bullocks and seven
rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up a holocaust for
yourselves; and let my servant Job pray for you; for his prayer
I will accept, not to punish you severely. For you have not
9 spoken rightly concerning me, as has my servant Job." Then
Eliphaz the Themanite, and Baldad the Sueite, and Sophar the
Naamite, went and did as the Lord had commanded them. And
the Lord accepted the intercession of Job.
10 Also, the Lord restored the prosperity of Job, after he had
prayed for his friends; the Lord even gave to Job twice as much
11 as he had before. Then all his brethren and his sisters came to
him, and all his former acquaintances, and they dined with him
in his house. They condoled with him and comforted him for
all the evil which the Lord had brought upon him; and each
one gave him a piece of money and a gold ring.
12 Thus the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his
earlier ones. For he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand
camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.
13.14 And he had seven sons and three daughters, | of whom he
called the first Jemima, the second Cassia, and the third Ceren-
15 happuch. In all the land no other women were as beautiful as
the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance
16 among their brethren. After this, Job lived a hundred and forty
years; and he saw children, his grandchildren, and even his
17 great-grandchildren. Then Job died, old and full of years.

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for the most part the prose folktale embodying the traditional teaching that God rewards the just and punishes the wicked on earth, what does the fifth century author mean by closing his work with this folktale? His whole dialogue (chs. 3—31) shows he does not hold the traditional theory taught in the Epilogue, namely: that God returns a doublefold temporal prosperity to Job as a reward for his virtue. Scholars are still searching for the answer. Some hypotheses are: perhaps the fifth century author wants his readers to understand this temporal prosperity as a symbol of God's love, or perhaps the author with masterly irony wants the readers to contrast the simple "solution" of the folktale with the profound "solution" of the Yahweh speeches.

42, 7: The three friends of Job (Eliu is ignored in the Epilogue) are criticized by the Lord because they had leveled false charges against him.

42, 11: *Gold ring:* for the nose or ear.

42, 14: Job's daughters had names symbolic of their charms: *Jemima,* dove; *Cassia,* precious perfume; *Ceren-happuch,* cosmetic jar.

42, 16: As his other rewards were *twice as much as he had before* (v. 10), so Job's *hundred and forty years* were double the expected span of human life.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

INTRODUCTION

The Psalter is a collection of one hundred and fifty psalms written by mostly unknown authors. The psalms are divided into five books, perhaps intentionally modeled after the five books of the Pentateuch. Besides this artificial reason for the division there is no other.

The writing of the psalms began before the time of David. Their final incorporation into the Hebrew Bible dates from about 200 B.C. During the centuries they underwent retouches. The tide turns against the opinion that some psalms were composed during the second century B.C. Machabean era. Opposed to this view are scholars who claim that there were no new psalms written after the fifth century B.C. At first, the psalms existed separately, and only gradually they grew from small to large collections. The date of the writing of individual psalms is usually unknown. In the annotations to the psalms an attempt is made to state the general opinion of scholars on the date. When no date is mentioned it means that the scholars find the psalm too vague to be dated. Scholars admit that David organized the liturgy, took the initiative in the use of the psalm form, and wrote some of the psalms. Yet they do not know, even in round numbers, how many he wrote. David is regarded as the author of the whole Psalter, as Moses is considered to be the author of the Pentateuch (see Introduction to the Pentateuch).

The "titles" of the psalms are not considered inspired because they were written by later writers. These titles give information on the tone in which the psalm is to be sung, but it means nothing to us because we do not know anything about this ancient music. The titles also mention the musical instruments which are to accompany the psalm, the name of the composer, the "historical" occasion. Scholars do not readily give credence to these titles when they offer information about the date of the psalm. About one third of the psalms are not attributed to any author. The titles are printed here in smaller type.

The psalms are written in Hebrew poetry which has a line (stich) as its basic external unit. Two or three stichs form a verse. Strophes or stanzas vary in size because they are determined by the thought units or meaning. Perhaps the most fundamental quality of Hebrew poetry is its rhythm, that is, a succession of stressed and unstressed syllables, according to the rise and fall of the voice. There are usually three or four stresses (accents or beats) which determine a line. The amount of unstressed syllables between two stressed syllables is ruled by euphony and Hebrew laws of pronunciation. Therefore, Hebrew poetry has not a true meter as in western poetry, in which a standard number of long and short syllables determine a line. The most outstanding characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, i.e., the balance of the idea or the meaning corresponds with the verse or stanza construction. The parallelism may be *synonymous* when the second line, verse or stanza more or less repeats the first. An example of this is Ps 2, 4. There is an *antithetic* parallelism when the lines, verses or stanzas are contrasted (Ps 1, 6).

Lastly, the parallelism is called *synthetic* when the thought in the first line, verse or stanza is elaborated upon in the second and following lines (Ps 3, 5).

The classification of the psalms is a most complex problem. Thanks to H. Gunkel it is proven that the psalms follow a limited number of fixed patterns. The psalmists wrote according to these well-known traditional structures. Consequently, biblical students try to classify the psalms according to literary forms. In ascertaining the literary form the scholars are not only guided by literary characteristics of style and motifs but they are influenced, as the inspired psalmists were, by the situations of life which brought about the composition of the psalms and by influences liturgical or otherwise (see, e.g., Ps 23, 1-10 n). Regarding liturgical influence, it is not correct to say that all psalms were originally written for use in the temple liturgy, though some of them were. Many psalms were originally written for an individual; only by and by did they become community psalms (see, e.g., Ps 24, 22 n). In the fifth or fourth century B.C. the Psalter probably became the community hymnal of the temple.

Experts at times depart from classifying according to literary form and classify psalms in accordance with the content matter, for example, royal psalms are labeled thus because they deal with kings (see Pss 19—20). There is a wide diversion of opinion on the kinds and number of psalms. Some common categories are: hymns, laments, thanksgiving psalms, wisdom ("didactic," "sapiential") psalms, Messianic psalms, and mixed types, a category for the psalms that do not fit into a definite grouping. The second and third of the types are often divided into individual and collective ("public," "national"). Messianic (see Ps 2, 1-12 n) and wisdom psalms are so classified according to content. Usually wisdom psalms extol wisdom under one aspect or another as in the Wisdom books. Sometimes a lesson from history is proposed as wisdom (see, e.g., Ps 77, 1-72 n) but more often wisdom psalms are concerned with some aspect of the problem of evil or retribution. These psalms grapple with the problem of why the evil prosper and the just suffer. The numerous minor groups of psalms, for example, psalms of Yahweh-King, psalms of Sion, will be treated in their appropriate places in the annotations.

Hymns, or psalms of praise (e.g., Ps 28), are structured by an introduction (an invitation to praise God), a body (a development of the reason(s) for the praise), and a conclusion (often a reinvitation to praise God).

Laments are structured by an appeal to Yahweh, a complaint usually against enemies, a petition, and a vow to praise God. Often there is an abrupt transition from the petition to the vow of thanksgiving for the favorable reply to the petition. One theory to explain the abrupt change is that the psalm was written during the trouble in question, but spoken in the temple at a later time (see Ps 6, 2-11 n). Sometimes psalms of trust are differentiated from psalms of lament because the trust is more predominant than the complaint (see Ps 22).

Psalms of thanksgiving (see Ps 17) are structured according to an invitation, often veiled, to thank God, the account of the event for

which the thanksgiving psalm was composed, and a concluding reinvitation to praise God.

The influence of the psalms is carried over into the New Testament where they are quoted 116 times. The early Church continued the tradition of praying the psalms which is still felt in the present liturgy. The piety of Christendom and the literature and arts of various Christian peoples bear the imprint of the Psalter. Even today, besides the Gelineau Psalms, the psalms are heard in recordings of Mendelssohn, Monteverdi, etc.

Main divisions of the Book of Psalms are:

1. Book One, Psalms 1—40
2. Book Two, Psalms 41—71
3. Book Three, Psalms 72—88
4. Book Four, Psalms 89—105
5. Book Five, Psalms 106—150

PSALM 1

1 ***True Happiness*** Happy the man who follows not the
counsel of the wicked, nor walks in the way of sinners, nor
2 sits in the company of the insolent, | but delights in the
3 law of the Lord and meditates on his law day and night. | He
is like a tree planted near running water, that yields its fruit
in due season, and whose leaves never fade. [Whatever he
does, prospers.]
4 Not so the wicked, not so; they are like chaff which the wind
5 drives away. | Therefore in judgment the wicked shall not
6 stand, nor shall sinners, in the assembly of the just. | For the
Lord watches over the way of the just, but the way of the
wicked vanishes.

PSALM 2

1 ***The Universal Reign of the Messia*** Why do the nations
2 rage and the peoples utter folly? | The kings of the earth rise

1, 1-6: The psalm was either composed independently or transposed here by the last editor of the Psalter as a preface to the entire collection of psalms. The purpose of the psalm is to encourage the readers or singers to practice the Mosaic Law in spite of hardships. Since the theme is on retribution of the good and wicked, we may classify this psalm as sapiential. See Introduction to the Book of Psalms.

2, 1-12: This is the first psalm which echoes and develops the royal Messianic prophecy of 2 Sm 7, 8-16 n; the others are Pss 44; 71; 88; and 109. Many moderns hold that this psalm does not predict that a divine Messia called Christ will come hundreds of years later and rule over a spiritual kingdom forever, but that the psalm speaks of a historical king, a successor of David, before the sixth century exile. In this modern view the psalm was most likely written to celebrate his accession to the throne of David. But—and this is characteristic of the

up, and the princes conspire together against the Lord and
3 against his anointed: | "Let us break their fetters and cast their
bonds from us!"
4 He who is throned in heaven laughs; the Lord derides them. |
5 Then in anger he speaks to them; he terrifies them in his wrath:
6 | "I myself have set up my king on Sion, my holy mountain."
7 I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: the Lord said to me,
8 "You are my son; this day I have begotten you. | Ask of me
and I will give you the nations for an inheritance and the ends
9 of the earth for your possession. | You shall rule them with an
iron rod; you shall shatter them like an earthen dish."

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royal Messianic psalms—the poet describes the historical reigning king insofar as he embodies all the hopes and ideals of the Davidic line. See table: Royal Messianism, pp. 1265-1267.

2, 1-3: It was customary in ancient days that whenever a new king succeeded to the throne the subject nations would try to regain their liberty (v. 3). The poet puts vv. 1-2 on the lips of the new king. The question has often been asked among scholars: how explain such a bombastic style referring to a puny Judean king as though he were as great as the world rulers of Egypt and Babylon? The moderns answer that the royal psalmists borrowed this court style from their imperialistic neighbors because each Judean king was the successor of David and hence embodied the promise of God to David through Nathan that the dynasty would endure forever. The hyperbolic court style was a fit instrument to convey this divine promise.

2, 4-5: The poet pictures God in the strategic security of heaven scornfully laughing in the manner of a typical mighty oriental despot and bellowing in angry wrath, by alluding to Nathan's prophecy wherein God promised David an enduring line of kingly successors which no enemy would annihilate.

2, 7: The inspired poet then makes the king speak and repeat the decree or prophecy with which God adopted David and his successors as His sons in the moral sense. This is the meaning of "this day I have begotten you." God has adopted the whole Davidic dynasty on the day of David's enthronement; "this day" refers to the time of God's promise to David and his successors, through Nathan. The "day" is renewed each time a successor of David becomes king.

2, 8: The psalmist makes the historical king elaborate on the promise of Yahweh that the king will rule the "nations" and the "ends of the earth." This elaboration seems to be more than a hyperbole, more than an imitation of oriental court style, and suggests more than the greatest extensions of the kingdoms of David and of Solomon. Here the psalmist makes the kingdom of David co-extensive with God's world-wide domain. The psalmist hopes that some day the Davidic king will rule the world in the political sense, without excluding the spiritual sense, but under the protection of God and as His representative. This would be a partial fulfillment of God's promise to Nathan. This notion of world-wide rule is the first significant development of Nathan's prophecy.

2, 9: The king is described as an oriental conquerer ruling with an "iron rod," and shattering his enemies like a piece of pottery.

10 And now, O kings, give heed; take warning, you rulers of the
11 earth. | Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him; with
12 trembling | pay homage to him, lest he be angry and you perish
from the way, when his anger blazes suddenly. Happy are all
who take refuge in him!

PSALM 3

Trust in God in Time of Danger

1 A psalm of David, when he fled from his son Absalom.
2 O Lord, how many are my adversaries! Many rise up against
3 me! | Many are saying of me, "There is no salvation for him
4 in God." | But you, O Lord, are my shield; my glory, you lift
up my head!
5 When I call out to the Lord, he answers me from his holy
6 mountain. | When I lie down in sleep, I wake again, for the
7 Lord sustains me. | I fear not the myriads of people arrayed
against me on every side.
8 Rise up, O Lord! Save me, my God! For you strike all my
enemies on the cheek; the teeth of the wicked you break. |
9 Salvation is the Lord's! Upon your people be your blessing!

PSALM 4

Joyful Confidence in God

1 For the leader; with stringed instruments. A psalm of David.
2 When I call, answer me, O my just God, you who relieve me
when I am in distress; have pity on me, and hear my prayer!

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2. 10-12: The psalmist turns to the rebel kings of the nations to exhort them to peace. The poet urges the peoples to pay "homage" (v. 12), which literally means in Hebrew "kiss his feet." In the Orient this is the highest mark of respect from subjects to their kings, for it is a sign of subjection. The last line—indicating happiness for those who take refuge in God—is inserted to avoid ending with a threat.

3. 2-9: This song centers on aging king David fleeing from Jerusalem, and his rebellious son, Absalom, who was marching upon Jerusalem to install himself as king. See 2 Sm 15—17. The dominating motif is David's profound trust in God. Hence this psalm may be categorized as a psalm of trust.

3. 3: When David quotes his enemies, who speak of him as abandoned by God, he is summarizing the curse of Shemei, a chauvinistic Benjaminite supporter of king Saul. Shemei cursed and pelted David on the road to exile (see 2 Sm 16, 5-13).

3. 8: *Rise up:* the opening word of an ancient Mosaic victory march (Dtn 10, 35). Since teeth are the weapons of beasts, the poet is metaphorically petitioning God to disarm his enemies.

4. 2-9: The psalmist thanks God for having recently helped him overcome a grave unidentified trial. He prayerfully encourages his close followers who seem shaken in their confidence in God for apparently

3 Men of rank, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do
4 you love what is vain and seek after falsehood? | Know that
the Lord does wonders for his faithful one; the Lord will hear
5 me when I call upon him. | Tremble, and sin not; reflect, upon
6 your beds, in silence. | Offer just sacrifices, and trust in the
Lord.
7 Many say, "Oh, that we might see better times!" O Lord,
8 let the light of your countenance shine upon us! | You put
gladness into my heart, more than when grain and wine abound.
9 | As soon as I lie down, I fall peacefully asleep, for you alone,
O Lord, bring security to my dwelling.

PSALM 5

Prayer for Divine Help

1 For the leader; with wind instruments. A psalm of David.
2 Hearken to my words, O Lord, attend to my sighing. |
3 Heed my call for help, my king and my God! To you I pray, |
4 O Lord; at dawn you hear my voice; at dawn I bring my plea
expectantly before you.

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allowing such an unjust misfortune to befall the holy psalmist (v. 3). The underlying presupposition of the psalmist seems to be that God rewards the holy with material prosperity and punishes the wicked with poverty and troubles. Later revelation was to correct this earthly thinking.

4, 4: The Lord has favored the psalmist with a spectacular demonstration of mercy.

4, 5-6: The bard seems to say to his followers: "Don't sin by doubting God's faithfulness, but reflect in prayer upon your beds in the silence of the night. To return to God's good graces for doubting His help, offer the prescribed sacrifices."

4, 7: The discouraged doubters clamor for happier days (than those recently experienced) by alluding to the blessing of the high priest: "The Lord bless you and keep you . . . and let his face shine upon you" (Nm 6, 24-26).

4, 8: The pessimism of the poet's friends contrasts with the exuberance of the poet's personal experience of God, who makes him happier than the joy of the rich harvest. The loud festivities of harvest and wine treading were the most intense expression of joy for the peasants.

4, 9: In the original Hebrew of this verse, the rhythm is as reposeful as is the thought of this delicate expression of absolute confidence in God's help alone.

5, 2-13: After the reign of David in the tenth century B.C. the temple service continued to be well organized. Here an unknown Levite, engaged in temple service and an assistant of the priest in the temple, prays this psalm at dawn. He is lamenting because of his enemies, and because of the crimes committed against the Law of God. The Levite asks for guidance.

5, 4: The sacred songster pleads for God's attention and help at dawn because, according to several psalmists, it is the privileged time for divine favors.

5 For you, O God, delight not in wickedness; no evil man
6 remains with you; | the arrogant may not stand in your sight.
7 You hate all evildoers; | you destroy all who speak falsehood;
the bloodthirsty and the deceitful the Lord abhors.
8 But I, because of your abundant kindness, will enter your
house; I will worship at your holy temple in fear of you, |
9 O Lord; because of my enemies, guide me in your justice; make
straight your way before me.
10 For in their mouth there is no sincerity; their heart teems with
treacheries. Their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their
11 tongue. | Punish them, O God; let them fall by their own
devices; for their many sins, cast them out because they have
rebelled against you.
12 But let all who take refuge in you be glad and exult forever.
Protect them, that you may be the joy of those who love your
13 name. | For you, O Lord, bless the just man; you surround
him with the shield of your good will.

PSALM 6

Prayer in Time of Distress

1 For the leader; with stringed instruments, "upon the eighth." A
psalm of David.
2 O Lord, reprove me not in your anger, nor chastise me in
3 your wrath. | Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am languishing;

5, 6: The poet represents God as a king forbidding a proud courtier to stand in his presence.

5, 9: In biblical terms, a holy man is one who follows the straight path.

5, 10: Although they flatter me outwardly, if thoughts could kill, they would swallow me to death.

5, 11: May God punish the evildoers because to harm a follower of Yahweh is to rebel against God Himself. This passage and many similar ones in the Psalter are known as the cursing or imprecatory psalms. See Jer 12, 3 n.

5, 12: The poet ends mildly by expressing with some certainty that God has answered him with joy and protection, as He answers everyone who seeks shelter in His name, i.e., in His Person.

6, 2-11: In this lamentation a sick man implored God for help against his enemies. It was probably written at the time of David in the tenth century B.C. The abrupt switch from pleading to the certainty that God has heard his prayer (v. 9) may be explained thus: This psalm was composed during the distress of the poet but it was delivered before the congregation in the temple after God had answered his plea.

This is the first of the seven Penitential Psalms. The others are: Pss 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, 142. Christian tradition from at least the sixth century has labeled them penitential because they arouse sorrow for sin. Hear the recording of The Seven Penitential Songs of David by Orlando di Lasso.

heal me, O Lord, for my body is in terror; | my soul, too, is
utterly terrified; but you, O Lord, how long . . . ?
Return, O Lord, save my life; rescue me because of your
kindness, | for among the dead no one remembers you; in the
nether world who gives you thanks?
I am wearied with sighing; every night I flood my bed with
weeping; I drench my couch with my tears. | My eyes are
dimmed with sorrow; they have aged because of all my foes.
Depart from me, all evildoers, for the Lord has heard the
sound of my weeping; | the Lord has heard my plea; the Lord
has accepted my prayer. | All my enemies shall be put to shame
in utter terror; they shall fall back in sudden shame.

PSALM 7

An Appeal to the Divine Judge

A plaintive song of David, which he sang to the Lord because of
Chus the Benjaminite.
O Lord, my God, in you I take refuge; save me from all
my pursuers and rescue me, | lest I become like the lion's prey,
to be torn to pieces, with no one to rescue me.
O Lord, my God, if I am at fault in this, if there is guilt
on my hands, | if I have repaid my friend with evil, I who
spared those who without cause were my foes— | let the enemy
pursue and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground,
and lay my glory in the dust.

6, 4: In an elliptical exclamation for "How long will it be before you answer my prayer?" the poet complains that not only his body (v. 5) but his soul is also in excruciating distress.

6, 5: He requests God to "return" and save his life because God seems to have abandoned him. The inspired composer appeals to God's description of Himself as "kind" in Ex 34, 6-7: "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, and rich in *kindness* and fidelity, continuing his *kindness* for a thousand generations. . . ."

6, 6: He urges his plea, which is found in several psalms: "Lord, if I die, you will be the loser, so to speak, because you will not receive any more praise or thanksgiving from me as you will if you let me live and frequent the temple." At that time the nether world was thought of as a dreary place where people led a weak, shadowy existence, and where there was no homage paid to God as in the lavish ceremonies of the temple.

6, 9: Suddenly, from deep desolation the songwriter passes to full confidence that God has heard his prayer. See Ps 6, 2-11 n.

6, 11: He considers himself as embarrassing his enemies because of his victory over them, insofar as God has answered him.

7, 2-18: This psalm may very well refer to that period of David's life when he was hunted by king Saul from cave to cave along the coast of the Dead Sea. The poem re-echoes the sentiments of David as an unjustly persecuted and calumniated man.

7 Rise up, O Lord, in your anger; rise against the fury of my
8 foes; wake to the judgment you have decreed. | Let the assembly
of the peoples surround you; above them on high be enthroned.
9 | [The Lord judges the nations.] Do me justice, O Lord,
because I am just, and because of the innocence that is mine. |
10 Let the malice of the wicked come to an end, but sustain the
just, O searcher of heart and soul, O just God.
11 A shield before me is God, who saves the upright of heart;
12 | a just judge is God, a God who punishes day by day. |
13 Unless they be converted, God will sharpen his sword; he will
14 bend and aim his bow, | prepare his deadly weapons against
them, and use fiery darts for arrows.
15 He who conceived iniquity and was pregnant with mischief,
16 brings forth failure. | He has opened a hole, he has dug it
17 deep, but he falls into the pit which he has made. | His
mischief shall recoil upon his own head; upon the crown of his
18 head his violence shall rebound. | I will give thanks to the
Lord for his justice, and sing praise to the name of the Lord
Most High.

PSALM 8

The Majesty of God and the Dignity of Man

1 For the leader; "upon the *gittith*." A psalm of David.
2 O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the
earth! You have exalted your majesty above the heavens. |
3 Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you have fashioned

7, 8-10: David calls for a public court hearing in front of all the nations and the Israelites to decide that he is not guilty.

7, 12-14: He depicts God as the warrior-judge who punishes daily. The "fiery darts" may refer to burning arrows discharged into a besieged town.

7, 18: On the sudden thank you of this closing doxology see Ps 6, 2-11 n.

8, 2-10: This psalm is a hymn celebrating God's glory as refracted through creation. It is possible that this hymn is a fragment of a larger poem. It was adapted to liturgical use by the addition of an antiphon at the beginning and at the end by a later hand. Notice that the antiphon is in the plural "our" and the body of the psalm is in the singular "I." The original author borrowed his ideas mostly from Genesis and Job. He was in contact with a milieu where these ideas circulated before being written down. His psalm emanates from the religious life of his people and the "publication" of his hymn reintroduces the psalm to the religious community. It was written shortly before the exile of the sixth century. It would be anachronistic to read the hymn as though the poet were intending to prove the existence of God through the works of creation.

8, 3: The implicit testimony of praise of the child is a silent refutation of God's foes who are hostile to His kingdom.

praise because of your foes, to silence the hostile and the vengeful. | When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars which you set in place— | what is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?
You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. | You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet: | all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field, | the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas. | O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

PSALM 9A

Thanksgiving for the Overthrow of Hostile Nations

For the leader; according to *Muth labben*. A psalm of David.
I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart; I will declare all your wondrous deeds. | I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, Most High, | because my enemies are turned back, overthrown and destroyed before you.
For you upheld my right and my cause, seated on your throne, judging justly. | You rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; their name you blotted out forever and ever. |

8, 7: The power of ruling is described by the Semitic gesture of victory—"putting all things under his feet."

8, 10: The antiphon is repeated as at the beginning. Notice that the antiphon sings the grandeur of God; the body of the hymn sings the goodness and magnificence of God.

9A, 2-21: Ps 9 of the Vulgate consists of two parts (A and B), each of which forms a separate psalm (Pss 9 and 10) in the current Hebrew text. In favor of the original unity of this psalm is its alphabetic character, now partially lost in the poorly preserved text; the first letter of each stanza (of two couplets apiece) originally followed the order of the Hebrew alphabet consecutively throughout both halves of the psalm. The poem speaks of the lot of the poor folk, the humble and faithful people of Yahweh who are oppressed by the merciless rich. In fact, this psalm, taken together with the following psalm, has been called "*the* canticle of the Poor Folk of Yahweh." See So 2, 3 n. The inspired song writer does not reason logically but rejoices lyrically, moans, prays, and hopes. The writer begins with his own case. After thanking God for deliverance from his enemies, he pens some general considerations of the misdeeds of the wicked. He asks God to punish them and he imparts hope for deliverance to the poor folk. The song may date from the Persian period (sixth-fourth centuries B.C.).

Because of the literary necessity of following the artificial alphabetic structure the thoughts are usually loosely connected. The other alphabetic psalms are: 24, 32, 33, 36, 110, 111, 118, 144.

9A, 6-7: Because of the personal victory God granted him, the bard

7 The enemies are ruined completely forever; the remembrance of
the cities you uprooted has perished.
8 But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has set up his throne
9 for judgment. | He judges the world with justice; he governs
10 the peoples with equity. | The Lord is a stronghold for the
11 oppressed, a stronghold in times of distress. | They trust in you
who cherish your name, for you forsake not those who seek
you, O Lord.
12 Sing praise to the Lord enthroned in Sion; proclaim among
13 the nations his deeds; | for the avenger of blood has remem-
bered; he has not forgotten the cry of the afflicted.
14 Have pity on me, O Lord; see how I am afflicted by my foes,
15 you who have raised me up from the gates of death, | that
I may declare all your praises and, in the gates of the daughter
of Sion, rejoice in your salvation.
16 The nations are sunk in the pit they have made; in the snare
17 they set, their foot is caught; | in passing sentence, the Lord
is manifest; the wicked are trapped by the work of their own
hands.
18 To the nether world the wicked shall turn back, all the
19 nations that forget God. | For the needy shall not always be
forgotten, nor shall the hope of the afflicted forever perish. |
20 Rise, O Lord, let not man prevail; let the nations be judged
21 in your presence. | Strike them with terror, O Lord; let the
nations know that they are but men.

PSALM 9B (10)

1 ***Prayer for Help against Oppressors*** Why, O Lord, do
2 you stand aloof? Why hide in times of distress? | Proudly the
wicked harass the afflicted, who are caught in the devices the
wicked have contrived.

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begins to recall numerous executions of the wicked, which Yahweh performed in the past, and the destruction of their cities.

9A, 12: *Sion:* Jerusalem is painted as the center of God's glorious world empire.

9A, 13-15: The reason for this exhortation is Yahweh's intervention in favor of the oppressed poor folk. The songster then returns to his personal case and to the motive of his thanksgiving: he was at the brink of death when God reprieved him so that he could sing His glory in Jerusalem (often called "the daughter of Sion"). Note the antithesis between the gates of death and the gates of Jerusalem.

9A, 16-17: The hymn continues with the renewed declaration (vv. 6-7) of the capitulation of the haughty whose snares have boomeranged, and of the triumph of Yahweh's justice, at least for the poet.

9B, 1-18: The background is the same as that of Psalm 9A since the two psalms are really one.

3 For the wicked man glories in his greed, and the covetous
4 blasphemes, sets the Lord at nought. | The wicked man boasts,
"He will not avenge it"; "There is no God," sums up his
5 thoughts. | His ways are secure at all times; your judgments
6 are far from his mind; all his foes he scorns. | He says in his
heart, "I shall not be disturbed; from age to age I shall be
without misfortune."
7 His mouth is full of cursing, guile and deceit; under his
8 tongue are mischief and iniquity. | He lurks in ambush near
the villages; in hiding he murders the innocent; his eyes spy
9 upon the unfortunate. | He waits in secret like a lion in his
lair; he lies in wait to catch the afflicted; he catches the afflicted
10 and drags them off in his net. | He stoops and lies prone till
11 by his violence fall the unfortunate. | He says in his heart,
"God has forgotten; he hides his face, he never sees."
12 Rise, O Lord! O God, lift up your hand! Forget not the
13 afflicted! | Why should the wicked man despise God, saying in
14 his heart, "He will not avenge it"? | You do see, for you behold
misery and sorrow, taking them in your hands. On you the
unfortunate man depends; of the fatherless you are the helper.
15 | Break the strength of the wicked and of the evildoer; punish
their wickedness; let them not survive.
16 The Lord is king forever and ever; the nations have perished
17 out of his land. | The desire of the afflicted you hear, O Lord;
18 strengthening their hearts, you pay heed | to the defense of the
fatherless and the oppressed, that man, who is of earth, may
terrify no more.

9B, 4: Although the wicked live like practical atheists, it would be anachronistic to say that they did not believe in the existence of God.

9B, 7: Paul, in Rom 3, 14, says that we are all sinners whom God has freely redeemed.

9B, 12-13: *Lift up your hand:* the poet asks God to exercise His power both to strike down the impious and to protect the holy poor people.

9B, 15: *Let them not survive:* the poet is echoing the sentiments of his era about the working of God's justice, since he is not aware of the existence of hell in the afterlife and can think of no other way in which God's justice might be exercised in this life.

9B, 16-18: Since Yahweh-King is so powerful that He drove the original settlers of Palestine out of the land (v. 16), is He not powerful enough to punish the haughty wicked people who, after all, are only men "of earth"? (v. 18).

PSALM 10 (11)

Unshaken Confidence in God

1 For the leader. Of David.
2 In the Lord I take refuge; how can you say to me, "Flee to the
mountain like a bird! For, see, the wicked bend the bow; they
place the arrow on the string to shoot in the dark at the upright
3 of heart. | When the pillars are overthrown, what can the just
man do?"
4 The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven.
5 His eyes behold, his searching glance is on mankind. | The
Lord searches the just and the wicked; the lover of violence he
6 hates. | He rains upon the wicked fiery coals and brimstone;
7 a burning blast is their allotted cup. | For the Lord is just, he
loves just deeds; the upright shall see his face.

PSALM 11 (12)

Prayer against Evil Tongues

1 For the leader; "upon the eighth." A psalm of David.
2 Help, O Lord! for no one now is dutiful; faithfulness has
3 vanished from among men. | Everyone speaks falsehood to his
neighbor; with smooth lips they speak, and double heart.
4 May the Lord destroy all smooth lips, every boastful tongue,
5 | those who say, "We are heroes with our tongues; our lips are
our own; who is lord over us?"

10, 1-7: This is a psalm of trust. The poet is in dire straits and the wicked are apparently victorious. His advisers counsel flight, but instead of losing confidence he trusts in God.

Henceforth there will mostly be two different numbers for the psalms. The first number is the numeration of the Psalter according to the Vulgate and the Septuagint (Greek) Bible; the second number (in parenthesis) is the numeration according to the Hebrew Bible.

10, 1: The bard refuses the advice to flee like a bird.

10, 3: When these pillars, i.e., law, order and justice, are overthrown, as in this case, what can a just man do but flee?

10, 4-5: The poet answers that his counselor considers only human means, whereas he looks with trust to God.

10, 6: Alluding to the fate of Sodom and Gomorra, the poet exclaims that God rains fiery coals and brimstone on the wicked as their "allotted cup," i.e., as their destiny.

10, 7: The holy "will see his face" after the manner of a courtier admitted before his king.

11, 1-9: The psalm is an individual's lament. The poet is a poor man of Yahweh who bemoans the general corruption of his day. He asks God to remedy the situation. The song may very well have been written before the exile of the sixth century B.C.

11, 3: *Double heart:* their words do not express what they are really thinking.

11, 4: See Ps 5, 11 n.

6 "Because they rob the afflicted, and the needy sigh, now will
I arise," says the Lord; "I will grant safety to him who longs
for it."
7 The promises of the Lord are sure, like tried silver, freed
8 from dross, sevenfold refined. | You, O Lord, will keep us and
9 preserve us always from this generation, | while about us the
wicked strut and in high place are the basest of men.

PSALM 12 (13)

Prayer of One in Sorrow

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 How long, O Lord? Will you utterly forget me? How long
3 will you hide your face from me? | How long shall I harbor
sorrow in my soul, grief in my heart day after day? How long
4 will my enemy triumph over me? | Look, answer me, O Lord,
my God!
Give light to my eyes that I may not sleep in death lest my
5 enemy say, | "I have overcome him"; lest my foes rejoice at
6 my downfall | though I trusted in your kindness. Let my heart
rejoice in your salvation; let me sing of the Lord, "He has been
good to me."

PSALM 13 (14)

A Lament over Widespread Corruption

1 For the leader. Of David.
The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Such are
corrupt; they do abominable deeds; there is not one who does
2 good. | The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children
of men, to see if there be one who is wise and seeks God. |
3 All alike have gone astray; they have become perverse; there is
not one who does good, not even one.

12, 2-6: This psalm is another lament of an individual. The composer has been suffering for a long time with no respite. Two items add salt to his wounds: the "obstinate" silence of God and the vigilance of his enemies.

This psalm it fittingly used in the Mass for a happy death.

13, 1-7: This is an individual lament about the general corruption of the day. It was probably written during the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. This psalm is about the same as Ps 52.

13, 1: The psalmist laments that the fool thinks, "says in his heart," that God apparently does not reward the virtuous and punish the offenders. On the existence of God see Ps 9B, 4 n.

13, 2: *Seeks God:* to inquire what God prescribes and proscribes.

13, 3: Paul, in Rom 3, 11-12, sees in this verse the description of man's sin, which cannot be effaced except by the redeeming blood of Christ.

4 Will all these evildoers never learn, they who eat up my
people just as they eat bread? They have not called upon the
5 Lord; | then they shall be in great fear, for God is with the
6 just generation. | You would confound the plans of the afflicted,
but the Lord is his refuge.
7 Oh, that out of Sion would come the salvation of Israel!
When the Lord restores the well-being of his people, then shall
Jacob exult and Israel be glad.

PSALM 14 (15)
The Guest of God

1 A psalm of David.
O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on
your holy mountain?
2 He who walks blamelessly and does justice; who thinks the
3 truth in his heart | and slanders not with his tongue; who
harms not his fellow man, nor takes up a reproach against his
4 neighbor; | by whom the reprobate is despised, while he honors
those who fear the Lord; who, though it be to his loss, changes
5 not his pledged word; | who lends not his money at usury and
accepts no bribe against the innocent.
He who does these things shall never be disturbed.

13, 7: Most probably a later poet added, for liturgical purposes, a supplication for the end of the exile in Babylon. This wish is a generalized yearning for salvation coming from Jerusalem. By salvation the poet means the restoration of that moral well-being which will truly rejoice the heart of Jacob, i.e., Israel.

14, 1-5: This sacred song was probably sung at the arrival of the pilgrims at Jerusalem but it is not a pilgrim song as described in Ps 119, 1-7 n. The pilgrims would sing the first verse and the priests and Levites would answer the rest of the psalm. It was originally written as a sort of catechism to facilitate learning and remembering. We may categorize this pre-exilic psalm as sapiential because of its rich moral instructions.

14, 1: The pilgrims ask God: "Who is worthy to live in your tent?" They allude to the ancient makeshift dwelling originally used during the sojourn in the Sinai desert, and are indirectly calling God's attention to themselves, since they will pitch their tents on the "holy mountain" of Jerusalem. A modern counterpart exists in the Arabs residing in Mecca near the Caaba. They are called "the clients of Allah."

14, 2-4: The priests and Levites answer the question of v. 1 by means of a little moral code.

14, 5: A true pilgrim does not engage in bribery nor in usury. The Jews were not allowed to practice usury among themselves but only with foreigners. Bribing in courts of law was a constant plague in the Orient. Usury and bribery were two of the most frequent violations of justice. The poet concludes that he who follows this moral code will never be disturbed because he will always experience the friendship of God.

PSALM 15 (16)

God the Supreme Good

A *miktam* of David.

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge; | I say to the
Lord, "My Lord are you. Apart from you I have no good." |
How wonderfully has he made me cherish the holy ones who
are in his land! | They multiply their sorrows who court other
gods. Blood libations to them I will not pour out, nor will I take
their names upon my lips. | O Lord, my allotted portion and
my cup, you it is who hold fast my lot. | For me the measuring
lines have fallen on pleasant sites; fair to me indeed is my
inheritance.

I bless the Lord who counsels me; even in the night my heart
exhorts me. | I set the Lord ever before me; with him at my
right hand I shall not be disturbed. | Therefore my heart is
glad and my soul rejoices, my body, too, abides in confidence; |
because you will not abandon my soul to the nether world, nor
will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption. | You
will show me the path to life, fullness of joys in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

PSALM 16 (17)

Prayer against Persecutors

A prayer of David.

Hear, O Lord, a just suit; attend to my outcry; hearken to

15, 1-11: Instead of laying his complaints before God the psalmist asserts his sincere trust in Him. This psalm of trust was probably written in the fifth century B.C.

15, 5: The poet implies that the idolators may choose their idols, but he chooses the Lord, "my allotted portion." God is compared to a choice parcel of land assigned to the poet. By "my cup" the poet compares God to food or sustenance, the preserver of man's life. He entrusts his destiny ("lot") to the Lord.

15, 6: This is a touching Semitic idiomatic verse to express complete surrender and dedication of oneself to God. The bard alludes to the custom of dividing the land into equal parts and then assigning a part to each claimant.

15, 8: *At my right hand:* with God as his protector.

15, 10: The poet is happy because God will not allow him to die and corrupt.

15, 11: The Hebrew text does not speak of resurrection. Not only will the psalmist be delivered from bodily death; he will be accorded life. The "fullness of joys in your presence" are those joys which God bestows upon His servants, especially those connected with His cult and temple service. All these joys will constitute the delights "at your right hand forever," i.e., the delights of the divine protection over him for the rest of his life.

16, 1-15: The psalmist, exposed to the hostility of wicked men,

my prayer from lips without deceit. | From you let my judg-
ment come; your eyes behold what is right. | Though you test
my heart, searching it in the night, though you try me with
fire, you shall find no malice in me. | My mouth has not trans-
gressed | after the manner of man; according to the words of
your lips I have kept the ways of the law. | My steps have been
steadfast in your paths, my feet have not faltered.

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your
ear to me; hear my word. | Show your wondrous kindness,
O savior of those who flee from their foes to refuge at your
right hand. | Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the
shadow of your wings | from the wicked who use violence
against me.

My ravenous enemies beset me; | they shut up their cruel
hearts, their mouths speak proudly. | Their steps even now
surround me; crouching to the ground, they fix their gaze, | like
lions hungry for prey, like young lions lurking in hiding.

Rise, O Lord, confront them and cast them down; rescue me
by your sword from the wicked, | by your hand, O Lord, from
mortal men: from mortal men whose portion in life is in this
world, where with your treasures you fill their bellies. Their
sons are enriched and bequeath their abundance to their little
ones. | But I in justice shall behold your face; on waking, I
shall be content in your presence.

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cries to God for assistance in the form of a psalmodic lament. Since some Hebrew terms in the psalm are similar to terms in the preceding one, both psalms have been considered as stemming from the same milieu but at different dates. This psalm was probably written some time after the exile.

16, 4: The author may remind a Christian of the Pharisee in Luke's Gospel (18, 11): "O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, robbers, dishonest, adulterers." But the Pharisee thought he was holy because he observed the external minutiae of all the legal laws. The psalmist does not boast of legal purity but of interior rectitude, as is apparent from v. 3, where he bares the thoughts and desires of his heart to God for examination.

16, 8: In the song of Moses (Dt 32, 10-11), both images depict God's protecting love for His treasured people.

16, 11-12: These enemy-images are common in the psalms.

16, 13: The sword may refer to God's justice.

16, 14: This very obscure verse may mean that the enemies are prosperous and will bequeath their wealth to their progeny.

16, 15: In contrast, the bard sings in his righteousness that he shall "behold your face," a formula which means "to attend the temple services." "On waking" from my illness and troubles, "I shall be content in your presence" at the temple where I can contemplate you. Worshiping at the temple was a great joy to the pious Hebrews. The author is not thinking of the afterlife because vv. 8-9 and 11-13 show him solicitous about temporal life.

PSALM 17 (18)

Thanksgiving for Help and Victory

1 For the leader. Of David, the servant of the Lord, who sang to
the Lord the words of this song when the Lord had rescued him
from the grasp of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.
2.3 I love you, O Lord, my strength, | O Lord, my rock, my
fortress, my deliverer. My God, my rock of refuge, my shield,
4 the horn of my salvation, my stronghold! | Praised be the Lord,
I exclaim, and I am safe from my enemies.
5 The breakers of death surged round about me, the destroying
6 floods overwhelmed me; | the cords of the nether world en-
7 meshed me, the snares of death overtook me. | In my distress
I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God; from his
temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.
8 The earth swayed and quaked; the foundations of the moun-
9 tains trembled and shook when his wrath flared up. | Smoke
rose from his nostrils, and a devouring fire from his mouth that

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17, 2-51: The psalm, one of the longest and most beautiful of the Psalter, is an individual's song of thanksgiving. The author is a professional court poet. The hero of his song is one of the last kings of Juda, who lived about the seventh century B.C. Most modern commentators say that this psalm does not speak of David. The author makes the king speak throughout the psalm. The psalm itself was composed to be sung at a thanksgiving feast following a victory of great moment in which God had recompensed this kingly hero for his fidelity by granting him victory over his enemies. It has aptly been called a royal *Te Deum*. See 2 Sm 22 for another version of this psalm.

17, 2: *I love you:* an unusual Hebrew praying formula, especially at the beginning of a psalm.

17, 3: *Horn of my salvation:* it means powerful savior.

17, 5-6: The images of oceanic breakers, destroying floods, cords of the nether world, and snares of death, are familiar biblical figures to express imminent death or a "close call." The peculiar "cords of the nether world" suggest that the nether world, or sheol, is a mysterious hunter with nooses and nets. In all these images the dominant role of water stems from the concept of sheol as a place surrounded by threatening waters beneath the earth.

17, 8-20: The elaborate theophany or description of the appearance of God is not a divine physical miraculous appearance. Through the eyes of faith the king perceives that God has helped him militarily and politically; consequently, with full poetic license the psalmist presents this aid as an external divine intervention in which the physical world has been disturbed. During the earthquake the "foundations of the mountains" (vv. 8, 16) shook. This evokes the concept of Hebrew cosmography in which the foundations are the bases of the two column-shaped mountains, at the two extremities of the flat earth, which uphold the blue vault of the heavens.

17, 8-9: The wrath of God means that He has pronounced judgment against the king's enemies. The smoke from Yahweh's nostrils and

10 kindled coals into flame. | And he inclined the heavens and
11 came down, with dark clouds under his feet. | He mounted a
12 cherub and flew, borne on the wings of the wind. | And he
made darkness the cloak about him; dark, misty rain-clouds his
13 wrap. | From the brightness of his presence coals were kindled
14 to flame. | And the Lord thundered from heaven, the Most
15 High gave forth his voice; | he sent forth his arrows to put
16 them to flight, with frequent lightnings he routed them. | Then
the bed of the sea appeared, and the foundations of the world
were laid bare, at the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of the
17 wind of his wrath. | He reached out from on high and grasped
18 me; he drew me out of the deep waters. | He rescued me from
my mighty enemy and from my foes, who were too powerful
19 for me. | They attacked me in the day of my calamity, but the
20 Lord came to my support. | He set me free in the open, and
rescued me, because he loves me.
21 The Lord rewarded me according to my justice; according
22 to the cleanness of my hands he requited me; | for I kept the
23 ways of the Lord and was not disloyal to my God; | for his
ordinances were all present to me, and his statutes I put not
24 from me, | but I was wholehearted toward him, and I was on
25 my guard against guilt. | And the Lord requited me according
to my justice, according to the cleanness of my hands in his

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the fire from His mouth do not signify, for the Hebrew bard, that his readers should try to visualize God physically as an angry deity. The poet wants to express as vividly as possible the mental concept of the awfulness of God's ire. This distinctive Hebraic symbolism should not mislead western readers into an interpretation of these verses as crass anthropomorphisms.

17, 10: Using "dark clouds" as His dais, Yahweh seems thereby to incline, or lower, the heavens. Yahweh is said to "come down" when He enters the world to show His powers.

17, 11: God is poetically shown seated on a cherub as a throne propelled through space by the wind.

17, 12: Yahweh is covered to hide Himself from human eyes; this symbolizes the mystery of His approach.

17, 14: *The Most High:* this title referring to God as the supreme ruler of the universe is used twenty-one times in the Psalter.

17, 16: At the command of the Lord, represented as an angry rebuking blast of wind, the hidden bases of the world are exposed. This delicately symbolizes the ownership of God.

17, 17-20: God drew the sinking ruler out of the overwhelming flood of enemies because "He loves me." This expression is fraught with meaning if we recall Ps 2, 7 wherein God says of the successors of David, such as the hero-king of this psalm, "You are my son."

17, 21-28: The king is not boasting about his own merits; he is declaring that God rewards those who are faithful to Him.

17, 21: The Lord rewarded the king for his "justice," i.e., for doing the right thing, and for cleanness of hands, an idiom for correct conduct.

26 sight. | Toward the faithful you are faithful, toward the
27 wholehearted you are wholehearted, | toward the sincere you
28 are sincere, but toward the crooked you are astute; | for lowly
29 people you save but haughty eyes you bring low; | you indeed,
O Lord, give light to my lamp; O my God, you brighten the
30 darkness about me; | for with your aid I run against an armed
31 band, and by the help of my God I leap over a wall. | God's
way is unerring, the promise of the Lord is fire-tried; he is a
shield to all who take refuge in him.
32 For who is God except the Lord? Who is a rock, save our
33 God? | The God who girded me with strength and kept my
34 way unerring; | who made my feet swift as those of hinds and
35 set me on the heights; | who trained my hands for war and my
arms to bend a bow of brass.
36 You have given me your saving shield; your right hand has
37 upheld me, and you have stooped to make me great. | You
38 made room for my steps; unwavering was my stride. | I pur-
sued my enemies and overtook them, nor did I turn again till I
39 made an end of them. | I smote them and they could not rise;
they fell beneath my feet.
40 And you girded me with strength for war; you subdued my
41 adversaries beneath me. | My enemies you put to flight before
42 me, and those who hated me you destroyed. | They cried for
help—but no one saved them; to the Lord—but he answered
43 them not. | I ground them fine as the dust before the wind;
like the mud in the streets I trampled them down.
44 You rescued me from the strife of the people; you made me

17, 28: *Haughty eyes:* one of the seven things which Yahweh abominates. See Prv 6, 6-19.

17, 29-31: The foregoing general procedures of God with faithful men (vv. 21-28) are exemplified in the king's life.

17, 29: *Light to my lamp:* the Oriental lit his tent or house with a lamp, which came to represent the life and happiness of the family.

17, 30: *Leap over a wall:* very likely, it meant to overcome an obstacle, rather than to besiege a town.

17, 32-35: A reflection by the poet. That which guarantees the trustworthiness of God's word ("promise" in v. 31) is the oneness of God. He is the one master of the world who alone is capable of realizing all the king's desires.

17, 34: God gave him the advantageous "heights" in time of war.

17, 42: Although some of the enemies may have invoked Yahweh, the author does not mean that they were fellow Israelites: they could have been pagans who, seeing the powerlessness of their own gods, despairingly cried to Yahweh.

17, 44-46: The Lord rescued the king's land from civil war and made him head over surrounding peoples, who perhaps sought an alliance with him after they heard of his fame.

head over nations; a people I had not known became my slaves;
45 | as soon as they heard me they obeyed. The foreigners fawned
46 and cringed before me; | they staggered forth from their fortresses.
47 The Lord live! And blessed be my Rock! Extolled be God my
48 savior. | O God, who granted me vengeance, who made peoples
49 subject to me | and preserved me from my enemies, truly above my adversaries you exalt me and from the violent man you have
50 rescued me. | Therefore will I proclaim you, O Lord, among
51 the nations, and I will sing praise to your name, | you who gave great victories to your king and showed kindness to your anointed, to David and his posterity forever.

PSALM 18 (19)

God's Glory in the Heavens and in the Law

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament
3 proclaims his handiwork. | Day pours out the word to day,
4 and night to night imparts knowledge; | not a word nor a
5 discourse whose voice is not heard; | through all the earth their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world, their message.

17, 47-49: These verses resume and develop the thought of the prelude (vv. 2-4).

17, 47: *The Lord live!:* the expression contrasts the living Yahweh with the dead idols of the neighboring pagans.

17, 50: Rom 15, 9 quotes this verse in connection with the conversion of the Gentiles.

18, 2-15: The psalm is a hymn to God the creator (vv. 2-7) and to God the legislator (vv. 8-15). Different from ordinary hymns which exhort the reader to praise God, this hymn simply affirms the glory of Yahweh. The author seems to have written this a long time after the cult of the stars presented an idolatrous temptation to the Israelites (before the exile of the sixth century B.C.). The author would not have hymned so glowingly about the sun if his own people had been lured to worship it. For this and other reasons, e.g., Aramaisms, the psalm seems to be postexilic (after the sixth century). The same author seems to have upturned both sides of a single coin to reveal his theme: the glory and wisdom of Yahweh displayed in the heavens and in the Mosaic Law. Speaking fancifully, Ps 18 is a comparison between God's two tomes: the book of nature and the book of Scriptures.

18, 3: Like alternating choirs, each night and each day chants to the succeeding day and night its knowledge of the glory of God.

18, 4: Not by sound or by human language, but by the universal heavenly language of a loud shout of day and a loud shout of night are God's works proclaimed.

18, 5-7: The sun is the most glorious and most sparkling voice in the soundless firmament. The poet imagines God pitching a tent "there" at the horizon as the abode for the sun which, emerging from its tent in the east, is compared to a bridegroom stepping forth from his bridal

6 He has pitched a tent there for the sun, | which comes forth
like the groom from his bridal chamber and, like a giant, joy-
7 fully runs its course. | At one end of the heavens it comes forth,
and its course is to their other end; nothing escapes its heat.
8 The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul; the decree
9 of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple. | The
precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the command
10 of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye; | the fear of the Lord
is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true,
11 all of them just; | they are more precious than gold, than a
heap of purest gold; sweeter also than syrup or honey from the
comb.
12 Though your servant is careful of them, very diligent in
13 keeping them, | yet who can detect failings? Cleanse me from
14 my unknown faults! | From wanton sin especially, restrain
your servant; let it not rule over me. Then shall I be blameless
15 and innocent of serious sin. | Let the words of my mouth and
the thought of my heart find favor before you, O Lord, my rock
and my redeemer.

PSALM 19 (20)
Prayer for the King in Time of War

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 The Lord answer you in time of distress; the name of the God
3 of Jacob defend you! | May he send you help from the sanc-
4 tuary, from Sion may he sustain you. | May he remember all

chamber. This comparison suggests the freshness and splendor of the sun. The simile changes abruptly and the sun now is like a track star: he runs from one end of the race course to the other and his heat spills all over the universe.

18, 8-10: Although to the Jewish audience of the poet the law meant above all the teaching part of the law, it also included the exhortatory part with its promises and threats. Here, law is expressed by six synonyms.

18, 15: *The thought of my heart:* a Hebrew phrase denoting most sincere interior sentiments that words cannot express. This last verse, representing the leave-taking of the poet's praying soul from the presence of the Lord, resembles the formula with which the rite of sacrifice was performed. The composer of this hymn seems to be in the most perfect state of justice possible in the time of the Old Testament.

19, 2-10: The psalm belongs to the small category of royal psalms. An unknown Davidic king is preparing for some imminent battle some time before the sixth century B.C. The psalm is a liturgical celebration. The priests offer the sacrifice while the temple choir sings the entreating part of the psalm (vv. 2-5). After the sacrifice is complete and the priests have sung their certainty of victory (vv. 7-9), the petition is resumed (v. 10).

This psalm is used in the feast of Corpus Christi.

5 your offerings and graciously accept your holocaust. | May he
grant you what is in your heart and fulfill your every plan. |
6 May we shout for joy at your victory and raise the standards
in the name of our God. The Lord grant all your requests!
7 Now I know that the Lord has given victory to his anointed,
that he has answered him from his holy heaven with the
8 strength of his victorious right hand. | Some are strong in
chariots; some, in horses; but we are strong in the name of the
9 Lord, our God. | Though they bow down and fall, yet we
stand erect and firm.
10 O Lord, grant victory to the king, and answer us when we
call upon you.

PSALM 20 (21)

Thanksgiving and Prayers for the King

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 O Lord, in your strength the king is glad; in your victory how
3 greatly he rejoices! | You have granted him his heart's desire;
4 you refused not the wish of his lips. | For you welcomed him
with goodly blessings, you placed on his head a crown of pure
5 gold. | He asked life of you: you gave him length of days for-
6 ever and ever. | Great is his glory in your victory; majesty and
7 splendor you conferred upon him. | For you made him a blessing
forever; you gladdened him with the joy of your presence. |
8 For the king trusts in the Lord, and through the kindness of the
Most High he stands unshaken.
9 May your hand reach all your enemies, may your right hand
10 reach your foes! | Make them burn as though in a fiery furnace,
when you appear. May the Lord consume them in his anger;
11 let fire devour them. | Destroy their fruit from the earth and

20, 2-14: The preceding royal psalm was a prayer requesting God's help on the eve of battle. This companion royal psalm is its answer: it is a prayer of joy for having received victory in battle. Both psalms refer to the same historical Judean king and his battle some time before the sixth century B.C. Further details are unknown.

20, 7: In Hebrew thinking, the victory is a sign of God's favor and presence.

20, 9-14: After the first part of the liturgical ceremony, which consisted in thanksgiving for victory, the choir directs its attention to Yahweh and His enemies.

20, 9: For the Hebrew mind, to oppose God's chosen people is to oppose Him.

20, 10-11: Rather than of raw hatred, the inspired writer is thinking more of God's justice which could be executed only through temporal punishment since God had not yet revealed eternal punishment and the New Testament doctrine on love of enemies.

12 their posterity from among men. | Though they intend evil
13 against you, devising plots, they cannot succeed, | for you shall put them to flight; you shall aim your shafts against them. |
14 Be extolled, O Lord, in your strength! We will sing, chant the praise of your might.

PSALM 21 (22)

Passion and Triumph of the Messia

1 For the leader; according to "The hind of the dawn." A psalm of David.

2 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, far from my
3 prayer, from the words of my cry? | O my God, I cry out by day, and you answer not; by night, and there is no relief for me.
4 | Yet you are enthroned in the holy place, O glory of Israel! |
5 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered
6 them. | To you they cried, and they escaped; in you they trusted, and they were not put to shame.

7 But I am a worm, not a man; the scorn of men, despised by
8 the people. | All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with
9 parted lips, they wag their heads: | "He relied on the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, if he loves him." |
10 You have been my guide since I was first formed, my security at
11 my mother's breast. | To you I was committed at birth, from my mother's womb you are my God.

12 Be not far from me, for I am in distress; be near, for I have

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21, 2-32: The psalm is the lamentation of an individual (vv. 2-22) followed by his thanksgiving (vv. 23-32). This holy psalmist is violently and unjustly persecuted for reasons unknown to us. The public "officials," and public opinion are against him. He appears close to death and so he turns to God. In contrast with other psalmists, he neither says that these sufferings are a result of his sins nor that he is innocent, nor does he curse his enemies with a desire for vengeance. He has dispositions which make him a model of his century and which still arouse our admiration. The psalmist wrote this originally about the sixth century B.C., although vv. 28-32 were probably added for temple usage by another hand after the sixth century.

21, 2: The author is not despairing. This is an exclamation from one who is suffering greatly because God seems too distant to hear his prayer. See Ps 21, 28-32 n.

21, 3: In those days, whether it was day or night, one would pray in a loud voice, and even shout.

21, 7-8: In contrast with the patriarchs whose prayers were answered (vv. 5-6), the poet who is in a muddy ditch or in a deep prison well, suffers so keenly that he resembles a worm more than a man. *They mock me with parted lips:* a mocking smile. (The chorus of the mocking crowd in Handel's "Messiah" is a most vivid interpretation of vv. 7-8.)

21, 9: See Ps 21, 28-32 n.

13 no one to help me. | Many bullocks surround me; the strong
14 bulls of Basan encircle me. | They open their mouths against
me like ravening and roaring lions.
15 I am like water poured out; all my bones are racked. My
heart has become like wax melting away within my bosom. |
16 My throat is dried up like baked clay, my tongue cleaves to my
jaws; to the dust of death you have brought me down.
17 Indeed, many dogs surround me, a pack of evildoers closes in
18 upon me; they have pierced my hands and my feet; | I can
count all my bones. They look on and gloat over me; | they
divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast
lots.
20 But you, O Lord, be not far from me; O my help, hasten to
21 aid me. | Rescue my soul from the sword, my loneliness from
22 the grip of the dog. | Save me from the lion's mouth; from the
horns of the wild bulls, my wretched life.
23 I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the midst of the
24 assembly I will praise you: | "You who fear the Lord, praise
him; all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him; revere
25 him, all you descendants of Israel! | For he has not spurned nor
disdained the wretched man in his misery, nor did he turn his
face away from him, but when he cried out to him, he heard
26 him." | So by your gift will I utter praise in the vast assembly;

21, 13: The bullocks symbolize the influential opponents of the poet, and the lions the leaders of these opponents. Basan, east of the Lake of Tiberias, was famous for its cattle.

21, 15: A melting heart is a biblical term for excruciating torments. The psalmist undergoes the experience of dying. This experience recalls Newman's "Dream of Gerontius:" "This emptying out of each constituent—And natural force, whereby I come to be."

21, 17: *They have pierced my hands and my feet:* this is the translation of ancient versions because the Hebrew text does not make good sense here. The poet compares his enemies to dogs surrounding him and piercing his hands and feet. Hungry dogs are a common sight in oriental cities. This is one of several biblical instances illustrating that the dogs were not considered "man's best friend."

21, 18: *Bones:* the English idiom would say "ribs."

21, 19: The suffering bard already visualizes himself as dead and his enemies dividing his garments and casting dice for his tunic. See Ps 21, 28-32 n.

21, 21-22: "Dog" may refer to the executioner since the "lion" refers apparently to the leader and "bulls" to the rulers.

21, 23-27: This section refers to the custom, then prevalent, of offering a thanksgiving sacrifice in the temple and narrating the favor received, after which the thankful devotee would invite his fellow worshipers to his sacrificial banquet. Naturally, this part was written after the poet overcame his trial, but apparently before its delivery in the temple.

27 I will fulfill my vows before those who fear him. | The lowly
shall eat their fill; they who seek the Lord shall praise him
"May your hearts be ever merry!"
28 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the
Lord; all the families of the nations shall bow down before
29 him. | For dominion is the Lord's, and he rules the nations.
30 To him alone shall bow down all who sleep in the earth;
before him shall bend all who go down into the dust. And to
31 him my soul shall live; | my descendants shall serve him. Let
32 the coming generation be told of the Lord | that they may
proclaim to a people yet to be born the justice he has shown

PSALM 22 (23)

The Lord, Shepherd and Host

1 A psalm of David.
2 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. | In verdant
pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me;
3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me in right paths for his name's
4 sake. | Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil

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21, 28-32: The last section does not seem to belong to the preceding part because of its different content. It may have been appended later for temple usage. It deals with the conversion of the Gentiles and God's universal reign. For an explanation see Ps 137, 4-6 n.

Most modern scholars refer the original literal meaning of this psalm to the suffering just man, as interpreted above. The suffering psalmist was intended by the Holy Spirit as a type of Christ since the evangelists quote generously from this psalm, apparently in the typical sense. Christ on the cross quoted the cry of anguish (v. 2) in Mt 27, 46 and parallel. Mt 27, 35 and parallels quoted v. 19 on the dividing of the garments as fulfilled in Christ. Mt 27, 43 quotes the derision from v. 9, used by Christ's enemies.

This psalm is appropriately used on Good Friday.

22, 1-6: The psalm is one of trust, written perhaps in the Persian period (sixth-fourth centuries B.C.) by an Old Testament saint. He delineates Yahweh's solicitude for his devotees under the allegorical diptych of a shepherd's care for his sheep (vv. 1-4) and of a host's generosity toward his guest (vv. 5-6). The figures designate the quiet materially happy life as a gift of God, but they also signify God's spiritual joys for those who serve Him faithfully. This is a preparation for the doctrine of everlasting happiness in heaven not yet revealed.

22, 2: In the East the shepherd never drives but always leads his sheep.

22, 3: *For his name's sake:* in biblical thinking God is a good shepherd who upholds His reputation by proving that He is what He claims to be toward His servants, namely: merciful, gracious, kind faithful (Ex 34, 6).

22, 4: In these valleys the sun scarcely penetrates, and they are usually infested with wild beasts and brigands. *Rod:* the shepherd is armed with a club, made of solid oak. Large nails are driven into it for

for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage.

5 You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; you
6 anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. | Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.

PSALM 23 (24)
The Lord's Solemn Entry into Sion

1 A psalm of David.
The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and
2 those who dwell in it. | For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

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more efficient protection. The handle is trimmed to fit the shepherd's hand. The hole in the end makes it possible for the shepherd to tie the club to his belt or to his wrist. The shepherd also has a crozier-like "staff" made of the same wood, but about six feet long. It is used in climbing over rocks, in breaking small branches, in tapping lazy sheep, and in fighting wild goats. He leans on it as he watches the sheep. For a development of v. 4, see Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

22, 5: The poet pictures God as a host and himself as a guest. Because of the scarcity of inns during Old Testament times, hospitality was a serious responsibility. It followed definite regulations and traditions—welcoming the guest as soon as he appeared, offering him water to wash his feet, and then offering him food and lodging. Even bitter enemies dared not offend or strike the visitor. According to the law of the desert, the host was responsible for the protection of his guest. And should he be murdered, his host had to avenge the pilgrim's death. In this case, to show the sincerity of the welcome, the host pours a bit of olive oil mixed with expensive perfumes on the head of his guest. It is a sign of predilection. Besides, the guest's "cup" of wine is kept replenished.

22, 6: God is so good that the poet would like to "dwell in the house of the Lord," not in the physical sense of living in the temple precincts but in the sense of being His intimate friend.

In the feast of Corpus Christi and in the Office of the Dead the best Christian commentary of Ps 22 is the parable of the Good Shepherd in Jn 10, 1-18.

23, 1-10: Many scholars assert that this psalm dates from the time of David in the tenth century B.C. The origin of the psalm was the liturgical celebration of the carrying of the Ark of the Covenant from its temporary abode in a neighboring town to its permanent abode in Jerusalem. All the details are narrated in 2 Sm 6. We may classify the psalm as a processional hymn.

23, 1: Since the Lord is about to enter in solemn procession to take official possession of His city, it is most fitting to sing the reason for which He is doing this: He is the owner not only of Jerusalem but of the world with all its inhabitants.

23, 2: He owns the world because He created it "upon the seas," a phrase alluding to the creation account in Genesis.

3 Who can ascend the mountain of the Lord? or who may
4 stand in his holy place? | He whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean, who desires not what is vain, nor swears deceit-
5 fully to his neighbor. | He shall receive a blessing from the
6 Lord, a reward from God his savior. | Such is the race that seeks for him, that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.
7 Lift up, O gates, your lintels; reach up, you ancient portals,
8 that the king of glory may come in! | Who is this king of glory?
9 The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. | Lift up, O gates, your lintels; reach up, you ancient portals, that
10 the king of glory may come in! | Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts; he is the king of glory.

PSALM 24 (25)
Prayer for Guidance and Help

1 Of David.
2 To you I lift up my soul, O Lord, | my God. In you I trust let me not be put to shame, let not my enemies exult over me. |
3 No one who waits for you shall be put to shame; those shall be put to shame who heedlessly break faith.
4 Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your

23, 3: The participants of the liturgy ask if they are worthy to enter the house of God on the mountain of Jerusalem.

23, 4: The response presents the conditions of worthiness. Sinless hands mean upright deeds. A clean heart means sincerity of intention, not the virtue of purity.

23, 7: The procession with the ark is at the entrance of the city; now is the solemn moment of taking possession of Jerusalem. The ark bearers stop and the priests outside ask the gates to lift up their lintels to allow God to enter, for they are too low. In a poetic flight of fancy the poet addresses the lintels and the portals in order to express God's dominion over the inanimate nature they represent.

23, 8: The priests from within the city gates ask, "Who is this king of glory?" *The Lord . . . in battle:* the response.

23, 9: The priests outside the gates again ask to allow the king of glory to enter.

23, 10: Again the priests inside inquire who He is and receive the final response: "The Lord of hosts," He who conquered this city through His people (as narrated in 2 Sm 6) now wants to take possession of His city.

24, 1-22: The psalm is the lamentation of an individual who is asking God for help against his enemies. Since the poem is "alphabetic," i.e., each couplet begins with the succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the thoughts are loosely connected. The last verse is excluded from this alphabetic arrangement. See Ps 9A, 2-21 n. The ideas and the language probably indicate a fifth century B.C. date.

24, 4-5: The liturgy throws in bold relief the suppliant tone of these verses by using them several times in Advent and Lent as antiphons of supplication.

5 paths, | guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God
6 my savior, and for you I wait all the day. | Remember that your
7 compassion, O Lord, and your kindness are from of old. | The
sins of my youth and my frailties remember not; in your kind-
ness remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.
8 Good and upright is the Lord; thus he shows sinners the way.
9 | He guides the humble to justice, he teaches the humble his way.
10 | All the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy toward
11 those who keep his covenant and his decrees. | For your name's
sake, O Lord, you will pardon my guilt, great as it is.
12 When a man fears the Lord, he shows him the way he
13 should choose. | He abides in prosperity, and his descendants
14 inherit the land. | The friendship of the Lord is with those
15 who fear him, and his covenant, for their instruction. | My
eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will free my feet from the
snare.
16 Look toward me, and have pity on me, for I am alone and
17 afflicted. | Relieve the troubles of my heart, and bring me out
18 of my distress. | Put an end to my affliction and my suffering,
19 and take away all my sins. | Behold, my enemies are many, and
20 they hate me violently. | Preserve my life, and rescue me; let
21 me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. | Let integrity
and uprightness preserve me, because I wait for you, O Lord.
22 Redeem Israel, O God, from all its distress!

PSALM 25 (26)

Prayer of an Innocent Man

1 Of David.
Do me justice, O Lord! for I have walked in integrity, and

24, 11: *For your name's sake:* for the sake of your "reputation." See 22, 3 n.

24, 12-13: When a man "fears the Lord," he practices his religion. See Prv 1, 7 n.

24, 15: *My eyes are ever toward the Lord:* this signifies a prayerful attitude.

24, 16-21: Although the last section of the psalm is a cry for pardon in general terms, the situation of the poet appears more grave than in the first part (vv. 1-7). The composer regards his affliction as punishment for his sins and therefore he asks God to pardon him so that his suffering will cease (v. 18). This is part of the temporal-retribution theory. Only gradually did God reveal that suffering on earth is not necessarily the result of one's sins.

24, 22: The final verse was added to the original song when it was used in the Jewish liturgy to ask for the welfare of the nation.

25, 1-12: The psalm is a lament of an unknown priest or Levite who seems to be asking God to help him in his illness. Some indications point to a sixth to fourth century B.C. date.

PSALM 26 (27)

Trust in God

1 Of David.
The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?
The Lord is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid? |
2 When evildoers come at me to devour my flesh, my foes and
3 my enemies themselves stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war be waged upon me, even then will I trust.
4 One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveli-
5 ness of the Lord and contemplate his temple. | For he will hide me in his abode in the day of trouble; he will conceal me in the
6 shelter of his tent, he will set me high upon a rock. | Even now my head is held high above my enemies on every side. And I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of gladness; I will sing and chant praise to the Lord.
7 Hear, O Lord, the sound of my call; have pity on me, and
8 answer me. | Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks;
9 your presence, O Lord, I seek. | Hide not your face from me; do not in anger repel your servant. You are my helper: cast me
10 not off; forsake me not, O God my savior. | Though my father and mother forsake me, yet will the Lord receive me.
11 Show me, O Lord, your way, and lead me on a level path,
12 because of my adversaries. | Give me not up to the wishes of my foes; for false witnesses have risen up against me, and such

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26, 1-14: The psalm is a composite of two originally complete and distinct songs. The first song (vv. 1-6), is a psalm of trust in God. The author may have been a temple singer (see vv. 4-5). A scholarly guess dates vv. 1-6 between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. The second song (vv. 7-14), is a psalm of trust written between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. The writer is in danger of false witnesses (v. 12). Ps 26 is considered one of the most beautiful in the Psalter both for its literary value and for its lofty spiritual ideas.

26, 1-3: The Introit of the fourth Sunday after Pentecost uses these verses to remind us of the theme of confidence permeating the Pentecostal season.

26, 1: *My light:* this verse is in the antiphon of the fourth, fifth, and sixth Sundays after Pentecost, perhaps because of the spiritual "light" received on Pentecost.

26, 4: The poet's climactic request is to be Yahweh's guest at the temple.

26, 7-14: See Ps 26, 1-14 n.

26, 8: The poet looks suppliantly for the "presence" of Yahweh, i.e., for His aid.

26, 10: The comparison is the expression of a most intense trust in God when one is cast into the most miserable situations imaginable.

26, 11: *On a level path:* a path of safety from his adversaries.

2 in the Lord I trust without wavering. | Search me, O Lord, and
try me; test my soul and my heart.
3 For your kindness is before my eyes, and I walk in your truth.
4 | I stay not with worthless men, nor do I consort with hypo-
5 crites. | I hate the assembly of evildoers, and with the wicked
6 I will not stay. | I wash my hands in innocence, and I go
7 around your altar, O Lord, | giving voice to my thanks, and
8 recounting all your wondrous deeds. | O Lord, I love the house
in which you dwell, the tenting-place of your glory.
9 Gather not my soul with those of sinners, nor with men of
10 blood my life. | On their hands are crimes, and their right
11 hands are full of bribes. | But I walk in integrity; redeem me,
12 and have pity on me. | My foot stands on level ground; in the
assemblies I will bless the Lord.

25, 4-8: The author portrays the holy man of his day. First, negatively (vv. 4-5), then positively (vv. 6-8).

25, 4-5: Here, as in Prv 1, 10ff, conduct (evil or good) is not conceived in an individual way. A man forms part of a class which he voluntarily joins. Only gradually through revelation did it become abundantly clear that each man is responsible for his own actions. See Ez 18, 1-32 n. Even today, many feel less guilty because "everyone is doing it."

25, 6-8: The poet develops the positive aspects of virtue, namely, religion and piety, but preceded by and accompanied with perfect integrity. "I wash my hands in innocence" is a very truthful declaration of innocence. Fidelity to the cult of Yahweh is also a positive hallmark of the holy man. We would say, "a fervent church-goer."

25, 6: The allusion to the cultic procession around the altar most probably shows that the poet was a priest or a Levite.

25, 7: The procession around the altar, an ancient rite of many Semitic religions, was accompanied with hymns of thanksgiving and of praise for God's "wondrous deeds." These deeds most likely refer to the Exodus from Egypt and the work of creation, since they loomed high in the Jewish prayers of the time. These hymns were sung by the temple choir with the congregation joining in.

25, 8: Even today, generally speaking, the Oriental has a greater flare for the liturgy than has the Westerner.

25, 9-10: The holy author characterizes the sinners as "men of blood," who accept bribes to condemn people to death.

25, 11: The author contrasts his correct conduct with that of the wicked but not in a pharisaical manner. He is simply conscious of the help he has received from God. *On level ground:* this is figurative language to express integrity of life.

At the "Lavabo" of the Mass, vv. 6-12 are recited. In the western liturgy this washing was not placed in the Mass because the priest had just finished receiving gifts, but it always symbolically meant a request for worthiness to perform such a deed as the consecration. This is the same symbolic sense as that of the psalmist.

13 as breathe out violence. | I believe that I shall see the bounty
14 of the Lord in the land of the living. | Wait for the Lord with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord.

PSALM 27 (28)

Petition and Thanksgiving

1 Of David.

To you, O Lord, I call; O my Rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you heed me not, I become one of those going down into the
2 pit. | Hear the sound of my pleading, when I cry to you, lifting
3 up my hands toward your holy shrine. | Drag me not away with the wicked, with those who do wrong, who speak civilly
4 to their neighbors though evil is in their hearts. | Repay them for their deeds, for the evil of their doings. For the work of their
5 hands repay them; give them their deserts. | Because they consider not the deeds of the Lord nor the work of his hands, may he tear them down and not build them up.

6 Blessed be the Lord, for he has heard the sound of my plead-
7 ing; | the Lord is my strength and my shield. In him my heart trusts, and I find help; then my heart exults, and with my song I give him thanks.

8 The Lord is the strength of his people, the saving refuge of
9 his anointed. | Save your people, and bless your inheritance; feed them, and carry them forever!

PSALM 28 (29)

God's Majesty in the Storm

1 A psalm of David.

Give to the Lord, you sons of God, give to the Lord glory

26, 13: *The land of the living:* on earth.

26, 14: Later, when this private psalm was made use of by the liturgy of the temple, v. 14 was added and addressed to those praying this psalm to exhort them to hope ("wait") and to confide in the Lord.

27, 1-9: The psalm is a lament of an individual written during the period of the monarchy, i.e. between the tenth to the sixth centuries B.C. The composer has probably been afflicted with a grievous illness.

27, 2: *Lifting up my hands:* many of the ancient peoples and the "orantes," "the praying ones," of the Roman catacombs prayed with outstretched hands. *Shrine:* the Holy of Holies in the temple.

27, 5: *Tear them down:* may God deprive them of a long life and "not build them up" through their descendants.

27, 6-7: The reason for the abrupt transition of thanksgiving for his cure may be that he is pronouncing this psalm at the temple after his cure and recalling his supplication.

27, 8-9: When this song became a congregational song, the last two verses were added as a prayer of intercession for the "inheritance," i.e., the nation and for the "anointed" reigning king.

28, 1: *Sons of God:* virtuous men.

and praise, | give to the Lord the glory due his name; adore
the Lord in holy attire.
The voice of the Lord is over the waters, the God of glory
thunders, the Lord, over vast waters. | The voice of the Lord is
mighty; the voice of the Lord is majestic. | The voice of the
Lord breaks the cedars, the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. |
He makes Lebanon leap like a calf and Sarion like a young wild
bull. | The voice of the Lord strikes fiery flames; | the voice
of the Lord shakes the desert, the Lord shakes the wilderness of
Cades. | The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the
forests, and in his temple all say, "Glory!"
The Lord is enthroned above the flood; the Lord is enthroned
as king forever. | May the Lord give strength to his people;
may the Lord bless his people with peace!

PSALM 29 (30)
Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death

A psalm. A song for the dedication of the temple. Of David.
I will extol you, O Lord, for you drew me clear and did not
let my enemies rejoice over me.
O Lord, my God, I cried out to you and you healed me. |

28, 1-11: This hymn deals with the glory and power of God as revealed in nature. It purposes to teach confidence in God's protection based on His omnipotence and majesty. To convey this message the ancient bard hymned it via the tempest theme of thunder, lightning, and earthquake because in Hebrew thinking these natural phenomena were the most eloquent spokesmen of God's power and glory. Although the date is unknown it is one of the oldest songs of the Psalter.

28, 3: *The voice of the Lord:* designates thunder. This expression is repeated seven times perhaps in imitation of the peals of thunder.

28, 6: *Sarion:* the Phoenician name for mount Hermon.

28, 8: The tempest seems to have originated from the Mediterranean Sea (v. 3) and struck Lebanon (v. 5) and then Cades in the Sinai Desert of southern Palestine. Thus the storm bypasses Israel. Perhaps the poet insinuates symbolically that God punishes the enemies of Israel to the North and to the South.

28, 11: The last verse may have been added later for recitation in the liturgy of the temple. Since God has command over the forces of nature, He will surely make them a source of peace, of happiness and of prosperity for His people.

29, 2-13: The song is a fifth (?) century B.C. thanksgiving psalm of an individual whose happy life was interrupted by a brief crisis of some sort in which he almost died. The psalmist reflects the common fund of sentiment with which the pious people of his day prayed. Perhaps after his time the psalm was applied to the whole nation on the feast of the Temple Dedication as the title of the psalm indicates. (v. 1).

29, 2-4: *You drew me:* out of the jaws of death "from the nether world" (v. 4).

4 O Lord, you brought me up from the nether world; you pre-
5 served me from among those going down into the pit. | Sing
praise to the Lord, you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his
6 holy name. | For his anger lasts but a moment; a lifetime, his
good will. At nightfall, weeping enters in, but with the dawn,
rejoicing.
7 Once, in my security, I said, "I shall never be disturbed." |
8 O Lord, in your good will you had endowed me with majesty
and strength; but when you hid your face I was terrified.
9 To you, O Lord, I cried out; with the Lord I pleaded: |
10 "What gain would there be from my lifeblood, from my going
down into the grave? Would dust give you thanks or proclaim
11 your faithfulness? | Hear, O Lord, and have pity on me; O
Lord, be my helper."
12 You changed my mourning into dancing; you took off my
13 sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, | that my soul might
sing praise to you without ceasing; O Lord, my God, forever
will I give you thanks.

PSALM 30 (31)

Prayer in Distress and Thanksgiving for Escape

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.
3 In your justice rescue me, | incline your ear to me, make haste
to deliver me! Be my rock of refuge, a stronghold to give me
4 safety. | You are my rock and my fortress; for your name's
5 sake you will lead and guide me. | You will free me from the
6 snare they set for me, for you are my refuge. | Into your hands
I commend my spirit; you will redeem me, O Lord, O faithful

29, 6: Misfortune is as brief as nightfall; prosperity is as lasting as the day is long.

29, 10: In a typical example of oriental bargaining, the poet strives to make God feel, as it were, that it would be of profit to God Himself if the poet continued to live so that one more could glorify Him on earth. See Ps 6, 6 n.

29, 12-13: God granted his request.

30, 2-25: About the fifth century B.C. a poet wrote this lament on being ill and persecuted by enemies. Many of the phrases and notions of the psalm are found in other psalms and in Jeremia. Because of these generous borrowings, it strongly resembles a "cento." The psalm is clearly divided into three parts: a prayer of assured confidence in God against persecution by enemies (vv. 2-9); a description of his distress in terms of supplication and trust (vv. 10-19); and a calm thanksgiving (vv. 20-25).

30, 6: *Into your hands I commend my spirit:* a figure of speech expressing the unconditional surrender to God. These words are fittingly found in the night prayers of the liturgy (compline).

7 God. | You hate those who worship vain idols, but my trust is
8 in the Lord. | I will rejoice and be glad of your kindness, when
you have seen my affliction and watched over me in my distress,
9 | not shutting me up in the grip of the enemy but enabling me
to move about at large.
10 Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am in distress; with sorrow
11 my eye is consumed; my soul also, and my body. | For my life
is spent with grief and my years with sighing; my strength has
12 failed through affliction, and my bones are consumed. | For
all my foes I am an object of reproach, a laughingstock to my
neighbors, and a dread to my friends; they who see me abroad
13 flee from me. | I am forgotten like the unremembered dead;
14 I am like a dish that is broken. | I hear the whispers of the
crowd, that frighten me from every side, as they consult to-
15 gether against me, plotting to take my life. | But my trust is in
16 you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." | In your hands is my
destiny; rescue me from the clutches of my enemies and my
17 persecutors. | Let your face shine upon your servant; save me
18 in your kindness. | O Lord, let me not be put to shame, for I
call upon you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them be
19 reduced to silence in the nether world. | Let dumbness strike
their lying lips that speak insolence against the just in pride
and scorn.
20 How great is the goodness, O Lord, which you have in store
for those who fear you, and which, toward those who take
21 refuge in you, you show in the sight of men. | You hide them
in the shelter of your presence from the plottings of men; you
screen them within your abode from the strife of tongues. |
22 Blessed be the Lord whose wondrous kindness he has shown
23 me in a fortified city. | Once I said in my anguish, "I am cut
off from your sight"; yet you heard the sound of my pleading
24 when I cried out to you. | Love the Lord, all you his faithful
ones! The Lord keeps those who are constant, but more than
25 requites those who act proudly. | Take courage and be stout-
hearted, all you who hope in the Lord.

PSALM 31 (32)

Remission of Sin

1 Of David. A *maskil.*
Happy is he whose fault is taken away, whose sin is covered.

30, 13: A broken dish is a common biblical figure of something ruined and useless.

31, 1-11: This is an individual's fifth (?) century psalm of thanks-

2 | Happy the man to whom the Lord imputes not guilt, in whose
spirit there is no guile.
3 As long as I would not speak, my bones wasted away with
4 my groaning all the day, | for day and night your hand was
heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of
5 summer. | Then I acknowledged my sin to you, my guilt I
covered not. I said, "I confess my faults to the Lord," and you
6 took away the guilt of my sin. | For this shall every faithful
man pray to you in time of stress. Though deep waters overflow,
7 they shall not reach him. | You are my shelter; from distress
you will preserve me; with glad cries of freedom you will ring
me round.
8 I will instruct you and show you the way you should walk;
9 I will counsel you, keeping my eye on you. | Be not senseless
like horses or mules: with bit and bridle their temper must be
curbed, else they will not come near you.
10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but kindness surrounds
11 him who trusts in the Lord. | Be glad in the Lord and rejoice,
you just; exult, all you upright of heart.

PSALM 32 (33)

1 ***Praise of the Lord's Power and Providence*** Exult, you
2 just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting. | Give
thanks to the Lord on the harp; with the ten-stringed lyre chant
3 his praises. | Sing to him a new song; pluck the strings skill-
4 fully, with shouts of gladness. | For upright is the word of the
5 Lord, and all his works are trustworthy. | He loves justice and
right; of the kindness of the Lord the earth is full.
6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; by the

giving for the pardon of his sins. It is the second penitential psalm. See Ps 6, 2-11 n.

31, 1-2: Rom 4, 7-8 quotes these verses to show that "God credits justice without works."

31, 6: *Deep waters:* this expression symbolizes danger of death in psalmodic imagery.

31, 8-11: An abrupt moral lesson of the psalmist as a wise man speaking to a disciple.

32, 1-22: This hymn of praise was composed sometime between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. It may have been occasioned by a recent victory of Israel against an enemy attack (vv. 10, 16-19). The words are too general to specify further. Each of the twenty-two verses of this "alphabetic" hymn begins with a consecutive letter of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. See Ps 9A, 2-21 n.

32, 3: *Sing to him a new song:* sing the latest song to thank God for His latest act of mercy. This latest song is composed and sung with an eye to surpassing the ancient hymns of national thanksgiving.

32, 6: *Heavens . . . host:* the sun, moon, stars.

breath of his mouth all their host. | He gathers the waters of
the sea as in a flask; in cellars he confines the deep.
Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all who dwell in the world
revere him. | For he spoke, and it was made; he commanded,
and it stood forth. | The Lord brings to nought the plans of
nations; he foils the designs of peoples. | But the plan of the
Lord stands forever; the design of his heart, through all genera-
tions. | Happy the nation whose God is the Lord, the people
he has chosen for his own inheritance.
From heaven the Lord looks down; he sees all mankind. |
From his fixed throne he beholds all who dwell on the earth,
| he who fashioned the heart of each, he who knows all their
works.
A king is not saved by a mighty army, nor is a warrior
delivered by great strength. | Useless is the horse for safety;
great though its strength, it cannot provide escape. | But see,
the eyes of the Lord are upon those who fear him, upon those
who hope for his kindness, | to deliver them from death and
preserve them in spite of famine.
Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and our shield,
| for in him our hearts rejoice; in his holy name we trust. |
May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our
hope in you.

PSALM 33 (34)

Praise of God, the Protector of the Just

Of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who forced
him to depart.
I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be ever in

32, 7: The ancients marveled at the power which kept the mighty seas, so mysterious to them as was all nature, from flooding the earth. The pagans explained this mystery by a victory of the earth gods over the sea gods. The monotheistic Jews simply explained that, as far as their God was concerned, it was just as easy for Him to restrain the waters as it was for a flask to limit the waters it contained. Moreover, just as a man finds it easy to store wine in his cellar, so does God easily store away the immense subterranean ocean in the depths of the earth.

32, 13-14: God is pictured looking down on the earth from the balcony of heaven. It is a Semitic metaphor for God's omniscience.

32, 15: That God knows all the secrets of the human heart is a thought frequently found in the Old Testament.

32, 20: *Waits:* hopes.

33, 2-23: A Jewish poet about the fifth century B.C. wrote this individual poem of thanksgiving for some kind of favor received. Gradually the psalm develops into a poem on wisdom whereby the author gives advice on how to live properly in this world (vv. 9ff). This, too, is an "alphabetic," poem. See Ps 9A, 2-21 n.

33, 2: "Lord" stands emphatically at the beginning in the original

3 my mouth. | Let my soul glory in the Lord; the lowly will hear
4 me and be glad. | Glorify the Lord with me, let us together
extol his name.
5 I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me
6 from all my fears. | Look to him that you may be radiant with
7 joy, and your faces may not blush with shame. | When the
afflicted man called out, the Lord heard, and from all his
8 distress he saved him. | The angel of the Lord encamps around
9 those who fear him, and delivers them. | Taste and see how
good the Lord is; happy the man who takes refuge in him. |
10 Fear the Lord, you his holy ones, for nought is lacking to those
11 who fear him. | The great grow poor and hungry; but those
who seek the Lord want for no good thing.
12 Come, children, hear me; I will teach you the fear of the
13 Lord. | Which of you desires life, and takes delight in pros-
14 perous days? | Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from
15 speaking guile; | turn from evil, and do good; seek peace, and
16 follow after it. | The Lord has eyes for the just, and ears for
17 their cry. | The Lord confronts the evildoers, to destroy remem-
18 brance of them from the earth. | When the just cry out, the
Lord hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them. |
19 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are
20 crushed in spirit he saves. | Many are the troubles of the just
21 man, but out of them all the Lord delivers him; | he watches

Hebrew text to stress that the psalmist will praise God and not creatures.

33, 3: The "lowly" form the poor class often mentioned in the psalms and in the prophets. See So 2, 3 n.

33, 8: *The angel of the Lord:* this is a circumlocution for God Himself, which is probably due to a theological scruple to avoid saying "God encamps." The latter expression would be too redolent of a sensible manifestation savoring of idolatry. The "angel encamps" evokes the image of God's angel heading an army which surrounds the lowly ones to protect them.

33, 9ff: The psalm gradually changes from a thanksgiving poem to a wisdom lesson on the meaning of life. *Taste and see:* share the poet's experience of a most spiritual intimacy with God. The intimacy of being with Christ in 1 Pt 2, 3 alludes perhaps to v. 9. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says that the first Christians were invited to receive Holy Communion at the recitation of this verse.

33, 10: *Fear the Lord, you his holy ones:* see Prv 1, 7 n on "Fear of the Lord." See So 2, 3 n on "holy ones," i.e., "anawim."

33, 12: The poet now completely turns teacher in the style of the Book of Proverbs.

33, 13-17: These verses are quoted in 1 Pt 3, 10-12 where St. Peter preaches Christian charity.

33, 21: This vivid metaphor of breaking bones alludes to a man's bodily frame on the rack. The verse is a promise God makes to the just man which was eminently fulfilled in His Son Christ, *the* just man (Jn

22 over all his bones; not one of them shall be broken. | Vice
slays the wicked, and the enemies of the just pay for their guilt.
23 But the Lord redeems the lives of his servants; no one incurs
guilt who takes refuge in him.

PSALM 34 (35)

Prayer for Help against Unjust Enemies

1 Of David.
Fight, O Lord, against those who fight me; war against those
1 who make war upon me. | Take up the shield and buckler, and
3 rise up in my defense. | Brandish the lance, and block the way
in the face of my pursuers; say to my soul, "I am your salva-
4 tion." | Let those be put to shame and disgraced who seek my
life; let those be turned back and confounded who plot evil
5 against me. | Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the
6 angel of the Lord driving them on. | Let their way be dark
and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them.
7 For without cause they set their snare for me, without cause
8 they dug a pit against my life. | Let ruin come upon them
unawares, and let the snare they have set catch them; into the
9 pit they have dug let them fall. | But I will rejoice in the Lord,
10 I will be joyful because of his salvation. | All my being shall
say, "O Lord, who is like you, the rescuer of the afflicted man
from those too strong for him, of the afflicted and the needy
11 from their despoilers?" | Unjust witnesses have risen up; things
12 I knew not of, they lay to my charge. | They have repaid me
evil for good, bringing bereavement to my soul.

19, 36: "Not a bone of him shall you break").

33, 23: This last verse is a liturgical addition to soften the preceding verse. The Jews avoided ending liturgical selections and books of the Bible with a threat.

34, 1-28: Around the fifth century B.C. a Jewish bard composed this lament on being unjustly persecuted and accused. He seems to have been a judge or an influential administrator. False witnesses prompted by his former ungrateful colleagues accused him of something illegal. The lament features several stereotyped formulas of supplication.

34, 5-6: In figurative language the poet asks God for the disgrace of his enemies by dispatching "the angel of the Lord" to rout them. "The angel of the Lord" is mentioned in the Psalter only here and in the preceding psalm 33, 8. According to the law of retaliation ("an eye for an eye," etc.), the poet has a right to wish that the snares laid by the enemies would boomerang. This is in keeping with the ancient notion of temporal retribution since total forgiveness is a New Testament doctrine. See Ps 5, 11 n.

34, 7-8: The imagery is that of a camouflaged net into which the prey ambulates and the hunter concealed in the surrounding shrubbery pulls the strings which encage the victim. The hunter's pit is the second metaphor.

3 of God before his eyes, | for he beguiles himself with the
4 thought that his guilt will not be found out or hated. | The
words of his mouth are empty and false; he has ceased to
5 understand how to do good. | He plans wickedness in his bed;
he sets out on a way that is not good, with no repugnance for
evil.
6 O Lord, your kindness reaches to heaven; your faithfulness,
7 to the clouds. | Your justice is like the mountains of God; your
judgments, like the mighty deep; man and beast you save, O
8 Lord. | How precious is your kindness, O God! The children
9 of men take refuge in the shadow of your wings. | They have
their fill of the prime gifts of your house; from your delightful
10 stream you give them to drink. | For with you is the fountain
of life, and in your light we see light.
11 Keep up your kindness toward your friends, your just defense
12 of the upright of heart. | Let not the foot of the proud overtake
13 me nor the hand of the wicked disquiet me. | See how the evil-
doers have fallen; they are thrust down and cannot rise.

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ments of the sinner that explain his evil conduct. The other side of the diptych, a hymn, (vv. 6-13) portrays a pious Jew. The intended contrast is effective. The sinner does not believe that God punishes the wicked on this earth: the pious Jew does believe it together with its corollary, namely, that God rewards the pious on earth with temporal blessings. We must remember: it was not revealed at this time that God will reward the good and the evil in the afterlife of heaven and hell.

35, 2: The scene opens with sin personified, which tempts the sinner who succumbs because he does not fear God. Just as the fear or "dread of the Lord" is the essence of wisdom, so is its absence the essence of immorality. This seems to be the psalmist's underlying explanation of how the sinner thinks.

35, 3: From his experience the sinner may think that God is too distant to know of his sin, or he may think that God will not punish him, because He does not care what men do.

35, 5: The first side of the diptych (vv. 2-5) is kindred in thought to psalms 9B, 13, and Mal 2, 17.

35, 7: *Man and beast you save, O Lord:* in all the wisdom of the Greeks it is difficult to find a line as clear as this on the Providence of God. The kindness exhibited in God's Providence is precious.

35, 8: *The children of men:* the Jews.

35, 9: *Their fill of the prime gifts of your house:* an allusion to the sacrificial feast in the temple. *Your delightful stream:* by another allusion to a supposed stream at the temple, the poet says that God gives His people drink from it.

35, 10: The "light of Yahweh" is the light of His countenance gazing favorably upon His faithful ones. In this light the Jews see a long and happy life.

35, 13: A possible allusion to some recent disaster of the evildoers known to the poet's audience.

13 But I, when they were ill, put on sackcloth; I afflicted myself
14 with fasting and poured forth prayers within my bosom. | As
though it were a friend of mine, or a brother, I went about,
like one bewailing a mother, I was bowed down in mourning
15 | Yet when I stumbled they were glad and gathered together;
they gathered together striking me unawares. They tore at me
16 without ceasing; | they put me to the test; they mocked me,
gnashing their teeth at me.
17 O Lord, how long will you look on? Save me from the roaring
18 beasts; from the lions, my only life. | I will give you thanks in
the vast assembly, in the mighty throng I will praise you. |
19 Let not my unprovoked enemies rejoice over me; let not my
20 undeserved foes wink knowingly. | For civil words they speak
not, but against the peaceful in the land they fashion treacherous
21 speech. | And they open wide their mouths against me, saying,
22 "Aha, aha! We saw him with our own eyes!" | You, O Lord,
23 have seen; be not silent; Lord, be not far from me! | Awake,
and be vigilant in my defense; in my cause, my God and my
24 Lord. | Do me justice, because you are just, O Lord; my God,
25 let them not rejoice over me. | Let them not say in their hearts,
"Aha! This is what we wanted!" Let them not say, "We have
swallowed him up!"
26 Let all be put to shame and confounded who are glad at my
misfortune. Let those be clothed with shame and disgrace who
27 glory over me. | But let those shout for joy and be glad who
favor my just cause; and may they ever say, "The Lord be
28 glorified; he wills the prosperity of his servant!" | Then my
tongue shall recount your justice, your praise, all the day.

PSALM 35 (36)

Human Wickedness and Divine Providence

1 For the leader. Of David, the servant of the Lord.
2 Sin speaks to the wicked man in his heart; there is no dread

34, 15: *They tore at me without ceasing:* we would say: "They tore my reputation to bits."

34, 16: *Gnashing their teeth at me:* this is a psalmodic metaphor of a beast poised to pounce on its prey.

34, 25: *Aha! This is what we wanted!:* this decision of guilt is what we wanted. *We have swallowed him up!:* we obliterated him completely.

34, 27: The discomfiture of the enemies is an occasion for the joy of the "just cause" of the holy because it means that God rules through righteousness.

On Monday of Holy Week the liturgy aptly applies this psalm to the persecuted Christ.

35, 2-13: This fifth (?) century psalm resembles a diptych. The first side of it (vv. 2-5) portrays a sinner. We may categorize the psalm as a song of wisdom insofar as the poet characterizes the intimate senti-

PSALM 36 (37)

The Fate of Sinners and the Reward of the Just

1 Of David.

Be not vexed over evildoers, nor jealous of those who do
2 wrong; | for like grass they quickly wither, and like green herbs
they wilt.
3 Trust in the Lord and do good, that you may dwell in the
4 land and enjoy security. | Take delight in the Lord, and he will
grant you your heart's requests.
5 Commit to the Lord your way; trust in him, and he will act. |
6 He will make justice dawn for you like the light; bright as the
noonday shall be your vindication.
7 Leave it to the Lord, and wait for him; be not vexed at the
successful path of the man who does malicious deeds.
8 Give up your anger, and forsake wrath; be not vexed, it will
9 only harm you. | For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who
wait for the Lord shall possess the land.
10 Yet a little while, and the wicked man shall be no more;
11 though you mark his place he will not be there. | But the meek
shall possess the land, they shall delight in abounding peace.
12 The wicked man plots against the just and gnashes his teeth
13 at them; | but the Lord laughs at him, for he sees that his day
is coming.
14 A sword the wicked draw; they bend their bow to bring down
the afflicted and the poor, to slaughter those whose path is
15 right. | But their swords shall pierce their own hearts, and
their bows shall be broken.
16 Better is the scanty store of the just than the great wealth of
17 the wicked, | for the power of the wicked shall be broken, but
the Lord supports the just.
18 The Lord watches over the lives of the wholehearted; their
19 inheritance lasts forever. | They are not put to shame in an
evil time; in days of famine they have plenty.

36, 1-40: The psalm is an alphabetic sapiential psalm written about the fifth century B.C. See Ps 9A, 2-21 n. The composer is speaking to a holy man who is toying with the temptation of abandoning the straight and narrow path of virtue because sinners seem to prosper. The psalmist stoutly defends the traditional opinion that the sinners are punished through temporal means and the virtuous are rewarded. See Introduction to the Book of Psalms on this problem of evil.

36, 7: *Wait for him:* be patient.

36, 11: *The meek shall possess the land:* and live in peace. Mt 5, 4 quotes it as a beatitude to mean the spiritual land of God's kingdom.

36, 18: The posterity of the good man will continue to inherit the family's wealth. This was a cherished hope of the Semites.

20 But the wicked perish, and the enemies of the Lord, like the
beauty of the meadows, vanish; like smoke they vanish.
21 The wicked man borrows and does not repay; the just man is
22 kindly and gives, | but those whom he blesses shall possess the
land, while those he curses shall be cut off.
23 By the Lord are the steps of a man made firm, and he
24 approves his way. | Though he fall, he does not lie prostrate,
for the hand of the Lord sustains him.
25 Neither in my youth, nor now that I am old, have I seen a
" just man forsaken nor his descendants begging bread. | All the
day he is kindly and lends, and his descendants shall be blessed.
27 Turn from evil and do good, that you may abide forever; |
28 for the Lord loves what is right, and forsakes not his faithful
ones.
Criminals are destroyed, and the posterity of the wicked is
29 cut off. | The just shall possess the land and dwell in it forever.
30 The mouth of the just man tells of wisdom and his tongue
31 utters what is right. | The law of his God is in his heart, and
his steps do not falter.
32 The wicked man spies on the just, and seeks to slay him. |
33 The Lord will not leave him in his power nor let him be
condemned when he is on trial.
34 Wait for the Lord, and keep his way; | he will promote you
to ownership of the land; when the wicked are destroyed, you
shall look on.
35 I saw a wicked man, fierce, and stalwart as a flourishing,
36 age-old tree. | Yet as I passed by, lo! he was no more; I sought
him, but he could not be found.
37 Watch the wholehearted man, and mark the upright; for
38 there is a future for the man of peace. | Sinners shall all alike
be destroyed; the future of the wicked shall be cut off.
39 The salvation of the just is from the Lord; he is their refuge
40 in time of distress. | And the Lord helps them and delivers
them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

PSALM 37 (38)

Prayer of an Afflicted Sinner

1 A psalm of David. For remembrance.
2 O Lord, in your anger punish me not, in your wrath chastise
3 me not; | for your arrows have sunk deep in me, and your

37, 2-33: A psalmist laments his illness. Extraordinary patience is perhaps his outstanding virtue. Many of the sentiments are common to other psalms of lament. It is difficult to know what was added to the

4 hand has come down upon me. | There is no health in my flesh
because of your indignation; there is no wholeness in my bones
5 because of my sin, | for my iniquities have overwhelmed me:
they are like a heavy burden, beyond my strength.
6 Noisome and festering are my sores because of my folly,
7 I am stooped and bowed down profoundly; all the day I go in
8 mourning, | For my loins are filled with burning pains; there
9 is no health in my flesh. | I am numbed and severely crushed;
I roar with anguish of heart.
10 O Lord, all my desire is before you; from you my groaning
11 is not hid. | My heart throbs; my strength forsakes me; the
12 very light of my eyes has failed me. | My friends and my
companions stand back because of my affliction; my neighbors
13 stand afar off. | Men lay snares for me seeking my life; they
look to my misfortune, they speak of ruin, treachery they talk
of all the day.
14 But I am like a deaf man, hearing not, like a dumb man who
15 opens not his mouth. | I am become like a man who neither
16 hears nor has in his mouth a retort. | Because for you, O Lord,
17 I wait; you, O Lord my God, will answer | when I say, "Let
them not be glad on my account who, when my foot slips,
glory over me."
18 For I am very near to falling, and my grief is with me always.
19 | Indeed, I acknowledge my guilt; I grieve over my sin. |
20 But my undeserved enemies are strong; many are my foes with-
21 out cause. | Those who repay evil for good harass me for
22 pursuing good. | Forsake me not, O Lord; my God, be not far
23 from me! | Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation!

PSALM 38 (39)
The Brevity and Vanity of Life

1 For the leader, for Idithun. A psalm of David.
2 I said, "I will watch my ways, so as not to sin with my
tongue; I will set a curb on my mouth." While the wicked man

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original writing. Although the psalm at first dealt with a sinful but repentant individual, it was later applied to the nation in the liturgy. To understand the thinking of the psalmist, we must recall that he knew nothing of reward and punishment in the afterlife. Consequently he thought that physical illness was a punishment for his past sins (v. 19). This is the third penitential psalm. See Ps 6, 2-11 n.

37, 12: In this abandoned condition he resembles Job.

37, 17: *When my foot slips:* a characteristic biblical term for "when misfortune strikes me."

37, 18: *Very near to falling:* a metaphor for any type of misfortune.

38, 2-14: This is a fifth (?) century lament of an individual whose grievous illness made him reflect meditatively on the mystery of evil

was before me | I kept dumb and silent; I refrained from rash
speech. But my grief was stirred up; | hot grew my heart
within me; in my thoughts, a fire blazed forth. I spoke out with
my tongue:
Let me know, O Lord, my end and what is the number of my
days, that I may learn how frail I am. | A short span you have
made my days, and my life is as nought before you; only a
breath is any human existence. | A phantom only, man goes
his ways; like vapor only are his restless pursuits; he heaps up
stores, and knows not who will use them.
And now, for what do I wait, O Lord? In you is my hope. |
From all my sins deliver me; a fool's taunt let me not suffer.
I was speechless and opened not my mouth, because it was
your doing; | take away your scourge from me; at the blow
of your hand I wasted away. | With rebukes for guilt you
chasten man; you dissolve like a cobweb all that is dear to him;
only a breath is any man. | Hear my prayer, O Lord; to my
cry give ear; to my weeping be not deaf! For I am but a wayfarer
before you, a pilgrim like all my fathers. | Turn your gaze
from me, that I may find respite ere I depart and be no more.

PSALM 39 (40)

Gratitude and Prayer for Help

For the leader. A psalm of David.
I have waited, waited for the Lord, and he stooped toward

and suffering: Why do the evil prosper and the good suffer? His answer is very similar to Job's: I don't understand the ways of God but I submit to Him. The composer of this psalm is original. Instead of the customary descriptions of the illness, of the enemies, and an abundance of references to his sins, he sketches a "psychological impression" of these elements. His psalm may be called a "philosophical meditation" on the problem of suffering.

38, 2-3: The ailing poet had resolved not to complain about the prospering evildoer, especially in the presence of the wicked man.

38, 4-7: His silence "blazed forth" into a prayer to understand the vanity of life and thus be directed away from criticizing God.

38, 9: The psalmist requests that he not suffer the taunt of a fool. The biblical fool is the exact opposite of the biblical wise man or sage. The fool is ignorant and usually morally depraved. He regards suffering as a sign of God's wrath and therefore a reason for taunting the afflicted one. See Is 32, 5-7 n.

38, 10: *It:* the illness of the psalmist.

38, 13: It seems that the composer refers to the three forms of prayer later distinguished in an ascending order of superior intercession by the Rabbinic saying: "Prayer is made in silence, crying with a loud voice, but tears surpass all."

39, 2-18: This song is generally admitted to be a composite psalm, but both parts were written by the same Jewish composer about the

3 me and heard my cry. | He drew me out of the pit of destruction, out of the mud of the swamp; he set my feet upon a crag;
4 he made firm my steps. | And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God. Many shall look on in awe and trust in the Lord.
5 Happy the man who makes the Lord his trust; who turns not
6 to idolatry or to those who stray after falsehood. | How numerous have you made, O Lord, my God, your wondrous deeds! And in your plans for us there is none to equal you; should I wish to declare or to tell them, they would be too many to recount.
7 Sacrifice or oblation you wished not, but ears open to obedience you gave me. Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not; |

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fifth century. The first part (vv. 2-11) is a song of thanksgiving to God for having rescued the author from a grave danger of death. The second part (vv. 12-18) is a lament by the same psalmist who is now ill and persecuted. (All of psalm 69 is almost identical with this second part.) The contrast between the two parts of psalm 39 has been happily compared to the contrast between a *Magnificat* and a *De Profundis*.

39, 2-3: The psalmist recalls a favor received from God in answer to a prayer (v. 2). He escaped death, which may have involved a grave illness or a serious accident or imprisonment. He makes no mention of enemies or persecutors. The "pit" and "mud of the swamp" are familiar psalmodic figures for danger. God extricated the poet from danger and set him on a *crag* (v. 3) and made his steps "firm"—corresponding to a biblical symbol for safety.

39, 6-9: The thought seems to be that no one can praise God as He deserves (v. 6). How then shall the poet praise and thank God? He answers that it is not by sacrifice but by obedience (vv. 7-9). Mentally thumbing through his temple ritual, he searches the different types of sacrifices for the best one to praise God. Would it be through a "sacrifice" of slain animals or an "oblation" of the fruits of the earth? No, God prefers "ears open to obedience." In repetitious parallel style the poet continues: is it through "holocausts" which symbolize the dedication of the servant to God or "sin-offerings" which reconcile the offender to God (v. 7)? No. The poet replies, "Behold I come to obey." In fact, obedience is "prescribed" for him and for all the faithful "in the written scroll" of the Mosaic Law, especially in Deuteronomy (v. 8). Moreover, "To do your will, O my God, is my delight," because it is God's delight. "And your law is within my heart," a delicate expression for willing obedience (v. 9).

39, 7-9: These verses are unevenly quoted in Heb 10, 5-7. The author of Hebrews contrasts the inadequacy of the countless Old Testament sacrifices to redeem sin with Christ's one sacrifice of obedience to the Father in dying on the cross. In putting vv. 7-9 of the psalm on the lips of Christ, the writer of Hebrews underscored *the* purpose of our Lord's life: to obey the Will of His Father out of love. The psalmist went to the Bible for his example of obedience; the Christian goes to the Bible and to Christ Himself.

8 then said I, "Behold I come; in the written scroll it is prescribed
9 for me, | to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your
10 law is within my heart!" | I announced your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as you, O Lord, know. |
11 Your justice I kept not hid within my heart; your faithfulness and your salvation I have spoken of; I have made no secret of your kindness and your truth in the vast assembly.
12 Withhold not, O Lord, your compassion from me; may your
13 kindness and your truth ever preserve me. | For all about me are evils beyond reckoning; my sins so overcome me that I cannot see; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails me.
14 Deign, O Lord, to rescue me; O Lord, make haste to help
15 me. | Let all be put to shame and confusion who seek to snatch away my life. Let them be turned back in disgrace who desire
16 my ruin. | Let them be dismayed in their shame who say to
17 me, "Aha, aha!" But may all who seek you exult and be glad in you, and may those who love your salvation say ever. "The
18 Lord be glorified." | Though I am afflicted and poor, yet the Lord thinks of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, hold not back!

PSALM 40 (41)
Thanksgiving after Sickness

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 Happy is he who has regard for the lowly and the poor; in
3 the day of misfortune the Lord will deliver him. | The Lord will keep and preserve him; he will make him happy on the
4 earth, and not give him over to the will of his enemies. | The Lord will help him on his sickbed, he will take away all his ailment when he is ill.
5 Once I said, "O Lord, have pity on me; heal me, though I
6 have sinned against you. | My enemies say the worst of me:

39, 10-11: But the poet is not satisfied with praising God by obedience alone; he wants to thank God publicly.

39, 12: With grave solemnity the same composer abruptly begins his lament. *Kindness . . . truth:* fidelity. These two are often united in psalmodic formulas.

39, 18: *Hold not back:* your help.

40, 2-14: This is a thanksgiving song for deliverance from illness and from enemies.

40, 2-4: These verses are best commented upon by our Lord in Mt 5,7: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." Our Lord has a more spiritual reward in view than the psalmist had.

40, 6: One of the worst disgraces which could befall a Jew was the prospect of his posterity vanishing.

7 'When will he die and his name perish?' | When one comes to
see me, he speaks without sincerity; his heart stores up malice;
8 when he leaves he gives voice to it outside. | All my foes
whisper together against me; against me they imagine the
9 worst: | 'A malignant disease fills his frame'; and 'Now that
10 he lies ill, he will not rise again.' | Even my friend who had
my trust and partook of my bread, has raised his heel against
11 me. | But you, O Lord, have pity on me, and raise me up, that
12 I may repay them." | That you love me I know by this, that
13 my enemy does not triumph over me, | but because of my
integrity you sustain me and let me stand before you forever.

* * *

14 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from all eternity and
forever. Amen. Amen.

PSALM 41 (42)

Desire for God and His Temple

1 For the leader. A *maskil* of the sons of Core.
2 As the hind longs for the running waters, so my soul longs
3 for you, O God. | Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.
4 When shall I go and behold the face of God? | My tears are
my food day and night, as they say to me day after day, "Where
5 is your God?" | Those times I recall, now that I pour out my

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40, 10: Even an intimate friend in whom he trusted "has raised his heel against me." This is a sign of disdain practiced among the Arabs even today. The verse is quoted in Jn 13, 18: "He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me." There Christ refers to Judas' betrayal.

40, 13: *Stand before:* a biblical idiom meaning that he is certain of a long life.

40, 14: The last verse has nothing to do with the psalm. It is a doxology to mark the end of the first book of the Psalter.

41—42: Both psalms were originally written by the same author as one psalm of lament—one of the most lyrical poems in the Bible. This appears evident from the sameness of language and from the refrain in the last verse of each psalm. The thought sequence between both psalms cannot be broken without making one psalm incomplete without the other. The composer lived before the sixth century B.C. and somewhere in northern Palestine in a heavily pagan milieu. He is homesick for the Jerusalem temple services.

41, 3: *Go and behold the face of God:* a Hebraic expression for visiting the temple.

41, 4: *Where is your God?:* as a worshiper of the one true God he is downcast because the heathen neighbors accuse him of being an "atheist," since they do not see him offering sacrifice to some idol or performing any type of external ritual. For the pagans there is no god if there is no ritual.

soul within me, when I went with the throng and led them in
procession to the house of God, amid loud cries of joy and
6 thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping festival. | Why are
you so downcast, O my soul? Why do you sigh within me?
Hope in God! For I shall again be thanking him, in the presence
of my savior and my God.
7 Within me my soul is downcast; so will I remember you
from the land of the Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount
8 Misar. | Deep calls unto deep in the roar of your cataracts; all
9 your breakers and your billows pass over me. | By day the
Lord bestows his grace, and at night I have his song, a prayer
10 to my living God. | I sing to God, my Rock: "Why do you
forget me? Why must I go about in mourning, with the enemy
11 oppressing me?" | It crushes my bones that my foes mock me, as
12 they say to me day after day, "Where is your God?" | Why are
you so downcast, O my soul? Why do you sigh within me? Hope
in God! For I shall again be thanking him, in the presence of
my savior and my God.

PSALM 42 (43)

1 Do me justice, O God, and fight my fight against a faithless
2 people; from the deceitful and impious man rescue me. | For
you, O God, are my strength. Why do you keep me so far away?
Why must I go about in mourning, with the enemy oppressing
3 me? | Send forth your light and your fidelity; they shall lead
me on and bring me to your holy mountain, to your dwelling-
4 place. | Then will I go in to the altar of God, the God of my
gladness and joy; then will I give you thanks upon the harp,
5 O God, my God! | Why are you so downcast, O my soul? Why
do you sigh within me? Hope in God! For I shall again be
thanking him, in the presence of my savior and my God.

41, 8: The psalmist imagines that the stormy waters of the roaring cataracts of the upper Jordan River are conspiring (echo-like—"deep calls unto deep") to dispatch waves to engulf him into a watery tomb.

41, 9: In retrospect the poet contrasts the sorrowful present with the past when God's steadfast love watched him by day like a guardian angel, and his prayerful song was with him at night.

41, 11: *It crushes my bones:* we would say: It hurts me to the marrow of my bones.

42, 3: The bard urges God to send His messengers, "light" and "fidelity" to lead him to His Holy Mount of Jerusalem.

Ps 42 is used at the beginning of Mass chiefly because of the appropriateness of v. 4. The liturgy suggests that just as the psalmist ardently desired God in the temple—the master idea of the entire psalm —so should we desire the Eucharistic Christ.

PSALM 43 (44)

Israel's Past Glory and Present Need

1 For the leader. A *maskil* of the sons of Core.
2 O God, our ears have heard, our fathers have declared to us,
3 | the deeds you did in their days, in days of old: | How with your own hand you rooted out the nations and planted them;
4 you smashed the peoples, but for them you made room. | For not with their own sword did they conquer the land, nor did their own arm make them victorious, but it was your arm and your right hand and the light of your countenance, in your love
5 for them. | You are my king and my God, who bestowed vic-
6 tories on Jacob. | Our foes through you we struck down;
7 through your name we trampled down our adversaries. | For
8 not in my bow did I trust, nor did my sword save me; | but you saved us from our foes, and those who hated us you put to
9 shame. | In God we gloried day by day; your name we praised always.
10 Yet now you have cast us off and put us in disgrace, and you
11 go not forth with our armies. | You have let us be driven back
12 by our foes; those who hated us plundered us at will, | you marked us out as sheep to be slaughtered; among the nations
13 you scattered us. | You sold your people for no great price;
14 you made no profit from the sale of them. | You made us the reproach of our neighbors, the mockery and the scorn of those
15 around us. | You made us a byword among the nations, a
16 laughingstock among the peoples. | All the day my disgrace is

43, 2-27: The psalm is a public lament (vv. 10-17) introduced by a hymn (vv. 2-9) and ending with a plea (vv. 18-27). Perhaps this psalm was written during the period of the monarchy (between the tenth to sixth century B.C.). The poet describes a time when Israel was independent enough to wage war. A national catastrophe is the situation of life that occasioned the national lament.

43, 2-3: An allusion to the conquest of the Promised Land.

43, 5: Henceforth the bard will alternate irregularly from the singular to the plural. When speaking in the singular, he is speaking in the name of the nation.

43, 6-8: For the same thought see 1 Mc 3, 19: "For the success of war is not in the multitude of the army, but strength comes from heaven."

43, 10: *Go not forth with our armies:* this psalmodic expression is rooted in early Israelite history when Yahweh, in the Ark of the Covenant, was carried to battle. When the ark was not transported Yahweh was nevertheless considered to accompany the Israelites in His war.

43, 13: To Israelites, who were fierce lovers of freedom and of their land, slavery was only a slight degree above death.

43, 14-17: A defeat of a people was interpreted by rivaling pagan neighboring countries as a quasi defeat of their god.

17 before me, and shame covers my face | at the voice of him
who mocks and blasphemes, and in the presence of the enemy
and the avenger.
18 All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten
19 you, nor have we been disloyal to your covenant; | our hearts
have not shrunk back, nor our steps turned aside from your
20 path, | though you thrust us down into a place of misery and
21 covered us over with darkness. | If we had forgotten the name
of our God and stretched out our hands to a strange god, |
22 would not God have discovered this? For he knows the secrets
23 of the heart. | Yet for your sake we are being slain all the day;
we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered.
24 Awake! Why are you asleep, O Lord? Arise! Cast us not off
25 forever! | Why do you hide your face, forgetting our woe and
26 our oppression? | For our souls are bowed down to the dust,
27 our bodies are pressed to the earth. | Arise, help us! Redeem us
for your kindness' sake.

PSALM 44 (45)

Nuptial Ode for the Messianic King

1 For the leader; according to "Lilies." A *maskil* of the sons of
Core. A love song.
2 My heart overflows with a goodly theme; as I sing my ode to
the king, my tongue is nimble as the pen of a skillful scribe.

43, 18-20: There is no other biblical passage that protests national innocence in such an assertive tone.

43, 20: *Covered us over with darkness:* a biblical idiom for misery and suffering.

43, 21: To forget God's name means to neglect the temple cult in which God's name was often spoken. To stretch out the hands to a strange god means to worship the gods. This description is taken from the gesture of praying by holding the palm of the hand open to the heavens.

43, 23: This verse is quoted in Rom 8, 36 to exemplify this: if the Old Testament saints were so steadfast in their faith to Yahweh, Paul's converts should be ready to die for our Lord's sake, if necessary.

43, 24: A daring expostulation found nowhere else in Scripture. The psalmist expresses how the nation felt emotionally rather than how it thought theologically.

44, 2-18: Most modern commentators safely place this psalm in the monarchic period from David's time to the sixth century B.C. The occasion for its composition was the marriage of one of the Davidic kings. Moderns generally understand that the author did not mean to ascribe all the qualities in this psalm to one definite historical king but only insofar as the king represented the hope for fulfillment of the promises God made to David's dynasty through Nathan (2 Sm 7). According to this opinion, the psalm is not literally and directly Messianic but typically Messianic, i.e., the reigning monarch is a type of

3 Fairer in beauty are you than the sons of men; grace is poured
4 out upon your lips; thus God has blessed you forever. | Gird
your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one! In your splendor
5 and your majesty ride on triumphant | in the cause of truth and
for the sake of justice; and may your right hand show you
6 wondrous deeds. | Your arrows are sharp; peoples are subject
7 to you; the king's enemies lose heart. | Your throne, O God,
stands forever and ever; a tempered rod is your royal scepter. |
8 You love justice and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God,
has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellow
9 kings. | With myrrh and aloes and cassia your robes are fra-
10 grant; from ivory palaces string music brings you joy. | The
daughters of kings come to meet you; the queen takes her place
at your right hand in gold of Ophir.
11 Hear, O daughter, and see; turn your ear, forget your people
12 and your father's house. | So shall the king desire your beauty;
13 for he is your lord, and you must worship him. | And the city
of Tyre is here with gifts; the rich among the people seek your
14 favor. | All glorious is the king's daughter as she enters; her
15 raiment is threaded with spun gold. | In embroidered apparel
she is borne in to the king; behind her the virgins of her train
16 are brought to you. | They are borne in with gladness and joy;
they enter the palace of the king.

Christ the Messia. The quality stressed is justice (vv. 5, 8) of his rule. This and other qualities are Messianic.

44, 2: The psalmist's dedicatory prologue.

44, 3: *Fairer in beauty are you than the sons of men:* another probable translation is: fairest among the sons of men. *Grace is poured out on your lips:* an expression for: you are eloquent.

44, 7: Strictly speaking, only this verse is Messianic. In spite of the several disputed ways of translating "Your throne O God" the author is not attributing divinity to the king, but the Hebrew word for God "Elohim" here means "godlike" or "taking God's place."

44, 8: *Ophir:* a place renowned for its gold. *God has anointed you with the oil of gladness:* the psalmist does not mean God anointed him king but God congratulated him.

44, 10-16: The liturgy accommodates these verses to Mary and to the Virgins.

44, 10: These "daughters of kings" are either the virgins of the queen's train (v. 15) or they allude to the polygamy of oriental kings who in war took daughters of kings as secondary wives.

44, 12: *Worship him:* the biblical way of expressing deep homage.

44, 13: *The city of Tyre:* this may be a personification of the Gentile cities. *Your favor:* the favor of the king who is addressed here.

44, 15-16: The formal entrance of the queen into the king's palace marks the beginning of her conjugal life. *To you:* the king is addressed here.

17 The place of your fathers your sons shall have; you shall
18 make them princes through all the land. | I will make your name memorable through all generations; therefore shall nations praise you forever and ever.

PSALM 45 (46)
God the Refuge of Israel

1 For the leader. A song of the sons of Core; according to "Virgins."
2 God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in
3 distress. | Therefore we fear not, though the earth be shaken
4 and mountains plunge into the depths of the sea; | though its waters rage and foam and the mountains quake at its surging. The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.
5 There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God, the
6 holy dwelling of the Most High. | God is in its midst; it shall not be disturbed; God will help it at the break of dawn. |
7 Though nations are in turmoil, kingdoms totter, his voice
8 resounds, the earth melts away, | the Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.
9 Come! behold the deeds of the Lord, the astounding things
10 he has wrought on earth: | he has stopped wars to the end of the earth: the bow he breaks; he splinters the spears; he burns
11 the shields with fire. | Desist! and confess that I am God,
12 exalted among the nations, exalted upon the earth. | The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob.

45, 2-12: This song of Sion belongs to the subclassification of hymns because of the similarity of structure. The purpose of the Songs of Sion is to praise Jerusalem and God's plan for it. Experts differ on the precise number of these Songs of Sion but some commonly accepted ones are Pss 47 and 86.

A definite historical event of liberation from some foreign power originated this psalm. The master idea of Ps 45 is the Presence of Yahweh in Jerusalem which serves as the basis for happiness. The poet writes in the name of the people. One of the opinions as regards the historical event is Sennacherib's demand for the surrender of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. It was refused. He was forced to return home because of a plague. The first stanza (vv. 2-4) hymns God's trust; the second stanza (vv. 5-8) God's protection of Jerusalem; the third (vv. 9-12) God's victory.

This psalm is used in the Mass of Ascension Thursday and the Sunday after Pentecost.

45, 4: *The Lord of hosts:* see Is 1, 9 n. *The Lord of hosts is with us . . . God of Jacob:* at the end of the three strophes this refrain occurs. *There is a stream:* a symbol of God's presence.

45, 6: *At the break of dawn:* the most difficult hour of watch is the one before dawn because it is the darkest.

PSALM 46 (47)

The Lord the King of All Nations

1 For the leader. A psalm of the sons of Core.
2 All you peoples, clap your hands, shout to God with cries of
3 gladness, | for the Lord, the Most High, the awesome, is the
4 great king over all the earth. | He brings peoples under us;
5 nations under our feet. | He chooses for us our inheritance, the glory of Jacob, whom he loves.
6 God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy; the Lord, amid
7 trumpet blasts. | Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our king, sing praise.
8 For king of all the earth is God; sing hymns of praise. |
9 God reigns over the nations, God sits upon his holy throne. |
10 The princes of the peoples are gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham. For God's are the guardians of the earth; he is supreme.

PSALM 47 (48)

Thanksgiving for Jerusalem's Deliverance

1 A psalm of the sons of Core; a song.
2 Great is the Lord and wholly to be praised in the city of our
3 God. His holy mountain, | fairest of heights, is the joy of all the earth; Mount Sion, "the recesses of the North," is the city
4 of the great King. | God is with her castles; renowned is he as a stronghold.
5.6 For lo! the kings assemble, they come on together; | they
7 also see, and at once are stunned, terrified, routed; | quaking
8 seizes them there; anguish, like a woman's in labor, | as though a wind from the east were shattering ships of Tharsis.

46, 2-10: This may be subclassified as a hymn on the kingship of Yahweh over all the world. See Ps 92, 1-5 n.

46, 2-5: All the Gentile nations must praise Yahweh as the one true God.

46, 6-10: When Yahweh shows He is God (vv. 6-7), then the nations will acknowledge Him (vv. 8-10).

46, 10: *The princes of the peoples . . . The guardians of the earth:* these may be the guardian angels of nations as in Dn 10, 13.

47, 2-15: A psalm of Sion. See Ps 45, 2-12 n.

47, 3: *The recesses of the North:* since this is the Olympus of the Syro-Phoenician gods, the sacred writer may be saying that the true abode of God is Jerusalem.

47, 5-6: Various guesses on an historical battle are made here, e.g., Sennacherib's defeat in 701 (see Is 36—37); the Syro-Ephraimite war against Juda in 734 B.C.

47, 8: *Ships of Tharsis:* we would say, "ocean liners." The text does not imply that the invasion was by sea.

9 As we had heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of
hosts, in the city of our God; God makes it firm forever. |
10.11 O God, we ponder your kindness within your temple. | As
your name, O God, so also your praise reaches to the ends
12 of the earth. Of justice your right hand is full; | let Mount Sion
be glad, let the cities of Juda rejoice, because of your judgments.
13.14 Go about Sion, make the round; count her towers. | Con-
sider her ramparts, examine her castles, that you may tell a
15 future generation | that such is God, our God forever and ever;
he will guide us.

PSALM 48 (49)
The Vanity of Worldly Riches

1 For the leader. A psalm of the sons of Core.
2 Hear this, all you peoples; hearken, all who dwell in the
3 world, | of lowly birth or high degree, rich and poor alike. |
4 My mouth shall speak wisdom; prudence shall be the utterance
5 of my heart. | My ear is intent upon a proverb; I will set forth
my riddle to the music of the harp.
6 Why should I fear in evil days when my wicked ensnarers
7 ring me round? | They trust in their wealth; the abundance of
8 their riches is their boast. | Yet in no way can a man redeem
9 himself, or pay his own ransom to God; | too high is the price
10 to redeem one's life; he would never have enough | to remain
11 alive always and not see destruction. | For he can see that wise
men die, and likewise the senseless and the stupid pass away,
12 leaving to others their wealth. | Tombs are their homes forever,
their dwellings through all generations, though they have called
13 lands by their names. | Thus man, for all his splendor, does
not abide; he resembles the beasts that perish.
14 This is the way of those whose trust is folly, the end of those
15 contented with their lot: | like sheep they are herded into the
nether world; death is their shepherd, and the upright rule
over them. Quickly their form is consumed; the nether world

47, 9: *As we had heard:* of the heroic exploits God worked through our ancestors. *So have we seen:* in our own recent experience (see vv. 5-6 n).

47, 15: *He will guide us:* through the ages.

48, 2-21: This is an evident wisdom psalm on the "riddle" (v. 5) or problem of evil. The psalmist asks himself how the wealthy people who persecuted him will be punished. His answer (vv. 8-10) is that death will make all men equal. Even wealth cannot prevent this leveling process of death.

48, 6-7: Since wealth was traditionally regarded as a sign of God's favor, the psalmist is taking a different view in belittling riches.

16 is their palace. | But God will redeem me from the power of
the nether world by receiving me.
17 Fear not when a man grows rich, when the wealth of his
18 house becomes great, | for when he dies, he shall take none of
19 it; his wealth shall not follow him down. | Though in his
lifetime he counted himself blessed, "They will praise you for
20 doing well for yourself," | he shall join the circle of his fore-
21 bears who shall never more see light. | Man, for all his splendor,
if he have not prudence, resembles the beasts that perish.

PSALM 49 (50)

The Acceptable Sacrifice

1 A psalm of Asaph.
God the Lord has spoken and summoned the earth, from the
2 rising of the sun to its setting. | From Sion, perfect in beauty,
3 God shines forth. | May our God come and not be deaf to us!
Before him is a devouring fire; around him is a raging storm. |
4 He summons the heavens from above, and the earth, to the trial
5 of his people: | "Gather my faithful ones before me, those
6 who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." | And the
heavens proclaim his justice; for God himself is the judge.
7 "Hear, my people, and I will speak; Israel, I will testify
8 against you; God, your God, am I. | Not for your sacrifices do
9 I rebuke you, for your holocausts are before me always. | I take
10 from your house no bullock, no goats out of your fold. | For
mine are all the animals of the forests, beasts by the thousand
11 on my mountains. | I know all the birds of the air, and what-
12 ever stirs in the plains, belongs to me. | If I were hungry, I
should not tell you, for mine are the world and its fullness. |
13 Do I eat the flesh of strong bulls, or is the blood of goats my
14 drink? | Offer to God praise as your sacrifice and fulfill your
15 vows to the Most High; | then call upon me in time of distress;
I will rescue you, and you shall glorify me."
16 But to the wicked man God says: "Why do you recite my
17 statutes, and profess my covenant with your mouth, | though

48, 16: Although the psalmist does not yet know the reward of an eternal afterlife of bliss, he gropingly seems to conclude that the final lot of the good ought to be different from that of the wicked. Other opinions say that the psalmist is merely wishing God may save him from death, or that he wishes to be taken up to heaven like Elias.

49, 1-23: Irrespective of its category, the meaning of the psalm is clear, namely, God prefers prayerful praise and fulfillment of vows (v. 14), the right way of good conduct (v. 23) to external sacrifice. This is a traditional teaching of the prophets, e.g., Is 1, 10ff.

49, 2: The Advent liturgy uses vv. 2, 3, 5.

49, 16-21: The ways of the hypocrite.

18 you hate discipline and cast my words behind you? | When
you see a thief, you keep pace with him, and with adulterers
19 you throw in your lot. | To your mouth you give free rein for
20 evil, you harness your tongue to deceit. | You sit speaking
against your brother; against your mother's son you spread
21 rumors. | When you do these things, shall I be deaf to it? Or
think you that I am like yourself? I will correct you by drawing
them up before your eyes.
22 "Consider this, you who forget God, lest I rend you and
23 there be no one to rescue you. | He that offers praise as a sacri-
fice glorifies me; and to him that goes the right way I will show
the salvation of God."

PSALM 50 (51)

The Miserere: Prayer of Repentance

1,2 For the leader. A psalm of David, | when Nathan the prophet
came to him after his sin with Bethsabee.
3 Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness
4 of your compassion wipe out my offense. | Thoroughly wash
me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me.
5 For I acknowledge my offense, and my sin is before me
6 always: | "Against you only have I sinned, and done what is
evil in your sight"—that you may be justified in your sentence,
7 vindicated when you condemn. | Indeed, in guilt was I born,
8 and in sin my mother conceived me; | behold, you are pleased
with sincerity of heart, and in my inmost being you teach me
wisdom.
9 Cleanse me of sin with hyssop, that I may be purified; wash

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50, 3-21: This lament of an individual for an unknown grievous sin is the fourth and most famous of the seven penitential psalms. See Ps 6, 2-11 n. It is a pre-eminent repentance song because among other reasons, the psalmist does not blame anyone, not even persecutors, as so many other psalmists do. The strongest argument against understanding this psalm as having been occasioned by David's adultery with Bethsabee (see title vv. 1-2) is verse 6: "Against you (God) only have I sinned." It is difficult to attribute this sentiment to David who also wronged Urias, the husband of Bethsabee. The psalm may be exilic.

50, 6: See 50, 3-21 n. This may be the only example in the whole Psalter where the sin is known only to the psalmist. *That you may be justified in your sentence:* the psalmist acknowledges his sin (v. 5), so that when people see God's sentence upon him (e.g., an illness in punishment for his sin, according to the ideas of the time), God will then be "justified" and "vindicated."

50, 7: The lamenting poet admits his inveterate propensity toward sin. This is not the revelation of original sin.

50, 9: *Hyssop:* a small brush with twigs of wood used as a sprinkler in the liturgy (Ex 12, 22) for symbolic cleansing. The penitent here asks to be literally "un-sinned," as the Hebrew word has it.

me, and I shall be whiter than snow. | Let me hear the sounds
of joy and gladness; the bones you have crushed shall rejoice. |
Turn away your face from my sins, and blot out all my guilt.
A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit
renew within me. | Cast me not out from your presence, and
your holy spirit take not from me. | Give me back the joy of
your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me.
I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall return
to you. | Free me from blood guilt, O God, my saving God;
then my tongue shall revel in your justice. | O Lord, open my
lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. | For you are
not pleased with sacrifices; should I offer a holocaust, you
would not accept it. | My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.
Be bountiful, O Lord, to Sion in your kindness by rebuilding
the walls of Jerusalem; | then shall you be pleased with due
sacrifices, burnt offerings and holocausts; then shall they offer
up bullocks on your altar.

PSALM 51 (52)
The Deceitful Tongue

For the leader. A *maskil* of David, | when Doeg the Edomite
went and told Saul, "David went to the house of Ahimelech."
Why do you glory in evil, you champion of infamy? All the
day | you plot harm; your tongue is like a sharpened razor, you
practiced deceiver! | You love evil rather than good, falsehood
rather than honest speech. | You love all that means ruin, you
of the deceitful tongue!
God himself shall demolish you; forever he shall break you;
he shall pluck you from your tent, and uproot you from the land
of the living.
The just shall look on with awe; then they shall laugh at
him: | "This is the man who made not God the source of his
strength, but put his trust in his great wealth, and his strength
in harmful plots." | But I, like a green olive tree in the house
of God, trust in the kindness of God forever and ever. | I will
thank you always for what you have done, and proclaim the
goodness of your name before your faithful ones.

50, 16: *Blood guilt:* the literal translation is "blood(s)" which may also mean death, and therefore the request would be the deliverance from a premature death.

50, 18-19: The same idea as in Ps 49.

50, 20-21: The majority opinion considers these verses a liturgical addition from exilic or postexilic times.

51, 3-11: This wisdom psalm is a complaint against a wealthy indi-

PSALM 52 (53)

Lament over Widespread Corruption

1 For the leader; according to *Mahalath*. A *maskil* of David.
2 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
Such are corrupt, they do abominable deeds;
there is not one who does
3 good.
God looks down from heaven upon the children of men
4 to see if there be one who is wise and seeks God.
All alike have gone astray; they have become perverse;
there is not one
who does good, not even one.
5 Will all these evildoers never learn,
they who eat up my
people just as they eat bread,
who call not upon God?
There they were in great fear, where no fear was,
for God has scattered the bones of your besiegers;
they are put to shame, because
God has rejected them.
7 Oh, that out of Zion would come the salvation of Israel!
When God restores the well-being of his people,
then shall
Jacob exult and Israel be glad.

PSALM 53 (54)

Confident Prayer in Great Peril

1 For the leader; with stringed instruments. A *maskil* of David,
2 when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "David is hiding among us."
3 O God, by your name save me,
and by your might defend my
4 cause.
O God, hear my prayer;
hearken to the words of my
mouth.
5 For haughty men have risen up against me,
and fierce
men seek my life;
they set not God before their eyes.
7 Behold, God is my helper;
the Lord sustains my life.

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wicked who cheats others. The psalmist forecasts that God will punish him with an early death. This is one of the stock answers to the traditional theme: God punishes the wicked on earth. Since v. 10 speaks of the temple ("the house of God") the title (vv. 1–2) is not regarded as the occasion for this psalm. The title refers to 1 Sm 21:8.

52. 3–7: This lament of an individual is on the general corruption of the day. The psalm is the same as Ps 13 except for a few differences, especially vv. 5–6. Besides, Ps 13 is called the Yahwistic version because it uses Yahweh for the name of God. Ps 52 is called the Elohistic version because it uses Elohim. Both versions were probably written during the exile in Babylon or the sixth century B.C. Ps 13 seems to be close to the original version, if it is not the original version itself.

52. 6 *God has scattered the bones of your besiegers*: probably a graphic way of saying that God shamed and rejected the besiegers.

53. 3–9: This is a lament of an individual against foes. The title (vv. 1–2) refers to an incident in David's life, as recounted in 1 Sm 23:19, but it is disputed whether the psalm really refers to it.

53. 3: *By your name*: a synonym for God's power.

7 Turn back the evil upon my foes; in your faithfulness destroy
8 them. | Freely will I offer you sacrifice; I will praise your name,
9 O Lord, for its goodness, | because from all distress you have rescued me, and my eyes look down upon my enemies.

PSALM 54 (55)

Complaint against Enemies and a Disloyal Companion

1 For the leader; with stringed instruments. A *maskil* of David.
2 Hearken, O God, to my prayer; turn not away from my
3 pleading; | give heed to me, and answer me. I rock with grief,
4 and am troubled | at the voice of the enemy and the clamor of the wicked. For they bring down evil upon me, and with fury
5 they persecute me. | My heart quakes within me; the terror of
6 death has fallen upon me. | Fear and trembling come upon me,
7 and horror overwhelms me, | and I say, "Had I but wings like
8 a dove, I would fly away and be at rest. | Far away I would
9 flee; I would lodge in the wilderness. | I would hasten to find shelter from the violent storm and the tempest."
10 Engulf them, O Lord; divide their counsels, for in the city
11 I see violence and strife; | day and night they prowl about upon
12 its walls. Evil and mischief are in its midst; | [treachery is in its midst;] oppression and fraud never depart from its streets. |
13 If an enemy had reviled me, I could have borne it; if he who hates me had vaunted himself against me, I might have hidden
14 from him. | But you, my other self, my companion and my
15 bosom friend! | You, whose comradeship I enjoyed; at whose side I walked in procession in the house of God!
16 Let death surprise them; let them go down alive to the nether
17 world, for evil is in their dwellings, in their very midst. | But
18 I will call upon God, and the Lord will save me. | In the evening, and at dawn, and at noon, I will grieve and moan, and
19 he will hear my voice. | He will give me freedom and peace from those who war against me, for many there are who
20 oppose me. | God will hear me and will humble them from his eternal throne; for improvement is not in them, nor do they

54, 2-24: This psalm is an individual's lament. He wants to flee a wicked city and especially a former friend (vv. 14-15). He asks for the punishment of the wicked and for his own safety. It may date from the eighth to sixth century B.C.

54, 12: *Treachery is in its midst:* apparently this is merely a variant reading of the preceding line.

54, 16: The poet wishes them a premature death ("go down alive into the nether world"). See Jer 12, 3 n.

21 fear God. | Each one lays hands on his associates, and violates
22 his pact. | Softer than butter is his speech, but war is in his heart; his words are smoother than oil, but they are drawn
23 swords. | Cast your care upon the Lord, and he will support
24 you; never will he permit the just man to be disturbed. | And you, O God, will bring them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and deceit shall not live out half their days. But I trust in you, O Lord.

PSALM 55 (56)
Trust in God, the Helper in Need

1 For the leader; according to *Jonath . . . rehokim.* A *miktam* of David, when the Philistines held him in Geth.

2 Have pity on me, O God, for men trample upon me; all the
3 day they press their attack against me. | My adversaries trample upon me all the day; yes, many fight against me. O Most High,
4.5 | when I begin to fear, in you will I trust. | In God, in whose promise I glory, in God I trust without fear; what can flesh do against me?

6 All the day they molest me in my efforts; their every thought
7 is of evil against me. | They gather together in hiding, they
8 watch my steps. As they have waited for my life, | because of their wickedness keep them in view: in your wrath bring down
9 the peoples, O God. | My wanderings you have counted; my tears are stored in your flask; are they not recorded in your
10 book? | Then do my enemies turn back, when I call upon you;
11 now I know that God is with me. | In God, in whose promise
12 I glory, | in God I trust without fear; what can flesh do against me?

13 I am bound, O God, by vows to you; your thank offerings I
14 will fulfill. | For you have rescued me from death, my feet, too, from stumbling; that I may walk before God in the light of the living.

54, 23: This verse is quoted in 1 Pt 5, 7 with the same meaning as here.

55, 2-14: The psalm is an individual lament of one who is wronged by his enemies. Trusting in God the psalmist vows a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The title refers to the historical incident of 1 Sm 21, 11f but there seems to be no reference in the psalm to this Davidic episode.

55, 5: *Flesh:* mortal man.

55, 9: *My tears are stored in your flask:* an unusual figure of God collecting the tears of the psalmist in a bottle with the intention of requiring recompense for them.

PSALM 56 (57)

Confident Prayer for Deliverance

1 For the leader. (Do not destroy!) A *miktam* of David, when he
fled away from Saul into the cave.
2 Have pity on me, O God; have pity on me, for in you I take
refuge. In the shadow of your wings I take refuge, till harm
3 pass by. | I call to God the Most High, to God, my benefactor.
4 | May he send from heaven and save me; may he make those
a reproach who trample upon me; may God send his kindness
5 and his faithfulness. | I lie prostrate in the midst of lions which
devour men; their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongue is a
6 sharp sword. | Be exalted above the heavens, O God; above all
the earth be your glory!
7 They have prepared a net for my feet; they have bowed me
down; they have dug a pit before me, but they fall into it.
8 My heart is steadfast, O God; my heart is steadfast; I will
9 sing and chant praise. | Awake, O my soul; awake, lyre and
10 harp! I will wake the dawn. | I will give thanks to you among
the peoples, O Lord, I will chant your praise among the nations,
11 | for your kindness towers to the heavens, and your faithful-
12 ness to the skies. | Be exalted above the heavens, O God; above
all the earth be your glory!

PSALM 57 (58)

Against Unjust Judges

1 For the leader. (Do not destroy!) A *miktam* of David.
2 Do you indeed like gods pronounce justice and judge fairly,
3 you men of rank? | Nay, you willingly commit crimes; on
4 earth you look to the fruits of extortion. | From the womb the
wicked are perverted; astray from birth have the liars gone. |
5 Theirs is poison like a serpent's, like that of a stubborn snake

56, 2-12: A lament of an individual trustingly asking for help. It is doubtful that the title has anything to do with the psalm.

56, 1: *Do not destroy:* here, and in the next two psalms, as well as in Ps 74, this expression is probably a mere annotation by some early scribe who wished to keep his copy from being discarded.

56, 5: The poet compares his enemies to "lions." The false accusations of the enemies are compared to lions' teeth.

56, 6: The same refrain also ends the second stanza in v. 12.

56, 8-12: These verses reappear with slight variations in Ps 107, 2-6.

56, 10: *I will wake the dawn:* with my music.

57, 2-12: The psalm is a public lament against law-breaking judges whom God will punish for making society suffer.

57, 1: *Do not destroy:* see Ps 56, 1 n.

57, 2: *Like gods:* the sense is: Do you, in taking God's place in pronouncing judgment, judge fairly?

6 that stops its ears, | that it may not hear the voice of enchanters
casting cunning spells.
7 O God, smash their teeth in their mouths; the jaw-teeth of
8 the lions, break, O Lord! | Let them vanish like water flowing
off; when they draw the bow, let their arrows be headless
9 shafts. | Let them dissolve like a melting snail, like an untimely
10 birth that never sees the sun. | Unexpectedly, like a thorn-bush,
11 or like thistles, let the whirlwind carry them away. | The just
man shall be glad when he sees vengeance; he shall bathe his
12 feet in the blood of the wicked. | And men shall say, "Truly
there is a reward for the just; truly there is a God who is judge
on earth!"

PSALM 58 (59)
Against Bloodthirsty Enemies

1 For the leader. (Do not destroy!) A *miktam* of David when Saul
sent men to watch his house and put him to death.
2 Rescue me from my enemies, O my God; from my adver-
3 saries defend me. | Rescue me from evildoers; from blood-
4 thirsty men save me. | For behold, they lie in wait for my life;
mighty men come together against me. Not for any offense or
5 sin of mine, O Lord; | for no guilt of mine they hurry to take
6 up arms. Rouse yourself to see it, and aid me, | for you are the
Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. Arise; punish all the nations;
have no pity on any worthless traitors.
7 Each evening they return, they snarl like dogs and prowl
8 about the city. | Though they bay with their mouths, and
blasphemies are on their lips—"Who is there to listen?"— |
9 You, O Lord, laugh at them; you deride all the nations. |
10 O my strength! for you I watch; for you, O God, are my
11 stronghold, | my gracious God!
May God come to my aid; may he show me the fall of my
12 foes. | O God, slay them, lest they beguile my people; shake

57, 9: *Like a melting snail:* if the Hebrew text is clear it alludes to the ancient belief that snails melted away to nothing. Perhaps this idea originated from dead snails leaving nothing but empty shells.

57, 10: The Hebrew is obscure.

57, 11: Besides recalling the hardy realism of the Semites and their love of hyperbole, the psalmist knew no other way of expressing God's justice against the wicked than through temporal punishment.

58, 2-18: The psalm is a lament for God's help against enemies.

58, 1: *Do not destroy:* see Ps 56, 1 n.

58, 8: *Who is there to listen?:* the blasphemous enemies ask if God hears about their evil deeds.

58, 11b-14: In asking for God's help against the enemies this stanza is similar to the stanza of vv. 2-6.

them by your power, and bring them down, O Lord our shield! |
13 By the sin of their mouths and the word of their lips let them
be caught in their arrogance, for the lies they have told under
14 oath. | Consume them in wrath; consume, till they are no more;
that men may know that God is the ruler of Jacob, yes, to the
ends of the earth.
15 Each evening they return, they snarl like dogs and prowl
16 about the city; | they wander about as scavengers; if they are
17 not filled, they howl. | But I will sing of your strength and revel
at dawn in your kindness; you have been my stronghold, my
18 refuge in the day of distress. | O my strength! your praise will
I sing; for you, O God, are my stronghold, my gracious God!

PSALM 59 (60)

Prayer after Defeat in Battle

1 For the leader; according to "The Lily of. . . ." A *miktam* of
2 David (for teaching) | when he fought against Aram Naharaim
and Aram Soba; and Joab, coming back, killed twelve thousand
Edomites in the "valley of salt."
3 O God, you have rejected us and broken our defenses; you
4 have been angry; rally us! | You have rocked the country and
5 split it open; repair the cracks in it, for it is tottering. | You
have made your people feel hardships; you have given us
6 stupefying wine. | You have raised for those who fear you a
7 banner to which they may flee out of bowshot | that your loved
ones may escape; help us by your right hand, and answer us!
8 God promised in his sanctuary: "Exultantly I will apportion
9 Sichem, and measure off the valley of Socchoth. | Mine is
Galaad, and mine Manasse; Ephraim is the helmet for my head;

58, 14: See Ps 57, 11 n on vengeance.

58, 15-18: This refrain, in which the psalmist compares the enemies to dogs, resembles the refrain of vv. 7-11a.

59, 3-14: This national psalm laments a national military defeat. The people remind God of His promise of giving them Chanaan and victory over their neighbors (vv. 8-10). The title (vv. 1-2) refers to David's war in the North and his sending Joab to defeat the Edomites in the South (2 Sm 8). However, it is disputed if the title is the back ground for this psalm. One objection is that v. 9 speaks of only Ephraim and Juda, which seems to indicate a period after David and after the schism of the two kingdoms.

59, 3-7: The enemy did not destroy the army completely.

59, 8: *I will apportion . . . and measure off:* this is probably a summary statement of God's promise of Chanaan to His people (Gn 13, 14ff). V. 9 continues this idea.

59, 9: *Galaad . . . Manasse:* the land east of the Jordan River. *Ephraim . . . Juda:* the land west of the Jordan River. Ephraim is

10 Juda my scepter; | Moab shall serve as my washbowl; upon
Edom I will set my shoe; I will triumph over Philistia."
11 Who will bring me into the fortified city? Who will lead me
12 into Edom? | Have not you, O God, rejected us, so that you go
13 not forth, O God, with our armies? | Give us aid against the
14 foe, for worthless is the help of men. | Under God we shall do
valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

PSALM 60 (61)

Prayer of the King in Exile

1 For the leader; with stringed instruments. Of David.
2.3 Hear, O God, my cry; listen to my prayer! | From the earth's
end I call to you as my heart grows faint. You will set me high
4 upon a rock; you will give me rest, | for you are my refuge,
5 a tower of strength against the enemy. | Oh, that I might lodge
in your tent forever, take refuge in the shelter of your wings!
6 You indeed, O God, have accepted my vows; you granted
7 me the heritage of those who fear your name. | Add to the days
8 of the king's life; let his years be many generations; | let him
sit enthroned before God forever; bid kindness and faithfulness
9 preserve him. | So will I sing the praises of your name forever,
fulfilling my vows day by day.

PSALM 61 (62)

Trust in God Alone

1 For the leader; *'al Idithun.* A psalm of David.
2 Only in God is my soul at rest; from him comes my salva-
3 tion. | He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold;
4 I shall not be disturbed at all. | How long will you set upon a
man and all together beat him down as though he were a sag-

called the "helmet of my head" because it was the largest tribe and army in the North and Juda was the leader ("scepter").

59, 10: Moab is compared to a slave who washes his master's feet. Probably the "washbowl" refers to Moab's western border on the Dead Sea. Edom may be compared to a footstool, the sign of a conquered nation.

59, 11: *The fortified city:* probably the capital of Edom.

60, 2-9: The psalm is the lament of an exiled individual for the king (v. 7) which would probably date the psalm, or at least vv. 7-8, from the time of the monarchy.

60, 3: *From the earth's end:* this may refer to the extremity of Palestine or to the nether world.

60, 9: The vow is that he will praise God daily.

61, 2-13: The psalm is the lament of an individual who trusts in God as the rewarder of the just.

61, 2-3: This refrain is repeated in vv. 6-7.

5 ging fence, a battered wall? | Truly from my place on high
they plan to dislodge me; they delight in lies; they bless with
their mouths, but inwardly they curse.
6 Only in God be at rest, my soul, for from him comes my
7 hope. | He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold;
8 I shall not be disturbed. | With God is my safety and my glory,
9 he is the rock of my strength; my refuge is in God. | Trust in
him at all times, O my people! Pour out your hearts before him.
God is our refuge!
10 Only a breath are mortal men; an illusion are men of rank;
in a balance they prove lighter, all together, than a breath. |
11 Trust not in extortion; in plunder take no empty pride; though
12 wealth abound, set not your heart upon it. | One thing God
said; these two things which I heard: that power belongs to
13 God, | and yours, O Lord, is kindness; and that you render to
everyone according to his deeds.

PSALM 62 (63)

Ardent Longing for God

1 A psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Juda.
2 O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh
pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and
3 without water. | Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
4 to see your power and your glory, | for your kindness is a
greater good than life; my lips shall glorify you.
5 Thus will I bless you while I live; lifting up my hands, I
6 will call upon your name. | As with the riches of a banquet
shall my soul be satisfied, and with exultant lips my mouth
7 shall praise you. | I will remember you upon my couch, and
8 through the night-watches I will meditate on you: | that you
are my help, and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy. |
9 My soul clings fast to you; your right hand upholds me.

61, 5: *From my place on high they plan to dislodge me:* socially.

61, 9: The poet, now addressing the people, exhorts them to learn from his experience.

61, 12: *One thing . . . two things:* this is a characteristic poetic device of numerical progression found in the Wisdom books.

61, 13: See 2 Tm 4, 14: "The Lord will render to him according to his deeds."

62, 2-12: The psalm is the lament of an individual longing to be in God's sanctuary (vv. 2-9). He is confident of victory over his enemies (vv. 10-11). It is doubtful whether these enemies refer to David's enemies of 2 Sm 15—17 in the title (v. 1).

62, 8: *In the shadow of your wings:* a probable reference to the wings of the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies.

10 But they shall be destroyed who seek my life, they shall go
11 into the depths of the earth; | they shall be delivered over to
12 the sword, and shall be the prey of jackals. | The king, however, shall rejoice in God; everyone who swears by him shall glory, but the mouths of those who speak falsely shall be stopped.

PSALM 63 (64)

Treacherous Conspirators Punished by God

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 Hear, O God, my voice in my lament; from the dread enemy
3 preserve my life. | Shelter me against the council of malefactors,
4 against the tumult of evildoers, | who sharpen their tongues
5 like swords, who aim like arrows their bitter words, | shooting from ambush at the innocent man, suddenly shooting at him
6 without fear. | They resolve on their wicked plan; they conspire to set snares, saying, "Who will see us?"
7 They devise a wicked scheme, and conceal the scheme they have devised; deep are the thoughts of each heart.
8 But God shoots his arrows at them; suddenly they are
9 struck. | He brings them down by their own tongues, all who
10 see them nod their heads. | And all men fear and proclaim the
11 work of God, and ponder what he has done. | The just man is glad in the Lord and takes refuge in him; in him glory all the upright of heart.

PSALM 64 (65)

Thanksgiving for God's Blessings

1 For the leader. A psalm of David. A song.
2 To you we owe our hymn of praise, O God, in Sion; to you
3 must vows be fulfilled, you who hear prayers. | To you all

62, 10: *They shall be destroyed:* see Jer 17, 3 n on the notion of revenge. *The depths of the earth:* the nether world.

62, 11: *Prey of jackals:* a lack of proper burial as an abominable disgrace is common in the Bible.

62, 12: *The king:* this may indicate either that the poet of the psalm is the king, or the poet finishes his prayer by a reference to the king.

63, 2-11: The psalm is an individual lament against foes (vv. 5-7) whom God will punish (vv. 8-11).

63, 7ff: The Hebrew text is poorly preserved.

63, 9: *Nod their heads:* a common biblical gesture of ridicule.

64, 2-14: This is a national thanksgiving song of praise for rain which assured a bountiful harvest.

64, 2: *Vows:* the people usually vowed sacrifices to be carried out in the temple when God answered their requests.

64, 3: *All flesh:* all men.

flesh must come because of wicked deeds. We are overcome by
our sins; it is you who pardon them. | Happy the man you
choose, and bring to dwell in your courts. May we be filled
with the good things of your house, the holy things of your
temple!
With awe-inspiring deeds of justice you answer us, O God
our savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the
distant seas. | You set the mountains in place by your power,
you who are girt with might; | you still the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves and the tumult of the peoples. |
And the dwellers at the earth's ends are in fear at your marvels;
the farthest east and west you make resound with joy.
You have visited the land and watered it; greatly have you
enriched it. God's watercourses are filled; you have prepared
the grain. | Thus have you prepared the land: drenching its
furrows, breaking up its clods, softening it with showers,
blessing its yield. | You have crowned the year with your
bounty, and your paths overflow with a rich harvest; | the
untilled meadows overflow with it, and rejoicing clothes the
hills. | The fields are garmented with flocks and the valleys
blanketed with grain. They shout and sing for joy.

PSALM 65 (66)

Praise of God, Israel's Deliverer

For the leader. A psalm; a song.
Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth, | sing praise to the

64, 4: Probably the people thought the drought that afflicted them was caused by their sins.

64, 5: *Your courts . . . your house . . . your temple:* three synonyms.

64, 6-9: The poet praises God by alluding to His creation of the world.

64, 12: *Your paths overflow with a rich harvest:* the Hebrew says literally: "Your wagon-wheel tracks drip with oil." The verse evokes the poetic picture of Yahweh voyaging through the land.

64, 13-14: *Rejoicing clothes the hills . . . they shout and sing for joy:* in a characteristic figure, nature is made to reflect the feelings of man.

65, 1-20: The psalm may have been originally two psalms. Part one (vv. 1-12) is a song of praise (vv. 1-7) thanking God for the avoidance of an unidentified national disaster (vv. 8-12). Experts differ on the date of this psalm according to their surmise of the event alluded to here. Perhaps it is best to abandon any hope of dating the psalm since the indications are too vague. Part two (vv. 13-20) is a thanksgiving song of an individual fulfilling his vows at the temple (vv. 13-15) and narrating how God heard his prayer (vv. 16-20).

65, 1: *All you on earth:* several psalms sing the universal acknowledgment of God's rule.

glory of his name; proclaim his glorious praise. | Say to God,
"How tremendous are your deeds! for your great strength your
enemies fawn upon you. | Let all on earth worship and sing
praise to you, sing praise to your name!"
Come and see the works of God, his tremendous deeds among
men. | He has changed the sea into dry land; through the river
they passed on foot; therefore let us rejoice in him. | He rules
by his might forever; his eyes watch the nations; rebels may not
exalt themselves. | Bless our God, you peoples, loudly sound his
praise; | he has given life to our souls, and has not let our feet
slip. | For you have tested us, O God! You have tried us as
silver is tried by fire; | you have brought us into a snare; you
laid a heavy burden on our backs. | You let men ride over our
heads; we went through fire and water, but you have led us out
to refreshment.
I will bring holocausts to your house; to you I will fulfill the
vows | which my lips uttered and my words promised in my
distress. | Holocausts of fatlings I will offer you, with burnt
offerings of rams; I will sacrifice oxen and goats. | Hear now,
all you who fear God, while I declare what he has done for
me. | When I appealed to him in words, praise was on the tip
of my tongue. | Were I to cherish wickedness in my heart, the
Lord would not hear; | but God has heard; he has hearkened
to the sound of my prayer. | Blessed be God who refused me
not my prayer or his kindness!

PSALM 66 (67)

Harvest Prayer that All Men May Worship God

For the leader; with stringed instruments. A psalm; a song.
May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face
shine upon us. | So may your way be known upon earth; among
all nations, your salvation. | May the peoples praise you, O
God; may all the peoples praise you!
May the nations be glad and exult because you rule the
peoples in equity; the nations on the earth you guide. | May

65, 6: *Sea . . . river:* God is praised by an allusion to the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan River.

65, 9: *He has given life to our souls:* this is fittingly accommodated in the Easter liturgy.

65, 17: The sense is: I hardly began making my request when I found myself thanking God for having heard my petition.

66, 2-8: This is a thanksgiving hymn for a plentiful harvest (v. 7) which prompts the poet to pray that the Gentiles recognize the wondrous deed and honor Yahweh.

66, 2: See the similarity in the priestly prayer of Nm 6, 24f.

66, 4: The refrain is repeated in v. 6.

the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you!
7 The earth has yielded its fruits; God, our God, has blessed
8 us. | May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear him!

PSALM 67 (68)

God's Triumphal Procession

1 For the leader. A psalm of David; a song.
2 God arises; his enemies are scattered, and those who hate
3 him flee before him. | As smoke is driven away, so are they driven; as wax melts before the fire, so the wicked perish before
4 God. | But the just rejoice and exult before God; they are glad and rejoice.
5 Sing to God, chant praise to his name, extol him who rides upon the clouds, whose name is the Lord; exult before him. |
6 The father of orphans and the defender of widows is God in
7 his holy dwelling. | God gives a home to the forsaken; he leads forth prisoners to prosperity; only rebels remain in the parched land.
8 O God, when you went forth at the head of your people,
9 when you marched through the wilderness, | the earth quaked; it rained from heaven at the presence of God, at the presence
10 of God, the God of Israel. [This is Sinai.] | A bountiful rain you showered down, O God, upon your inheritance; you re-
11 stored the land when it languished; | your flock settled in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided it for the needy.
12 The Lord gives the word; women bear the glad tidings, a
13 vast army: | "Kings and their hosts are fleeing, fleeing, and the

67, 2-36: All scholars acknowledge that this is one of the most difficult yet one of the most pulsating psalms in the Psalter. The poor condition of the Hebrew text has contributed to the variety of opinions on its date, ranging from the thirteenth to the second century B.C. Nevertheless, it is clearly a triumphant thanksgiving hymn of praise in which we should not expect close logical unity.

67, 2: This is patently modeled on Moses' prayer when the Ark of the Covenant began its trip into the desert (Nm 10, 35).

67, 3-4: The just defeat the wicked.

67, 5-7: God is praised.

67, 5: *Extol him who rides upon the clouds:* although the Hebrew text is obscure, it is clear that "the Rider of the Clouds" as an epithet of Yahweh in several biblical texts derives ultimately from the Chanaanites before the time of Moses.

67, 8-15: A glowing description of Yahweh leading His people from Egypt to Sinai (vv. 8-11) and conquering the Promised Land of Chanaan (vv. 12-15).

67, 12: A vast army of women herald the word of Yahweh.

household shall divide the spoils. | Though you rested among
the sheepfolds, the wings of the dove shone with silver, and her
pinions with a golden hue. | While the Almighty dispersed the
kings there, snow fell on Salmon."
High the mountains of Basan; rugged the mountains of
Basan. | Why look you jealously, you rugged mountains, at the
mountain God has chosen for his throne, where the Lord him-
self will dwell forever? | The chariots of God are myriad, thou-
sands on thousands; the Lord advances from Sinai to the sanc-
tuary. | You have ascended on high, taken captives, received
men as gifts—even rebels; the Lord God enters his dwelling.
Blessed day by day be the Lord, who bears our burdens;
God, who is our salvation. | God is a saving God for us; the
Lord, my Lord, controls the passageways of death. | Surely
God crushes the heads of his enemies, the hairy crowns of
those who stalk about in their guilt. | The Lord said: "I will
fetch them back from Basan; I will fetch them back from the
depths of the sea, | so that you will bathe your feet in blood;
the tongues of your dogs will have their share of your enemies."
They view your progress, O God, the progress of my God,
my King, into the sanctuary; | the singers lead, the minstrels
follow, in their midst the maidens play on timbrels. | In your
choirs bless God; bless the Lord, you of Israel's wellspring! |
There is Benjamin, the youngest, leading them; the princes of
Juda in a body, the princes of Zabulon, the princes of Nephthali.
Show forth, O God, your power, the power, O God, with

67, 14-15: The obscure Hebrew text does not help in identifying the battle.

67, 14: *Though you rested among the sheepfolds:* though you were unable by yourselves, God saw to it that your armies ("dove"?) were victorious.

67, 15: *Snow fell:* probably means that the enemy fell as numerous as snowflakes. *Salmon:* probably a mountain near Basan, east of the Sea of Galilee (v. 16).

67, 16-19: God chose Jerusalem ("mountain," v. 17).

67, 19: *On high:* probably Jerusalem. *Captives:* the Chanaanites. *Received men as gifts:* as tokens of victory. Paul (Eph 4, 8) quotes this phrase according to the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew) thus: "He gave to men" and applies it to Christ giving charismatic gifts to the first Christians after His ascension into heaven. The liturgy of the Ascension frequently uses this expression, "He led captivity captive" to mean: He triumphed victoriously.

67, 20-24: God's victories.

67, 25-28: This is a rare biblical description of an actual ceremonial procession.

67, 29-32: The poet petitions Yahweh to extend His rule over the Gentiles.

30 which you took our part; | for your temple in Jerusalem let
31 the kings bring you gifts. | Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds,
the herd of strong bulls and the bullocks, the nations. Let them
prostrate themselves with bars of silver; scatter the peoples who
32 delight in war. | Let nobles come from Egypt; let Ethiopia
extend its hands to God.
33 You kingdoms of the earth, sing to God, chant praise to the
34 Lord | who rides on the heights of the ancient heavens. Behold,
35 his voice resounds, the voice of power: | "Confess the power
of God!" Over Israel is his majesty; his power is in the skies. |
36 Awesome in his sanctuary is God, the God of Israel; he gives
power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!

PSALM 68 (69)

A Cry of Anguish in Great Distress

1 For the leader; according to "Lilies." Of David.
2.3 Save me, O God, for the waters threaten my life; | I am
sunk in the abysmal swamp where there is no foothold; I have
4 reached the watery depths; the flood overwhelms me. | I am
wearied with calling, my throat is parched; my eyes have failed
5 with looking for my God. | Those outnumber the hairs of my
head who hate me without cause. Too many for my strength
are they who wrongfully are my enemies. Must I restore what I
did not steal?
6 O God, you know my folly, and my faults are not hid from
7 you. | Let not those who wait for you be put to shame through
me, O Lord, God of hosts. Let not those who seek you blush
8 for me, O God of Israel, | since for your sake I bear insult, and
9 shame covers my face. | I have become an outcast to my

67, 31: *The wild beast of the reeds:* probably Egypt. *Bars of silver:* gifts or tribute.

67, 33-36: The whole world praises Yahweh.

67, 34: *Who rides:* see v. 5 n.

68, 2-37: Similar to Ps 21 this is an individual lament of a suffering just man. The psalm is not speaking literally and directly of the Messia, but of the unknown sufferer at the time of the psalm itself. However, the psalm is Messianic in this sense that this historical person is a type of Christ, *the* innocent sufferer pre-eminently. The psalm is often dated as pre-exilic but hardly Davidic, e.g., the temple (v. 10) came after David's time.

The Lenten liturgy applies this psalm to the Suffering Innocent Christ.

68, 2-13: The wretched condition of the poet (vv. 2-5) is unjustly inflicted upon him (vv. 6-13).

68, 2: *Waters:* a frequent figure for sorrows in the psalms.

68, 5: *Who hates me without cause:* Jn 15, 25 sees this phrase fulfilled in Christ.

10 brothers, a stranger to my mother's sons, | because zeal for your
house consumes me, and the insults of those who blaspheme
11 you fall upon me. | I humbled myself with fasting, and this
12 was made a reproach to me. | I made sackcloth my garment,
13 and I became a byword for them. | They who sit at the gate
gossip about me, and drunkards make me the butt of their songs.
14 But I pray to you, O Lord, for the time of your favor, O
God! In your great kindness answer me with your constant
15 help. | Rescue me out of the mire; may I not sink! may I be
16 rescued from my foes, and from the watery depths. | Let not
the flood-waters overwhelm me, nor the abyss swallow me up,
17 nor the pit close its mouth over me. | Answer me, O Lord, for
bounteous is your kindness; in your great mercy turn toward
18 me. | Hide not your face from your servant; in my distress,
19 make haste to answer me. | Come and ransom my life; as an
20 answer for my enemies, redeem me. | You know my reproach,
my shame and my ignominy; before you are all my foes. |
21 Insult has broken my heart, and I am weak, I looked for sym-
pathy, but there was none; for comforters, and I found none. |
22 Rather they put gall in my food, and in my thirst they gave me
vinegar to drink.
23 Let their own table be a snare before them, and a net for their
24 friends. | Let their eyes grow dim so that they cannot see, and
25 keep their backs always feeble. | Pour out your wrath upon
26 them; let the fury of your anger overtake them. | Let their
encampment become desolate; in their tents let there be no one
27 to dwell. | For they kept after him whom you smote, and added
28 to the pain of him you wounded. | Heap guilt upon their guilt,
29 and let them not attain to your reward. | May they be erased
from the book of the living, and not be recorded with the just!
30 But I am afflicted and in pain; let your saving help, O God,

68, 10: *Zeal for your house consumes me:* Jn 2, 17 interprets this phrase as fulfilled in Christ.

68, 10b: Rom 15, 3 quotes this to exemplify Christ's unselfishness.

68, 14-22: The poet seeks God's assistance.

68, 22: *Gall:* probably the juice of a bitter plant. Jn 19, 28-30 sees Christ fulfilling this text in the vinegar offered to Him on the cross.

68, 23-29: This is a stereotyped sketch of the unjust according to temporal retribution: prosperity of the wicked-misfortune-death-extinction of his posterity. On the psalmist's vengeance, see Jer 12, 3 n.

68, 23: Let them and their friends trip over their tablecloth ("table") which was spread on the ground.

68, 26: Peter (Acts 1, 20) applies this verse to Judas.

68, 29: God is pictured with a book which contains the names of all living persons. When they die their names are "erased."

68, 30-35: The psalmist will thank God through a sacrifice of praise.

31 protect me. | I will praise the name of God in song, and I will
32 glorify him with thanksgiving; | this will please the Lord more
33 than oxen or bullocks with horns and divided hooves: | "See,
you lowly ones, and be glad; you who seek God, may your
34 hearts be merry! | For the Lord hears the poor, and his own
35 who are in bonds he spurns not. | Let the heavens and the
earth praise him, the seas and whatever moves in them!"
36 For God will save Sion and rebuild the cities of Juda. They
37 shall dwell in the land and own it, | and the descendants of
his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall
inhabit it.

PSALM 69 (70)

Prayer for Divine Help

1 For the leader; of David. For remembrance.
2 Deign, O God, to rescue me; O Lord, make haste to help me.
3 | Let them be put to shame and confounded who seek my life.
4 Let them be turned back in disgrace who desire my ruin. | Let
5 them retire in their shame who say to me, "Aha, aha!" | But
may all who seek you exult and be glad in you, and may those
6 who love your salvation say ever, "God be glorified!" | But I
am afflicted and poor; O God, hasten to me! You are my help
and my deliverer; O Lord, hold not back!

PSALM 70 (71)

1 ***Humble Prayer in Time of Old Age*** In you, O Lord, I
2 take refuge; let me never be put to shame. | In your justice
rescue me, and deliver me; incline your ear to me, and save
3 me. | Be my rock of refuge, a stronghold to give me safety,
4 for you are my rock and my fortress. | O my God, rescue me
from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the criminal
5 and the violent. | For you are my hope, O Lord; my trust,
6 O God, from my youth. | On you I depend from birth; from

68, 31f: Sincere praise and thanksgiving will please God more than animal sacrifice.

68, 33-34: These verses refer to the poor folk spirituality (see So 2, 3 n).

68, 36f: The couplet was added in hope of the end of the Babylonian exile. See Ps 50, 20-21 n.

69, 2-6: The psalm is almost the same as Ps 39, 14-18.

70, 1-24: This psalm is a lament of an old psalmist (v. 9) afflicted by foes but he trusts in God. Many verses resemble other psalms. The descriptions in the psalm are too vague to identify the exact complaints and their background.

The Liturgy very appropriately uses this psalm in the Mass for a good death.

my mother's womb you are my strength; constant has been my
7 hope in you. | A portent am I to many, but you are my strong
8 refuge! | My mouth shall be filled with your praise, with your
glory day by day.
9 Cast me not off in my old age; as my strength fails, forsake
10 me not, | for my enemies speak against me, and they who keep
11 watch against my life take counsel together. | They say, "God
has forsaken him; pursue and seize him, for there is no one to
12 rescue him." | O God, be not far from me; my God, make
13 haste to help me. | Let them be put to shame and consumed
who attack my life; let them be wrapped in ignominy and
14 disgrace who seek to harm me. | But I will always hope and
15 praise you ever more and more. | My mouth shall declare your
justice, day by day your salvation, though I know not their
16 extent. | I will treat of the mighty works of the Lord; O God,
I will tell of your singular justice.
17 O God, you have taught me from my youth, and till the
18 present I proclaim your wondrous deeds; | and now that I am
old and gray, O God, forsake me not till I proclaim your
19 strength to every generation that is to come. | Your power and
your justice, O God, reach to heaven. You have done great
20 things; O God, who is like you? | Though you have made me
feel many bitter afflictions, you will again revive me; from the
depths of the earth you will once more raise me.
21 Renew your benefits toward me, and comfort me over and
22 over. | So will I give you thanks with music on the lyre, for your
faithfulness, O my God! I will sing your praises with the harp,
23 O Holy One of Israel! | My lips shall shout for joy as I sing
24 your praises; my soul also, which you have redeemed, | and my
tongue day by day shall discourse on your justice. How shamed
and how disgraced are those who sought to harm me!

PSALM 71 (72)

The Kingdom of the Messia

1 Of Solomon.
Of God, with your judgment endow the king, and with your
2 justice, the king's son; | he shall govern your people with jus-

70, 20: *From the depths of the earth:* from the clutches of death.
71, 1-20: Although this psalm is never quoted in the New Testament there is general agreement, following upon a long Jewish and Christian tradition, that it is a royal Messianic psalm; but there is wide disagreement on its date and in what sense it is Messianic. A solid modern opinion regards this psalm as originally written, perhaps in pre-exilic times, for an unknown historical Davidic king upon the occasion of his accession to the throne or his birthday or some solemn

3 tice and your afflicted ones with judgment. | The mountains
4 shall yield peace for the people, and the hills justice. | He shall
defend the afflicted among the people, save the children of the
poor, and crush the oppressor.
5 May he endure as long as the sun, and like the moon through
6 all generations. | He shall be like rain coming down on the
7 meadow, like showers watering the earth. | Justice shall flower
in his days, and profound peace, till the moon be no more.
8 May he rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends
9 of the earth. | His foes shall bow before him, and his enemies
10 shall lick the dust. | The kings of Tharsis and the Isles shall
offer gifts; the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring tribute. |
11 All kings shall pay him homage, all nations shall serve him.
12 For he shall rescue the poor man when he cries out, and the
13 afflicted when he has no one to help him. | He shall have pity
for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save. |
14 From fraud and violence he shall redeem them, and precious
shall their blood be in his sight.
15 May he live to be given the gold of Arabia, and to be prayed
16 for continually; day by day shall they bless him. | May there
be an abundance of grain upon the earth; on the tops of the
mountains the crops shall rustle like Lebanon; the city dwellers
17 shall flourish like the verdure of the fields. | May his name be

festival. The historical king is described as representative of the Davidic dynasty which accounts for the exaggerated royal qualities. Later, perhaps in postexilic times, when the psalm may have been expanded, it was reread in the direct hope of a personal Messia.

The Advent liturgy uses this psalm to mean Christ.

71, 1: *Of Solomon:* scholars do not generally regard this title as indicative of the date of the psalm. *The king . . . the king's son:* this expression signifies the same person. *Justice:* notice the prevalence of this explicitly stated Messianic quality in this psalm (vv. 2, 3, 7).

71, 5: The perpetuity of the dynasty is proclaimed here and in v. 17.

71, 8-11: The world-wide rule of the king.

71, 8: The interpretation of this verse varies according to how this psalm is understood to be Messianic. In accordance with the explanation of Messianic given in 71, 1-20 n, this verse speaks of the universal kingdom to be governed by God through the Davidic dynasty, and later by the Messia. It took Christ in the New Testament to explain this universal rule as a spiritual one.

71, 10: *Tharsis and the Isles:* the West. *Arabia and Saba:* the South. There is a similar idea in Is 60, 5-9.

71, 14: *Blood:* life.

71, 15-17: The king will rule prosperously.

71, 15: *May he live to be given the gold of Arabia:* a wish resulting from ruling the poor kindly in vv. 12-14.

71, 17: See 71, 5 n. *In him . . . be blessed:* either, "Because of him all men shall receive God's blessings," or, "All men shall use his name

blessed forever; as long as the sun his name shall remain. In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.

* * *

18 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does
19 wondrous deeds. | And blessed forever be his glorious name; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen.
20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

PSALM 72 (73)
The False Happiness of the Wicked

1 A psalm of Asaph.
How good God is to the upright; the Lord, to those who are
2 clean of heart! | But, as for me, I almost lost my balance; my
3 feet all but slipped, | because I was envious of the arrogant when I saw them prosper though they were wicked.
4 For they are in no pain; their bodies are sound and sleek; |
5 they are free from the burdens of mortals, and are not afflicted
6 like the rest of men. | So pride adorns them as a necklace; as
7 a robe violence enwraps them. | Out of their crassness comes
8 iniquity; their fancies overflow their hearts. | They scoff and
9 speak evil; outrage from on high they threaten. | They set their mouthings in place of heaven, and their pronouncements roam
10 the earth: | "So he brings his people to such a pass that they
11 have not even water!" | And they say, "How does God know?"
12 And, "Is there any knowledge in the Most High?" | Such,

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in giving a blessing, saying 'May you be as blessed as this king.' " See Gn 48, 20.

71, 18-19: A later editor added this doxology to the psalm to end the Second Book of Psalms.

71, 20: Apparently this verse was added at a time when no more psalms followed and the collection of psalms ended here.

72, 1-28: This wisdom psalm on why the good suffer and the wicked prosper is usually dated as postexilic. The sacred writer answers in the traditional mold that God will punish the wicked and reward the just. The Mass of several confessors uses this psalm to show God's protection of the apparent weak and mocked man.

72, 1: *Clean of heart:* see Ps 23, 4 n.

72, 2-3: The poet was tempted to doubt the justice of God (v. 2) when he saw the wicked prosper (v. 3).

72, 4-12: The wicked blaspheme with apparent impunity.

72, 9: *They set their mouthings in place of heaven:* they talk as if they were God Almighty.

72, 10: The general sense of the poorly preserved Hebrew text is a mockery of God's justice.

72, 11: Does God really know or care about what we are doing?

then, are the wicked; always carefree, while they increase in wealth.
13 Is it but in vain I have kept my heart clean and washed my
14 hands as an innocent man? | For I suffer affliction day after day
15 and chastisement with each new dawn. | Had I thought, "I will speak as they do," I had been false to the fellowship of your
16 children. | Though I tried to understand this it seemed to me
17 too difficult, | till I entered the sanctuary of God and considered their final destiny.
18 You set them, indeed, on a slippery road; you hurl them
19 down to ruin. | How suddenly they are made desolate! They are
20 completely wasted away amid horrors. | As though they were the dream of one who had awakened, O Lord, so will you, when
21 you arise, set at nought these phantoms. | Because my heart
22 was embittered and my soul was pierced, | I was stupid and understood not; I was like a brute beast in your presence.
23 Yet with you I shall always be; you have hold of my right
24 hand; | with your counsel you guide me, and in the end you will
25 receive me in glory. | Whom else have I in heaven? And when I
26 am with you, the earth delights me not. | Though my flesh and my heart waste away, God is the rock of my heart and my
27 portion forever. | For indeed, they who withdraw from you
28 perish; you destroy everyone who is unfaithful to you. | But for me, to be near God is my good; to make the Lord God my refuge. I shall declare all your works in the gates of the daughter of Sion.

PSALM 73 (74)

Prayer in Time of National Calamity

1 A *maskil* of Asaph.
Why, O God, have you cast us off forever? Why does your anger

72, 13-16: The suffering of the just man.

72, 17: *Till I entered the sanctuary of God:* this may mean till I entered the temple in person or till I entered the temple in spirit.

72, 20: An obscure verse that has been diversely translated. *When you arise:* in judgment you will show that the apparent success of the wicked was only a bad dream.

72, 24: *In the end:* when you judge the wicked on earth. *You will receive me in glory:* you will reinstate me in happiness. The Hebrew is easily understood to speak of the present, not of the afterlife.

72, 25: The Hebrew does not refer to the future life but affirms belief in the one true God, and alludes to a denial of pagan heavenly gods.

72, 28: *Daughter of Sion:* Jerusalem.

73, 1-23: The better opinion understands this psalm as a public lament on the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. rather than on the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C.

2 smolder against the sheep of your pasture? | Remember your
flock which you built up of old, the tribe you redeemed as your
3 inheritance, Mount Sion, where you took up your abode. | Turn
your steps toward the utter ruins; toward all the damage the
4 enemy has done in the sanctuary. | Your foes roar triumphantly
5 in your shrine; they have set up their tokens of victory. | They
6 are like men coming up with axes to a clump of trees; | and
now with chisel and hammer they hack at all its paneling. |
7 They set your sanctuary on fire; the place where your name
8 abides they have razed and profaned. | They said in their hearts,
"Let us destroy them; burn all the shrines of God in the land."
9 | Deeds on our behalf we do not see; there is no prophet now,
10 and no one of us knows how long. . . . | How long, O God,
shall the foe blaspheme? Shall the enemy revile your name
11 forever? | Why draw back your hand and keep your right hand
idle beneath your cloak?

12 Yet, O God, my king from of old, you doer of saving deeds
13 on earth, | you stirred up the sea by your might; you smashed
14 the heads of the dragons in the waters. | You crushed the heads
15 of Leviathan, and made food of him for the dolphins. | You
released the springs and torrents; you brought dry land out of
16 the primeval waters. | Yours is the day, and yours the night;
17 you fashioned the moon and the sun. | You fixed all the limits
18 of the land; summer and winter you made. | Remember how
the enemy has blasphemed you, O Lord, and how a stupid
19 people has reviled your name. | Give not to the vulture the life
of your dove; be not forever unmindful of the lives of your
20 afflicted ones. | Look to your covenant, for the hiding places in
21 the land and the plains are full of violence. | May the humble
not retire in confusion; may the afflicted and the poor praise
22 your name. | Arise, O God; defend your cause; remember how
23 the fool blasphemes you day after day. | Be not unmindful of
the voice of your foes; the uproar of those who rebel against
you is unceasing.

73, 5: The Hebrew text is unclear.

73, 9: *No prophet now:* Jeremia and Ezechiel may not have been at Jerusalem, or they may have been dead.

73, 12-17: It is customary in psalms of lament for the mood to switch abruptly as here.

73, 13-15: The creation by God is described as a victory over primeval chaos in the imagery of a Chanaanite myth. Compare Jb 7, 12 n.

73, 19: *Dove:* this symbol for Israel is also used in Ps 67, 14.

73, 20: *Hiding places:* every place is violated, even the caves.

PSALM 74 (75)

God the Just Judge of the Wicked

1 For the leader. (Do not destroy!) A psalm of Asaph; a song.
2 We give you thanks, O God, we give thanks, and we invoke
your name; we declare your wondrous deeds.
3 "When I seize the appointed time, I will judge with equity. |
4 Though the earth and all who dwell in it quake, I have set firm
5 its pillars. | I say to the boastful: Boast not; and to the wicked:
6 Lift not up your horns." | Lift not up your horns against the
7 Most High; speak not haughtily against the Rock. | For neither
from the east nor from the west, neither from the desert nor
8 from the mountains— | but God is the judge; one he brings
9 low; another he lifts up. | For a cup is in the Lord's hand, full
of spiced and foaming wine, And he pours out from it; even to
the dregs they shall drain it; all the wicked of the earth shall
drink.
10 But as for me, I will exult forever; I will sing praise to the
11 God of Jacob. | And I will break off the horns of all the
wicked; the horns of the just shall be lifted up.

PSALM 75 (76)

Thanksgiving for the Overthrow of Israel's Foes

1 For the leader; a psalm with stringed instruments. A song of
Asaph.
2 God is renowned in Juda; in Israel great is his name. |
3.4 In Salem is his abode; his dwelling is in Sion. | There he
shattered the flashing shafts of the bow, shield and sword, and
weapons of war.

74, 1: *Do not destroy!:* see Ps 56, 1 n.

74, 2-11: There is no clue to a definite historical situation. The general meaning is; God will judge the world. Many commentators understand this judgment as the one at the end of the world, but vv. 10-11 seem to speak of a judgment at the time of the psalmist. It is difficult to classify this psalm.

74, 2: The people praise Yahweh.

74, 3-5: The psalmist poetically has God predict the fall of the haughty.

74, 6-9: The poet develops the idea of vv. 3-5.

74, 5: *Horns:* a common biblical figure for power.

74, 6: *Most High . . . Rock:* frequent synonyms for Yahweh.

74, 7: *From the mountains—:* the sense demands the addition: "does justice come."

74, 9: Yahweh makes sinners drink from the "cup" of his anger.

75, 2-13: The psalm is a thanksgiving song of Sion which, according to many commentators, refers to Jerusalem's victory over Sennacherib in 701 B.C.

75, 3: *Salem . . . Sion:* synonyms for Jerusalem.

5 Resplendent you came, O powerful One, from the everlasting
6 mountains. | Despoiled are the stouthearted; they sleep their
7 sleep; the hands of all the mighty ones have failed. | At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, chariots and steeds lay stilled.
8 You are terrible; and who can withstand you for the fury
9 of your anger? | From heaven you made your intervention
10 heard; the earth feared and was silent | when God arose for judgment, to save all the afflicted of the earth.
11 For wrathful Edom shall glorify you, and the survivors of
12 Hamath shall keep your festivals. | Make vows to the Lord, your God, and fulfill them; let all round about him bring gifts
13 to the terrible Lord | who checks the pride of princes, who is terrible to the kings of the earth.

PSALM 76 (77)
Lament and Comfort in Time of Distress

1 For the leader; *'al Idithun.* A psalm of Asaph.
2.3 Aloud to God I cry; aloud to God, to hear me; | on the day of my distress I seek the Lord. By night my hands are stretched
4 out without flagging; my soul refuses comfort. | When I remem-
5 ber God, I moan; when I ponder, my spirit grows faint. | You keep my eyes watchful; I am troubled and cannot speak. |
6.7 I consider the days of old; the years long past | I remember. In the night I meditate in my heart; I ponder, and my spirit broods:
8 | "Will the Lord reject forever and nevermore be favorable? |
9 Will his kindness utterly cease, his promise fail for all genera-
10 tions? | Has God forgotten pity? Does he in anger withhold
11 his compassion?" | And I say, "This is my sorrow, that the
12 right hand of the Most High is changed." | I remember the
13 deeds of the Lord; yes, I remember your wonders of old. | And I meditate on your works; your exploits I ponder.
14 O God, your way is holy; what great god is there like our

75, 5: *The everlasting mountains:* from the ancient Jebusite city of Jerusalem.

75, 6: *They sleep their sleep:* of death. In the Bible "sleep" if often used for death.

75, 11: *Edom . . . Hamath:* another probable translation is: "For the wrath of man must be turned to your praise, and the survivors of fury shall keep your festivals."

76, 2-21: The psalm is an individual's lament that God is forgetting the nation (vv. 2-13). Usually psalms of lament are about something personal. In vv. 14-21 the psalm continues as a hymn of praise on God's past deeds in contrast with the present sad situation. There is no clue for the historical circumstances of the lament.

76, 11: The "sorrow" is that God no longer protects the people.

76, 14-21: This section is usually understood to refer to the crossing of the Red Sea in Ex 15.

15 God? | You are the God who works wonders; among the
16 peoples you have made known your power. | With your strong
arm you redeemed your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. |
17 The waters saw you, O God; the waters saw you and shuddered;
18 the very depths were troubled. | The clouds poured down water;
the skies gave forth their voice; your arrows also sped abroad. |
19 Your thunder resounded in the whirlwind; your lightning
20 illumined the world; the earth quivered and quaked. | Through
the sea was your way, and your path through the deep waters,
21 though your footsteps were not seen. | You led your people
like a flock under the care of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM 77 (78)
God's Goodness despite Israel's Ingratitude

1 A *maskil* of Asaph.
Hearken, my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the
2 words of my mouth. | I will open my mouth in a parable, I
3 will utter mysteries from of old. | What we have heard and
4 know, and what our fathers have declared to us, | we will not
hide from their sons; we will declare to the generation to come
the glorious deeds of the Lord and his strength and the wonders
5 that he wrought. | He set it up as a decree in Jacob, and
established it as a law in Israel, that what he commanded our
6 fathers they should make known to their sons; | so that the
generation to come might know, their sons yet to be born, that
7 they too may rise and declare to their sons | that they should
put their hope in God, and not forget the deeds of God but
8 keep his commands, | and not be like their fathers, a generation
wayward and rebellious, a generation that kept not its heart
steadfast nor its spirit faithful toward God.
9 The sons of Ephraim, ordered ranks of bowmen, retreated in
10 the day of battle. | They kept not the covenant with God,
11 according to his law they would not walk; | and they forgot
12 his deeds, the wonders he had shown them. | Before their

77, 1-72: As Pss 104, 105, this is a wisdom historical psalm (see Introduction) telling the people not to imitate the disobedience of their ancestors in history. Scholars tend to date the psalm from the tenth century to the destruction of the temple in 587 B.C.

This psalm is used in the Masses of the third and fourth Sundays of Lent.

77, 1-8: It is important to pass on to future generations what God has taught.

77, 2: Mt 13, 35 applies this verse to Christ teaching in parables.

77, 9-11: Ephraim (the northern kingdom) disobeyed God.

77, 12-16: The ancestors in the Exodus were disloyal to God.

fathers he did wondrous things, in the land of Egypt, in the
13 plain of Soan. | He cleft the sea and brought them through,
14 and he made the waters stand as in a mound. | He led them
15 with a cloud by day, and all night with a glow of fire. | He
cleft the rocks in the desert and gave them water in copious
16 floods. | He made streams flow from the crag and brought the
waters forth in rivers.
17 But they sinned yet more against him, rebelling against the
18 Most High in the wasteland, | and they tempted God in their
19 hearts by demanding the food they craved. | Yes, they spoke
against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the desert? |
20 For when he struck the rock, waters gushed forth, and the
streams overflowed; can he also give bread and provide meat
21 for his people?" | Then the Lord heard and was enraged; and
fire blazed up against Jacob, and anger rose against Israel, |
22.23 because they believed not God nor trusted in his help. | Yet
he commanded the skies above and the doors of heaven he
24 opened; | he rained manna upon them for food and gave them
25 heavenly bread. | The bread of the mighty was eaten by men;
26 even a surfeit of provisions he sent them. | He stirred up the
east wind in the heavens, and by his power brought on the south
27 wind. | And he rained meat upon them like dust, and, like the
28 sand of the sea, winged fowl, | which fell in the midst of their
29 camp round about their tents. | So they ate and were wholly
30 surfeited; he had brought them what they craved. | They had
not given over their craving, and their food was still in their
31 mouths, | when the anger of God rose against them and slew
their best men, and laid low the young men of Israel.
32 Yet for all this they sinned still more and believed not in
33 his wonders. | Therefore he quickly ended their days and their
34 years with sudden destruction. | While he slew them they
35 sought him and inquired after God again, | remembering that
God was their Rock and the Most High God, their redeemer. |
36 But they flattered him with their mouths and lied to him with
37 their tongues, | though their hearts were not steadfast toward
38 him, nor were they faithful to his covenant. | Yet he, being
merciful, forgave their sin and destroyed them not; often he
39 turned back his anger and let none of his wrath be roused. | He
remembered that they were flesh, a passing breath that returns
not.

77, 12: *Soan:* the capital of Egypt in the Delta at the time of the Exodus.

77, 17-31: The journey through the wilderness.

77, 25: *The mighty:* the angels.

77, 32-39: The punishment for empty external worship to God.

40 How often they rebelled against him in the desert and grieved
41 him in the wilderness! | Again and again they tempted God
42 and provoked the Holy One of Israel. | They remembered not
43 his hand nor the day he delivered them from the foe, | when
he wrought his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the plain of
44 Soan, | and changed into blood their streams—their running
45 water, so that they could not drink; | he sent among them flies
46 that devoured them and frogs that destroyed them. | He gave
their harvest to the caterpillar, the fruits of their toil to the
47 locust. | He killed their vines with hail and their sycamores
48 with frost. | He gave over to the hail their beasts and their
49 flocks to the lightning. | He loosed against them his fierce anger,
wrath and fury and strife, a detachment of messengers of
50 doom. | When he measured the course of his anger he spared
them not from death, and delivered their beasts to the plague.
51 | He smote every first-born in Egypt, the first fruits of manhood
52 in the tents of Ham; | but his people he led forth like sheep
53 and guided them like a herd in the desert. | He led them on
secure and unafraid, while he covered their enemies with the
54 sea. | And he brought them to his holy land, to the mountains
55 his right hand had won. | And he drove out nations before
them; he distributed their inheritance by lot, and settled the
tribes of Israel in their tents.
56 But they tempted and rebelled against God the Most High,
57 and kept not his decrees. | They turned back and were faithless
58 like their fathers; they recoiled like a treacherous bow. | They
angered him with their high places and with their idols roused
59 his jealousy. | God heard and was enraged and utterly rejected
60 Israel. | And he forsook the tabernacle in Silo, the tent where
61 he dwelt among men. | And he surrendered his strength into
62 captivity, his glory into the hands of the foe. | He abandoned
his people to the sword and was enraged against his inheritance.
63 | Fire consumed their young men, and their maidens were not
64 betrothed. | Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows
sang no dirges.
65 Then the Lord awoke, as wakes from sleep a champion
66 overcome with wine; | and he put his foes to flight and cast
67 them into everlasting disgrace. | And he rejected the tent of
68 Joseph, and the tribe of Ephraim he chose not; | but he chose

77, 40-55: The ancestors did not profit from seeing God's power at work in the plagues of Egypt (vv. 40-51), and during the journey to Chanaan (vv. 52-55).

77, 50: *Measured:* surveyed with a glance.

77, 56-72: God rejected the northern kingdom (vv. 56-64), and chose the southern kingdom of Juda (vv. 65-72).

69 the tribe of Juda, Mount Sion which he loved. | And he built
his shrine like heaven, like the earth which he founded forever.
70 | And he chose David, his servant, and took him from the
71 sheepfolds; | from following the ewes he brought him to shep-
72 herd Jacob, his people, and Israel, his inheritance. | And he
tended them with a sincere heart, and with skillful hands he
guided them.

PSALM 78 (79)

The Destruction of Jerusalem and Its Temple

1 A psalm of Asaph.
O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they
have defiled your holy temple, they have laid Jerusalem in ruins.
2 | They have given the corpses of your servants as food to the
birds of heaven, the flesh of your faithful ones to the beasts of
3 the earth. | They have poured out their blood like water round
4 about Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury them. | We have
become the reproach of our neighbors, the scorn and derision of
those around us.
5 O Lord, how long? Will you be angry forever? Will your
6 jealousy burn like fire? | Pour out your wrath upon the nations
that acknowledge you not, upon the kingdoms that call not
7 upon your name; | for they have devoured Jacob and laid
8 waste his dwelling. | Remember not against us the iniquities of
the past; may your compassion quickly come to us, for we are
brought very low.
9 Help us, O God our savior, because of the glory of your
name; deliver us and pardon our sins for your name's sake. |
10 Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Let it be
known among the nations in our sight that you avenge the
shedding of your servants' blood.
11 Let the prisoners' sighing come before you; with your great
12 power free those doomed to death. | And repay our neighbors
sevenfold into their bosoms the disgrace they have inflicted on
13 you, O Lord. | Then we, your people and the sheep of your
pasture, will give thanks to you forever; through all generations
we will declare your praise.

78, 1-13: A national lament, more especially on the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., than in Ps 73, 1-23 n.
The liturgy applies this psalm to the Mass of the Martyrs.

78, 2-3: *The flesh . . . to bury them:* even though these four lines are freely quoted in 1 Mc 7, 17, it does not follow that the psalm was written in the second century Machabean era.

78, 12: *Sevenfold:* completely. *Into their bosoms:* in their own person.

PSALM 79 (80)

Prayer for the Restoration of the Lord's Vineyard

1 For the leader; according to "Lilies." *Eduth.* A psalm of Asaph.
2 O shepherd of Israel, hearken, O guide of the flock of Joseph!
3 From your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth | before
Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasse. Rouse your power, and come
4 to save us. | O Lord of hosts, restore us; if your face shine upon
us, then we shall be safe.
5 O Lord of hosts, how long will you burn with anger while
6 your people pray? | You have fed them with the bread of tears
7 and given them tears to drink in ample measure. | You have
left us to be fought over by our neighbors, and our enemies
8 mock us. | O Lord of hosts, restore us; if your face shine upon
us, then we shall be safe.
9 A vine from Egypt you transplanted; you drove away the
10 nations and planted it. | You cleared the ground for it, and it
11 took root and filled the land. | The mountains were hidden in
12 its shadow; by its branches, the cedars of God. | It put forth its
foliage to the Sea, its shoots as far as the River.
13 Why have you broken down its walls, so that every passer-by
14 plucks its fruit, | the boar from the forest lays it waste, and the
15 beasts of the field feed upon it? | Once again, O Lord of hosts,
16 look down from heaven, and see; take care of this vine, | and
protect what your right hand has planted [the son of man
whom you yourself made strong].
17 Let those who would burn it with fire or cut it down perish
18 before you at your rebuke. | May your help be with the man

79, 2-20: This is a vague national lament variously attributed to the fall of Samaria in 722-21 B.C., or to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The Masses in Advent use this psalm perhaps for the spiritual restoration of the Church.

79, 2-7: The main tribes (v. 3) of the northern kingdom were oppressed.

79, 2: *Your throne upon the cherubim:* a reference to the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

79, 4: This refrain is repeated in vv. 8 and 20.

79, 9-12: God led the people from Egypt to the Promised Land, which is here ideally extended from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea.

79, 9: *Vine:* Israel is often compared to a vine in prophetic literature. See Mt 21, 33.

79, 16: *The son of man:* this line is presumably an accidental duplication of the similar line in v. 18.

79, 17: *Let those who would burn it:* this line, as here translated, is a reconstruction; but the two halves of the Hebrew line do not belong together.

79, 18: Perhaps the safest opinion is to consider "the man of your right hand" and "the son of man" as synonyms for the nation.

of your right hand, with the son of man whom you yourself
19 made strong. | Then we will no more withdraw from you; give
20 us new life, and we will call upon your name. | O Lord of hosts, restore us; if your face shine upon us, then we shall be safe.

PSALM 80 (81)

Festive Song with an Admonition to Fidelity

1 For the leader; "upon the *gittith.*" Of Asaph.
2 Sing joyfully to God our strength; acclaim the God of Jacob.
3 | Take up a melody, and sound the timbrel, the pleasant harp
4 and the lyre. | Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full
5 moon, on our solemn feast; | for it is a statute in Israel, an
6 ordinance of the God of Jacob, | who made it a decree for Joseph when he came forth from the land of Egypt.
7 An unfamiliar speech I hear: | "I relieved his shoulder of
8 the burden; his hands were freed from the basket. | In distress you called, and I rescued you; unseen, I answered you in
9 thunder; I tested you at the waters of Meriba. | Hear, my people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, will you not hear me?
10 | There shall be no strange god among you nor shall you wor-
11 ship any alien god. | I, the Lord, am your God who led you forth from the land of Egypt; open wide your mouth, and I will fill it.
12 "But my people heard not my voice, and Israel obeyed me
13 not; | so I gave them up to the hardness of their hearts; they
14 walked according to their own counsels. | If only my people
15 would hear me, and Israel walk in my ways, | quickly would I humble their enemies; against their foes I would turn my hand.
16 | Those who hated the Lord would seek to flatter me, but their
17 fate would endure forever, | while Israel I would feed with the best of wheat, and with honey from the rock I would fill them."

80, 2-17: The psalm is often considered a hymn. At least, vv. 2-6a were used at some liturgical feast, notably that of tabernacles. Vv. 6b-17 deal with God's covenant at Sinai and the apostasy of the nation. Since the temple liturgy is presupposed, the psalm dates most probably from before the destruction of the temple in 587 B.C., or perhaps after its reconstruction in 515 B.C.

The liturgy uses this psalm on the feast of Corpus Christi.

80, 4: *Blow the trumpet:* to assemble the people for the feast of tabernacles, which was celebrated at the time of the "full moon."

80, 6: *An unfamiliar speech I hear:* the psalmist poetically "hears" the voice of a prophet uttering an oracle. This is why some label this psalm "prophetic liturgy."

80, 7: *From the basket:* of bricks. An allusion to the people's servitude in Egypt, Ex 1, 14.

80, 8: References to Ex 2, 23-24; Nm 20, 13.

PSALM 81 (82)

Judgment against Wicked Judges

1 A psalm of Asaph.
God arises in the divine assembly; he judges in the midst of
the gods.
2 "How long will you judge unjustly and favor the cause of the
3 wicked? | Defend the lowly and the fatherless; render justice to
4 the afflicted and the destitute. | Rescue the lowly and the poor;
from the hand of the wicked deliver them.
5 "They know not, neither do they understand; they go about
6 in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. | I
7 said: You are gods, all of you sons of the Most High; | yet
8 like men you shall die, and fall like any prince." | Rise, O God;
judge the earth, for yours are all the nations.

PSALM 82 (83)

Prayer against a Hostile Alliance

1 A song; a psalm of Asaph.
2 O God, do not remain unmoved; be not silent, O God, and
3 be not still! | For behold, your enemies raise a tumult, and they
4 who hate you lift up their heads. | Against your people they
plot craftily; they conspire against those whom you protect. |
5 They say, "Come, let us destroy their nation; let the name of
Israel be remembered no more!"
6 Yes, they consult together with one mind, and against you
7 they are allied: | the tents of Edom and the Ismaelites, Moab

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81, 1-8: This psalm may be loosely classified as a wisdom psalm. It laments unfair judges. The psalm could fit many periods in the history of the people.

81, 1: The inspired psalmist presents God through a literary allusion to the Chanaanite assembly of the gods without compromising his conviction that Yahweh is the only true God. *The gods:* the godlike judges, as in Ps 57, 2 n.

81, 2-7: The psalmist has God rebuke (vv. 2-4) and sentence the unfair judges (vv. 5-7).

81, 5: *All the foundations of the earth are shaken:* the bases of law are shaken.

81, 6: *I said: You are gods:* see v. 1 n for "gods." Compare Jesus' use of this verse 6 in Jn 10, 34.

81, 8: The psalmist invites God to judge the universe.

82, 2-19: This is a public lament against a league of enemy nations. Since opinions on a time when these nations (vv. 7-9) combined against God's people vary from Saul to the Machabees, some conclude that at an unknown historical period these nations were selected to represent the hostile Gentiles.

82, 7: *Agarenes:* a desert tribe east of Moab.

8 and the Agarenes, | Gebal and Ammon and Amalec, Philistia
9 with the inhabitants of Tyre; | the Assyrians, too, are leagued
with them; they are the forces of the sons of Lot.
10 Deal with them as with Madian; as with Sisara and Jabin
11 at the torrent Cison, | who perished at Endor; they became
12 dung on the ground. | Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeb;
13 all their chiefs like Zebee and Salmana, | who said, "Let us
14 take for ourselves the dwelling place of God." | O my God,
make them like leaves in a whirlwind, like chaff before the
15 wind. | As a fire raging in a forest, as a flame setting the
16 mountains ablaze, | so pursue them with your tempest and rout
17 them with your storm. | Darken their faces with disgrace, that
18 men may seek your name, O Lord. | Let them be shamed and
19 put to rout forever; let them be confounded and perish, | know-
ing that you alone are the Lord, the Most High over all the
earth.

PSALM 83 (84)

Desire for the Sanctuary

1 For the leader; "upon the *gittith.*" A psalm of the sons of Core.
2.3 How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! | My
soul yearns and pines for the courts of the Lord. My heart and
4 my flesh cry out for the living God. | Even the sparrow finds a
home, and the swallow a nest in which she puts her young—
your altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God!
5 Happy they who dwell in your house! continually they praise
6 you. | Happy the men whose strength you are! their hearts are
7 set upon the pilgrimage: | when they pass through the arid
valley, they make a spring of it; the early rain clothes it with

82, 8: *Gebal:* a mountain region south of the Dead Sea. *Tyre:* there is no proof that Tyre ever actively fought Israel.

82, 10-13: A reference to Jgs 4—7.

82, 14: The liturgy uses this verse and v. 19 in the Gradual of the Mass for the pagans.

83, 2-13: This psalm is usually (not with certainty) dated as pre-exilic, when the temple was still standing. The psalm is ordinarily considered to belong to the group of pilgrim songs of Pss 119—133. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

83, 4: Since in Yahweh's Providence, even "the sparrow finds a home," all the more so will He welcome His pilgrims in His sanctuary ("altars").

83, 6f: The Hebrew text of these two verses is obscure in several places.

83, 7: Although the valley is arid, in the eyes of the pilgrims, it may as well be watered since they are confident that their prayers for rain will be heard on the coming feast day.

8 generous growth. | They go from strength to strength; they
shall see the God of gods in Sion.
9 O Lord of hosts, hear my prayer; hearken, O God of Jacob!
10 | O God, behold our shield, and look upon the face of your
11 anointed. | I had rather one day in your courts than a thousand
elsewhere; I had rather lie at the threshold of the house of my
12 God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. | For a sun and a
shield is the Lord God; grace and glory he bestows; the Lord
13 withholds no good thing from those who walk in sincerity. | O
Lord of hosts, happy the men who trust in you!

PSALM 84 (85)

Prayer for Complete Restoration

1 For the leader. A psalm of the sons of Core.
2 You have favored, O Lord, your land; you have restored the
3 well-being of Jacob. | You have forgiven the guilt of your
4 people; you have covered all their sins. | You have withdrawn
all your wrath; you have revoked your burning anger.
5 Restore us, O God our savior, and abandon your displeasure
6 against us. | Will you be ever angry with us, prolonging your
7 anger to all generations? | Will you not instead give us life;
8 and shall not your people rejoice in you? | Show us, O Lord,
your kindness, and grant us your salvation.
9 I will hear what God proclaims; the Lord—for he proclaims
peace to his people, and to his faithful ones, and to those who
10 put in him their hope. | Near indeed is his salvation to those
11 who fear him, glory dwelling in our land. | Kindness and truth
12 shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. | Truth shall spring
out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven. |
13 The Lord himself will give his benefits; our land shall yield its

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83, 8: *From strength to strength:* they grow stronger.

83, 10: *Shield . . . your anointed:* two synonyms for the king.

84, 2-14: This apparent national lament is usually assigned to the period soon after the exile in 538 B.C. At that time the trouble about the restoration of the nation began, as the prophets Aggai and Zacharia testify.

84, 2-4: Thanksgiving for blessings of deliverance at the end of the exile.

84, 5-8: A petition of relief from present difficulties.

84, 9-14: The inspired psalmist enshrines his message of future happiness in the words of a prophet's oracle. Hence some label this psalm "prophetic liturgy." See Ps 80, 6 n.

84, 10: *Glory:* Yahweh's glory was considered to be pre-eminently in His temple.

84, 11-14: A poetic renewal of spiritual and material well-being.

84, 13: The liturgy uses this verse in the Communion verse of the first Sunday of Advent to indicate the blessings brought by the Messia.

14 increase. | Justice shall walk before him, and salvation, along
the way of his steps.

PSALM 85 (86)
Prayer in Time of Distress

1 A prayer of David.
Incline your ear, O Lord; answer me, for I am afflicted and
2 poor. | Keep my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant
3 who trusts in you. | You are my God; have pity on me, O Lord,
4 for to you I call all the day. | Gladden the soul of your servant,
5 for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; | for you, O Lord, are
good and forgiving, abounding in kindness to all who call upon
6 you. | Hearken, O Lord, to my prayer and attend to the sound
7 of my pleading. | In the day of my distress I call upon you,
for you will answer me.
8 There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, and there are
9 no works like yours. | All the nations you have made shall
come and worship you, O Lord, and glorify your name. |
10 For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds; you alone are
God.
11 Teach me, O Lord, your way that I may walk in your truth;
12 direct my heart that it may fear your name. | I will give thanks
to you, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify
13 your name forever. | Great has been your kindness toward me;
14 you have rescued me from the depths of the nether world. | O
God, the haughty have risen up against me, and the company
of fierce men seeks my life, nor do they set you before their
15 eyes. | But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow
16 to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity. | Turn toward
me, and have pity on me; give your strength to your servant,
17 and save the son of your handmaid. | Grant me a proof of your
favor, that my enemies may see, to their confusion, that you,
O Lord, have helped and comforted me.

85, 1-17: The majority view this lament as that of an individual rather than of the nation. It is a string of loose quotations from the psalms and from the Old Testament. The psalm is often dated long after the exile, but there are hardly any certain clues to date it. The poet asks for help against foes; he was on the threshold of death (v. 13).

85, 1-7: The psalmist is confident in his request for help precisely because God abounds in "kindness" (v. 5).

85, 8-10: A hymn of praise and hope for the conversion of the Gentiles.

85, 11-17: A prayer for guidance.

PSALM 86 (87)

Sion the Home of All Nations

1 A psalm of the sons of Core. A song.
2 His foundation upon the holy mountains | the Lord loves:
3 the gates of Sion, more than any dwelling of Jacob. | Glorious
4 things are said of you, O city of God! | I tell of Egypt and Babylon among those that know the Lord; of Philistia, Tyre,
5 Ethiopia: "This man was born there." | And of Sion they shall say: "One and all were born in her; and he who has established
6 her is the Most High Lord." | They shall note, when the peoples
7 are enrolled: "This man was born there." | And all shall sing, in their festive dance: "My home is within you."

PSALM 87 (88)

Lament and Prayer in Affliction

1 A song; a psalm of the sons of Core. For the leader; according to *Mahalath.* For singing; a *maskil* of Heman the Ezrahite.
2 O Lord, my God, by day I cry out; at night I clamor in your
3 presence. | Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to
4 my call for help, | for my soul is surfeited with troubles and
5 my life draws near to the nether world. | I am numbered with those who go down into the pit; I am a man without strength. |
6 My couch is among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave,

86, 1-7: A song of Sion (see Ps 45, 2-12 n) praising Jerusalem as the city chosen by God for His temple (vv. 1-2), and as the future spiritual birthplace of all the nations on earth. The mention of "Babylon" (v. 4) is the only clue to a date, i.e., during or after the sixth century exile.

86, 1-2: God chose Jerusalem ("the gates of Sion") which He built on "holy mountains."

86, 3: The "glorious things" said of Jerusalem are in vv. 4-5.

86, 4-5: When I (the psalmist speaks) mention Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia, my friends say, "This man was born there" (v. 4). But of Jerusalem ("Sion") they shall say that everyone is born there spiritually.

86, 5: *And of Sion they shall say:* most Greek manuscripts read "'Mother Sion,' they shall say." Gal 4, 26 ("Jerusalem which is our mother") probably refers to this Greek reading.

86, 6-7: The poet is not speaking of the future but of the present. God assigns a nation to each person to be born (v. 6), but happy is the one to whom Yahweh assigns Jerusalem ("My home is within you").

The liturgy fittingly uses this psalm in the feasts of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

87, 2-19: "The saddest psalm in the whole Psalter" is the best description of an individual's lament, who is friendless and close to death (vv. 4-5). Differing from other lamenting psalms, it expresses no confidence in God's help.

87, 6: *My couch:* the meaning of the Hebrew is obscure. *Who lie in the grave:* most likely it refers to deprivation of a proper burial.

whom you remember no longer and who are cut off from your
7 care. | You have plunged me into the bottom of the pit, into
8 the dark abyss. | Upon me your wrath lies heavy, and with all
9 your billows you overwhelm me. | You have taken my friends
away from me; you have made me an abomination to them;
I am imprisoned, and I cannot escape.
10 My eyes have grown dim through affliction; daily I call upon
11 you, O Lord; to you I stretch out my hands. | Will you work
wonders for the dead? Will the shades arise to give you thanks?
12 | Do they declare your kindness in the grave, your faithfulness
13 among those who have perished? | Are your wonders made
known in the darkness, or your justice in the land of oblivion?
14 But I, O Lord, cry out to you; with my morning prayer I
15 wait upon you. | Why, O Lord, do you reject me; why hide
16 from me your face? | I am afflicted and in agony from my
17 youth; I am dazed with the burden of your dread. | Your
18 furies have swept over me; your terrors have cut me off. | They
encompass me like water all the day; on all sides they close in
19 upon me. | Companion and neighbor you have taken away from
me; my only friend is darkness.

PSALM 88 (89)

Prayer for the Fulfillment of God's Promises to David

1 A *maskil* of Ethan the Ezrahite.
2 The favors of the Lord I will sing forever; through all genera-
3 tions my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. | For you
have said, "My kindness is established forever"; in heaven you
4 have confirmed your faithfulness: | "I have made a covenant
with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: |
5 Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne
for all generations."

87, 10: *I stretch out my hands:* in prayer.

87, 11-13: See Ps 6, 6 n: the dead cannot praise God any longer in the temple liturgy.

87, 11: *The shades:* of the dead.

88, 2-53: Some scholars believe that this psalm was composed from other psalms. Following many other scholars, we shall treat it as a unity. Most experts seem to agree that the psalm was written at a time when the Davidic dynasty was threatened with extinction (see vv. 39-46), in other words, at a time when it looked like God would not keep His promise (2 Sm 7) of an enduring Davidic dynasty. Therefore the date of the composition of the psalm varies from the time of Solomon to just before or during the sixth century exile.

88, 2-5: A reference to 2 Sm 7: God promises David a perpetual dynasty.

6 The heavens proclaim your wonders, O Lord, and your faith-
7 fulness, in the assembly of the holy ones. | For who in the skies
can rank with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the sons
8 of God? | God is terrible in the council of the holy ones; he is
9 great and awesome beyond all round about him. | O Lord,
God of hosts, who is like you? Mighty are you, O Lord, and
your faithfulness surrounds you.
10 You rule over the surging of the sea; you still the swelling
11 of its waves. | You have crushed Rahab with a mortal blow;
12 with your strong arm you have scattered your enemies. | Yours
are the heavens, and yours is the earth; the world and its full-
13 ness you have founded; | north and south you created; Thabor
14 and Hermon rejoice at your name. | Yours is a mighty arm;
15 strong is your hand, exalted your right hand. | Justice and
judgment are the foundation of your throne; kindness and truth
go before you.
16 Happy the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of
17 your countenance, O Lord, they walk. | At your name they
rejoice all the day, and through your justice they are exalted. |
18 For you are the splendor of their strength, and by your favor
19 our horn is exalted. | For to the Lord belongs our shield, and
to the Holy One of Israel, our king.
20 Once you spoke in a vision, and to your faithful ones you
said: "Of a stripling I have made a champion; over the people
21 I have set a youth. | I have found David, my servant; with my
22 holy oil I have anointed him, | that my hand may be always
with him, and that my arm may make him strong.
23 "No enemy shall deceive him, nor shall the wicked afflict
24 him. | But I will crush his foes before him and those who hate
25 him I will smite. | My faithfulness and my kindness shall be
with him, and through my name shall his horn be exalted. |
26 I will set his hand upon the sea, his right hand upon the rivers.

88, 6-19: Praise of the almighty God with an implied teaching that God is powerful enough to keep His promise to David.

88, 6-7: *The holy ones . . . the sons of God:* the angels.

88, 11: *Rahab:* often in the Bible this mythological figure symbolizes primeval chaos conquered by Yahweh. In non-figurative language: God created the world.

88, 16: *The joyful shout:* the people shouted during the public liturgy in complete harmony with their temperament.

88, 18: *Horn:* a common figure for strength, as in v. 25.

88, 20-38: A resumption of the perpetual promise to David (vv. 2-5), but now analyzed in greater detail.

88, 20: *Your faithful ones:* Nathan and David.

88, 26: *The Sea:* the Mediterranean to the west. *The rivers:* the Euphrates and its tributaries in the east.

27 "He shall say of me, 'You are my father, my God, the Rock,
28 my savior.' | And I will make him the first-born, highest of the
29 kings of the earth. | Forever I will maintain my kindness toward
30 him, and my covenant with him stands firm. | I will make his
posterity endure forever and his throne as the days of heaven.
31 "If his sons forsake my law and walk not according to my
32 ordinances, | if they violate my statutes and keep not my
33 commands, | I will punish their crime with a rod and their
34 guilt with stripes. | Yet my kindness I will not take from him,
nor will I belie my faithfulness.
35 "I will not violate my covenant; the promise of my lips I
36 will not alter. | Once, by my holiness, have I sworn; I will not
37 be false to David. | His posterity shall continue forever, and
38 his throne shall be like the sun before me; | like the moon,
which remains forever—a faithful witness in the sky."
39 Yet you have rejected and spurned and been enraged at your
40 anointed. | You have renounced the covenant with your servant,
41 and defiled his crown in the dust. | You have broken down
42 all his walls; you have laid his strongholds in ruins. | All who
pass by the way have plundered him; he is made the reproach
of his neighbors.
43 You have exalted the right hands of his foes, you have
44 gladdened all his enemies. | You have turned back his sharp
45 sword and have not sustained him in battle. | You have
deprived him of his luster and hurled his throne to the ground.
46 | You have shortened the days of his youth; you have covered
him with shame.
47 How long, O Lord? Will you hide yourself forever? Will
48 your wrath burn like fire? | Remember how short my life is;
49 how frail you created all the children of men! | What man
shall live, and not see death, but deliver himself from the power
50 of the nether world? | Where are your ancient favors, O Lord,
51 which you pledged to David by your faithfulness? | Remember,
O Lord, the insults to your servants: I bear in my bosom all the
52 accusations of the nations | with which your enemies have
reviled, O Lord, with which they have reviled your anointed
on his way!

* * *

53 Blessed be the Lord forever. Amen, and amen!

88, 39-46: The continuance of David's dynasty is threatened.
88, 45: The Hebrew text of this verse is somewhat obscure.
88, 47-52: A prayer for the people and for the king.
88, 53: This doxology is not part of the psalm, but was added to end the Third Book of Psalms. In several Masses of Our Lord the liturgy applies the doxology directly to Him.

PSALM 89 (90)

God's Eternity and Man's Frailty

1 A prayer of Moses, the man of God.
O Lord, you have been our refuge through all generations.
2 | Before the mountains were begotten and the earth and the
world were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting
3 you are God. | You turn man back to dust, saying, "Return,
4 O children of men." | For a thousand years in your sight are
as yesterday, now that it is past, or as a watch of the night. |
5 You make an end of them in their sleep; the next morning they
6 are like the changing grass, | which at dawn springs up anew,
but by evening wilts and fades.
7 Truly we are consumed by your anger, and by your wrath
8 we are put to rout. | You have kept our iniquities before you,
9 our hidden sins in the light of your scrutiny. | All our days have
passed away in your indignation; we have spent our years like
10 a sigh. | Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty, if we are
strong, and most of them are fruitless toil, for they pass quickly
11 and we drift away. | Who knows the fury of your anger or
your indignation toward those who should fear you?
12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain
13 wisdom of heart. | Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on
14 your servants! | Fill us at daybreak with your kindness, that we
15 may shout for joy and gladness all our days. | Make us glad,
for the days when you afflicted us, for the years when we saw
16 evil. | Let your work be seen by your servants and your glory by
17 their children; | and may the gracious care of the Lord our
God be ours; prosper the work of our hands for us! [Prosper
the work of our hands!]

89, 1-17: The psalm is a lament on man's misery. Though there is no clear evidence of its date, many experts believe it is postexilic. Another contention is its unity; it is debated whether this is one psalm or two independent sections joined together.

89, 1-6: The contrast between the everlasting God and mortal man.

89, 3: It takes but one word from God to return man to dust.

89, 4: See a similar saying in 2 Pt 3, 8.

89, 5: The Hebrew text is not clear.

89, 7-11: The psalmist comments that man's brief life span is miserable because God punishes him for his sins.

89, 12-17: A plea for God's favor.

89, 15: *For the days when:* either, "as a recompense for the days when," or, "for as many days as."

89, 17: *Prosper the work of our hands:* the second occurrence of these words is probably an accidental repetition.

PSALM 90 (91)

Security under God's Protection You who dwell in the
1 shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Al-
2 mighty,-| say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my
3 God, in whom I trust." | For he will rescue you from the snare
4 of the fowler, from the destroying pestilence. | With his pinions
he will cover you, and under his wings you shall take refuge;
5 his faithfulness is a buckler and a shield. | You shall not fear
6 the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day; | not the
pestilence that roams in darkness nor the devastating plague at
7 noon. | Though a thousand fall at your side, ten thousand at
8 your right side, near you it shall not come. | Rather with your
eyes shall you behold and see the requital of the wicked, |
9 because you have the Lord for your refuge; you have made the
10 Most High your stronghold. | No evil shall befall you, nor
11 shall affliction come near your tent, | for to his angels he has
given command about you, that they guard you in all your
12 ways. | Upon their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash
13 your foot against a stone. | You shall tread upon the asp and
the viper; you shall trample down the lion and the dragon.
14 Because he clings to me, I will deliver him; I will set him on
15 high because he acknowledges my name. | He shall call upon
me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in distress; I will
16 deliver him and glorify him; | with length of days I will gratify
him and will show him my salvation.

90, 1-16: This is a wisdom psalm with the traditional teaching that the trusting just man's reward is preservation from miseries and from a premature death. Those who attempt its dating place it during or after the sixth century exile.

The Mass of the first Sunday of Lent uses this entire psalm.

90, 1-13: The poet expresses trust in God through a sequence of metaphors.

90, 5: *Arrow:* a metaphor for the evil deeds (as in Ps 10, 2) and words (as in Ps 63, 4) of the wicked.

90, 6: *The devastating plague at noon:* it was a popular belief that the sun's rays, especially at noon, were associated with diseases.

90, 7: *It:* the plague. According to the prevalent idea of retribution, since the plague is an instrument of God's anger, only the wicked would be struck down.

90, 11-12: Satan quotes these verses in the temptation scene of Christ (Mt 4, 6, and Lk 4, 10f). See "The Merchant of Venice," Act 1, Scene 3.

90, 11: *Angels:* the doctrine of the angels developed in postexilic times.

90, 12: *Dash your foot:* tripping or stumbling are frequent psalmodic metaphors for human troubles and sorrows.

90, 13: Metaphors expressing God's help to the just wayfarer in life.

PSALM 91 (92)

Praise of God's Just Government of Mankind

1 A psalm; a song for the Sabbath day.
2 It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your
3 name, Most High, | to proclaim your kindness at dawn and
4 your faithfulness throughout the night, | with ten-stringed in-
5 strument and lyre, with melody upon the harp. | For you make me glad, O Lord, by your deeds; at the works of your hands I rejoice.
6 How great are your works, O Lord! How very deep are your
7 thoughts! | A senseless man knows not, nor does a fool under-
8 stand this. | Though the wicked flourish like grass and all
9 evildoers thrive, | they are destined for eternal destruction; while you, O Lord, are the Most High forever.
10 For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies
11 shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered. | You have exalted my horn like the wild bull's; you have anointed me with rich
12 oil. | And my eye has looked down upon my foes, and my ears have heard of the fall of my wicked adversaries.
13 The just man shall flourish like the palm tree, like a cedar of
14 Lebanon shall he grow. | They that are planted in the house of
15 the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. | They shall bear fruit even in old age; vigorous and sturdy shall they be,
16 | declaring how just is the Lord, my Rock, in whom there is no wrong.

PSALM 92 (93)

1 ***The Glory of the Lord's Kingdom*** The Lord is king, in splendor robed; robed is the Lord and girt about with strength;

91, 2-16: A hymn of thanksgiving by an individual for victory over his enemies. According to the traditional wisdom ideas, God will destroy the wicked after their short-lived success.

The liturgy fittingly applies the psalm to the consecration of a church.

91, 11: *Horn . . . oil:* two symbols of strength.

91, 14: The just frequent the temple so much that they are figuratively "planted" there.

92, 1-5: A psalm of Yahweh-King (vv. 1-2) who is victorious over the rebellious forces of evil (vv. 3-4), and whose "decrees" must therefore be obeyed (v. 5). There are a group of hymns known as Psalms of Yahweh-King or Psalms on the Kingship of Yahweh, namely: psalms 46; 92; 94—99; 149. In content matter, they praise Yahweh who will come to rule the world. In structure, they follow the hymns: an introductory invitation to praise Yahweh, different modes of praising Him, e.g., king, world ruler, savior, creator, a concluding invitation to praise God. These psalms are postexilic.

A modern non-Catholic opinion calls this group of psalms, which

2 and he has made the world firm, not to be moved. | Your throne
stands firm from of old; from everlasting you are, O Lord.
3 The floods lift up, O Lord, the floods lift up their voice; the
4 floods lift up their tumult. | More powerful than the roar of
many waters, more powerful than the breakers of the sea—
powerful on high is the Lord.
5 Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed; holiness befits your
house, O Lord, for length of days.

PSALM 93 (94)

1 ***A Warning to Israel's Oppressors*** God of vengeance,
2 Lord, God of vengeance, show yourself. | Rise up, judge of the
3 earth; render their deserts to the proud. | How long, O Lord,
4 shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked glory, | mouthing
insolent speeches, boasting, all the evildoers?
5 Your people, O Lord, they trample down, your inheritance
6 they afflict. | Widow and stranger they slay, the fatherless

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vary in number from four to about thirty-five, Enthronement of Yahweh Psalms. These men claim that in the enthronement psalms the Jews celebrated a liturgical New Year Feast of Yahweh's Enthronement. According to this opinion the festival ritual included a dramatic reading of creation, a pantomime of Yahweh battling His enemies, a procession, probably with the Ark of the Covenant, and Yahweh's annual renewal enthronement as King of His people through the reigning Davidic king. This ritual was supposedly an imitation of the Babylonian annual enthronement feast of Marduk. That feast apparently influenced the Jews through the Chanaanites. Other non-Catholic scholars have severely hindered this opinion from gaining wide acceptance with such arguments as: 1) There is not one clear biblical text mentioning such a New Year Feast of Yahweh's Enthronement. 2) The following resemblances in this group of psalms with the Babylonian feast are too general to prove that the psalms are speaking of the same New Year Enthronement Feast, namely, the trumpet blasts, the people's shouts, and handclapping, the ascent to the throne. 3) The frequent expression "Yahweh King" is forced to yield the translation "Yahweh has again become king," which is supposed to refer to the whole New Year Feast of Yahweh's Enthronement. It suffices to translate this psalmodic expression "Yahweh is or has become king" without reading this feast into it. It would be a profession of faith in Yahweh as king or in Yahweh who once more will become king as in days of old.

The liturgy applies this to Christ the King in several feasts.

92, 5: *Holiness befits your house:* the consecrated temple of Yahweh.

93, 1-23: Whether or not one or two authors wrote this psalm, and in spite of the dates varying from the eighth to the fourth centuries, the song seems to be a national lament in the sense that an individual prays for the nation against unfair judges and rulers (vv. 1-15), and a lament of an individual who is full of trust and gratefulness (vv. 16-23).

they murder, | and they say, "The Lord sees not; the God of Jacob perceives not."
Understand, you senseless ones among the people; and, you fools, when will you be wise? | Shall he who shaped the ear not hear? or he who formed the eye not see? | Shall he who instructs nations not chastise, he who teaches men knowledge? | The Lord knows the thoughts of men, and that they are vain.
Happy the man whom you instruct, O Lord, whom by your law you teach, | giving him rest from evil days, till the pit be dug for the wicked. | For the Lord will not cast off his people, nor abandon his inheritance; | but judgment shall again be with justice, and all the upright of heart shall follow it.
Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will stand by me against the evildoers? | Were not the Lord my help, I would soon dwell in the silent grave. | When I say, "My foot is slipping," your kindness, O Lord, sustains me; | when cares abound within me, your comfort gladdens my soul.
How could the tribunal of wickedness be leagued with you, which creates burdens in the guise of law? | Though they attack the life of the just and condemn innocent blood, | yet the Lord is my stronghold, and my God the Rock of my refuge. | And he will requite them for their evildoing, and for their wickedness he will destroy them; the Lord, our God, will destroy them.

PSALM 94 (95)

A Call to Praise and Obedience Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation. | Let us greet him with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him | for the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods; | in his hands are the depths of the earth, and the tops of the mountains are his. | His is the sea, for he has made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.
Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the

93, 7: The criticism is that God does not care about the concerns of men as in Ps 58, 8.
93, 8-11: In the style of a sage, the psalmist warns the wicked.
93, 15: The judges will again give fair decisions.
93, 18: *Slipping:* a metaphor for trouble.
94, 1-11: A psalm of Yahweh-King. See Ps 92, 1-5 n.
94, 1-2: The psalmist invites the worshipers to praise Yahweh.
94, 3-5: Yahweh is king of creation.
94, 6: Another invitation as in vv. 1-2.

7 Lord who made us. | For he is our God, and we are the people
he shepherds, the flock he guides.
8 Oh, that today you would hear his voice: | "Harden not
your hearts as at Meriba, as in the day of Massa in the desert, |
9 where your fathers tempted me; they tested me though they had
10 seen my works. | Forty years I loathed that generation, and I
said: They are a people of erring heart, and they know not my
11 ways. | Therefore I swore in my anger: They shall not enter
into my rest."

PSALM 95 (96)

The Glories of the Lord, the King of the Universe

1 Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all you lands. |
2 Sing to the Lord; bless his name; announce his salvation, day
3 after day. | Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples,
his wondrous deeds.
4 For great is the Lord and highly to be praised; awesome is he,
5 beyond all gods. | For all the gods of the nations are things of
6 nought, but the Lord made the heavens. | Splendor and majesty
go before him; praise and grandeur are in his sanctuary.
7 Give to the Lord, you families of nations, give to the Lord
8 glory and praise; | give to the Lord the glory due his name!
9 | Bring gifts, and enter his courts; worship the Lord in holy
10 attire. Tremble before him, all the earth; | say among the
nations: The Lord is king. He has made the world firm, not to
be moved; he governs the peoples with equity.
11 Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and
12 what fills it resound; | let the plains be joyful and all that is
13 in them! Then shall all the trees of the forest exult | before
the Lord, for he comes; for he comes to rule the earth. He
shall rule the world with justice and the peoples with his con-
stancy.

94, 7b-11: By referring to Ex 17, 7 the poet warns the people to learn from the disobedience of their ancestors.

94, 11: *My rest:* the Promised Land of Chanaan. Heb 4, 1 spiritualizes it to mean heaven.

95, 1-13: A psalm of Yahweh-King. See Ps 92, 1-5 n. This psalm is more or less in 1 Par 16, 23-33.

95, 1-3: The poet invites the nations to praise Yahweh.

95, 4-6: Yahweh is the only true God.

95, 7-10: Another invitation as in vv. 1-3.

95, 11-13: In characteristic biblical fashion, nature shares man's sentiments in praising Yahweh.

PSALM 96 (97)

The Divine King, the Just Judge of All The Lord is king; let the earth rejoice; let the many isles be glad. | Clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne. | Fire goes before him and consumes his foes round about. | His lightnings illumine the world; the earth sees and trembles. | The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth. | The heavens proclaim his justice, and all peoples see his glory.

All who worship graven things are put to shame, who glory in the things of nought; all gods are prostrate before him. | Sion hears and is glad, and the cities of Juda rejoice because of your judgments, O Lord. | Because you, O Lord, are the Most High over all the earth, exalted far above all gods. | The Lord loves those that hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful ones; from the hand of the wicked he delivers them. | Light dawns for the just; and gladness, for the upright of heart. | Be glad in the Lord, you just, and give thanks to his holy name.

PSALM 97 (98)

The Lord, the Victorious King and Just Judge

A psalm.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds; his right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm. | The Lord has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. | He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God.

Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands; break into song; sing praise. | Sing praise to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and melodious song. | With trumpets and the sound of the horn sing joyfully before the King, the Lord.

Let the sea and what fills it resound, the world and those who

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96, 1-12: A psalm of Yahweh-King. See Ps 92, 1-5 n.

96, 1-6: The psalmist poetically has Yahweh appear as judge with the conventional accompaniment of "clouds and darkness," "fire," "lightnings," earthquake.

96, 7-9: Jerusalem ("Sion") and Juda rejoice at God's conquest of idolatry.

96, 10-12: Yahweh's followers are rewarded.

97, 1-9: A psalm of Yahweh-King. See Ps 92, 1-5 n.

97, 1-3: An invitation to praise God for the victory He gave to Israel.

97, 1: *His right hand . . . his holy arm:* metaphors for God's omnipotence.

97, 4-9: Man and nature should greet Yahweh savior.

8 dwell in it; | let the rivers clap their hands, the mountains
9 shout with them for joy | before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to rule the earth; he will rule the world with justice and the peoples with equity.

PSALM 98 (99)

1 ***The Lord the Holy King*** The Lord is king; the peoples tremble; he is throned upon the cherubim; the earth quakes. |
2 The Lord in Sion is great, he is high above all the peoples. |
3 Let them praise your great and awesome name; holy is he!
4 The King in his might loves justice; you have established equity; justice and judgment in Jacob you have wrought. |
5 Extol the Lord, our God, and worship at his footstool; holy is he!
6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests, and Samuel, among those who called upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and
7 he answered them. | From the pillar of cloud he spoke to them;
8 they heard his decrees and the law he gave them. | O Lord, our God, you answered them; a forgiving God you were to them,
9 though requiting their misdeeds. | Extol the Lord, our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for holy is the Lord, our God.

PSALM 99 (100)

Processional Hymn

1 A psalm of thanksgiving.
2 Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands; | serve the Lord
3 with gladness; come before him with joyful song. | Know that the Lord is God; he made us, his we are; his people, the flock
4 he tends. | Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with
5 praise; give thanks to him; bless his name, | for he is good:

98, 1-9: A psalm of Yahweh-King. See Ps 92, 1-5 n. This hymn stresses God's holiness.

98, 1-3: An invitation to praise Yahweh in Jerusalem ("Sion").

98, 3: *Holy is he!:* each of the three stanzas ends with this refrain. See vv. 5 and 9.

98, 4: Yahweh as ruler is praised.

98, 5: *His footstool:* the Ark of the Covenant was thought of as Yahweh's footstool, which evoked the image of oriental kings resting their feet on footstools.

98, 6-8: The people are to praise Yahweh for His kind treatment of the historical leaders of the nation.

98, 7: A reference to Ex 33, 9.

99, 1-5: A psalm of Yahweh-King. See Ps 92, 1-5 n.

99, 1-3: An invitation to "all the lands" to praise Yahweh.

99, 4-5: All should thank Yahweh in His temple ("gates," "courts") for His qualities.

the Lord, whose kindness endures forever, and his faithfulness, to all generations.

PSALM 100 (101)

Norm of Life for Rulers

1 A psalm of David.

Of kindness and judgment I will sing; to you, O Lord, I will
2 sing praise. | I will persevere in the way of integrity; when will you come to me?

I will walk in the integrity of my heart, within my house; |
3 I will not set before my eyes any base thing. I hate him who
4 does perversely; he shall not remain with me. | A crooked
5 heart shall be far from me; evil I will not know. | Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I destroy. The man of
6 haughty eyes and puffed-up heart I will not endure. | My eyes are upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me. He who walks in the way of integrity shall be in my
7 service. | He shall not dwell within my house who practices deceit. He who speaks falsehood shall not stand before my
8 eyes. | Each morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land, and uproot from the city of the Lord all evildoers.

PSALM 101 (102)

Prayer in Time of Distress

1 The prayer of an afflicted one when he is faint and pours out his anguish before the Lord.

2 O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you. |

100, 1-8: This is often called a royal psalm since it was intended for a Jerusalem king at a time unknown to us. Insofar as it was intended as a rule of conduct for a monarch, it is a wisdom psalm.

100, 1: The psalmist puts these words on the lips of the monarch, speaking as a sage.

100, 2: *When will you come to me?:* in intimate union as my reward for a virtuous life.

100, 4: *A crooked heart:* a perverse heart.

100, 8: The reference to the normal time of daily administering of justice.

101, 2-29: The unity of this psalm of lament is discussed, i.e., whether there were one or two authors for its different parts. Regardless, the psalm has three parts. Part I (vv. 2-12) is a prayer of an ill and abandoned psalmist. Part 2 (vv. 13-23) is a prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and for her exiles, which indicates the date of the psalm. Part 3 (vv. 24-29) is a prayer on the contrast between man's brief life span and God's eternity. It is the fifth penitential psalm. See Ps 6, 2-11 n.

3 Hide not your face from me in the day of my distress. Incline
your ear to me; in the day when I call, answer me speedily. |
4 For my days vanish like smoke, and my bones burn like fire. |
5 Withered and dried up like grass is my heart; I forget to eat
6 my bread. | Because of my insistent sighing I am reduced to
7 skin and bone. | I am like a desert owl; I have become like an
8 owl among the ruins. | I am sleepless, and I moan; I am like a
9 sparrow alone on the housetop. | All the day my enemies revile
10 me; in their rage against me they make a curse of me. | For I
11 eat ashes like bread and mingle my drink with tears, | because
of your fury and your wrath; for you lifted me up only to cast
12 me down. | My days are like a lengthening shadow, and I
wither like grass.

13 But you, O Lord, abide forever, and your name through all
14 generations. | You will arise and have mercy on Sion, for it is
15 time to pity her, for the appointed time has come. | For her
stones are dear to your servants, and her dust moves them to
16 pity. | And the nations shall revere your name, O Lord, and
17 all the kings of the earth your glory, | when the Lord has
18 rebuilt Sion and appeared in his glory; | when he has regarded
the prayer of the destitute, and not despised their prayer.

19 Let this be written for the generation to come, and let his
20 future creatures praise the Lord: | "The Lord looked down
21 from his holy height, from heaven he beheld the earth, | to hear
the groaning of the prisoners, to release those doomed to die"—
22 | that the name of the Lord may be declared in Sion; and his
23 praise, in Jerusalem, | when the peoples gather together, and
the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

24 He has broken down my strength in the way; he has cut
25 short my days. | I say: O my God, take me not hence in the
midst of my days; through all generations your years endure. |
26 Of old you established the earth, and the heavens are the work
27 of your hands. | They shall perish, but you remain though all
of them grow old like a garment. Like clothing you change
28 them, and they are changed, | but you are the same, and your
29 years have no end. | The children of your servants shall abide,
and their posterity shall continue in your presence.

101, 7: *A desert owl:* what exact species of birds the Hebrew words signify is uncertain.

101, 9: *They make a curse of me:* they use my name in cursing, e.g., "May you be as miserable as he."

101, 10: *I eat ashes like bread:* I undergo many humiliations.

101, 12: My days are drawing to a close.

101, 25: *In the midst of my days:* in middle age.

PSALM 102 (103)

Praise of Divine Goodness

1 Of David.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy
2 name. | Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his
3 benefits; | he pardons all your iniquities, he heals all your ills. |
4 He redeems your life from destruction, he crowns you with
5 kindness and compassion, | he fills your lifetime with good;
your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The Lord secures justice and the rights of all the oppressed. |
7 He has made known his ways to Moses, and his deeds to the
8 children of Israel. | Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to
9 anger and abounding in kindness. | He will not always chide,
10 nor does he keep his wrath forever. | Not according to our sins
does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our
crimes.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is
12 his kindness toward those who fear him. | As far as the east is
from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. |
13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has
14 compassion on those who fear him, | for he knows how we are
15 formed; he remembers that we are dust. | Man's days are like
16 those of grass; like a flower of the field he blooms; | the wind
sweeps over him and he is gone, and his place knows him no
17 more. | But the kindness of the Lord is from eternity to eternity
toward those who fear him, and his justice toward children's
18 children | among those who keep his covenant and remember
to fulfill his precepts.

19 The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his king-
20 dom rules over all. | Bless the Lord, all you his angels, you
mighty in strength, who do his bidding, obeying his spoken
21 word. | Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, his ministers, who
22 do his will. | Bless the Lord, all his works, everywhere in his
domain. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

PSALM 103 (104)

1 ***Praise of God the Creator*** Bless the Lord, O my soul!
O Lord, my God, you are great indeed! You are clothed with

102, 1-22: A hymn of praise for God's kindness to the poet (vv. 1-5) and to the nation (vv. 6-10). Yahweh is merciful because man is weak (vv. 11-18). The poet invites heaven and earth to praise God (vv. 19-22).

102, 5: *Your youth is renewed like the eagle's:* the eagle was known for his long life.

103, 1-35: This is a hymn on the glory and wisdom of God as mani-

majesty and glory, | robed in light as with a cloak. You have
spread out the heavens like a tent-cloth; | you have constructed
your palace upon the waters. You make the clouds your chariot;
you travel on the wings of the wind. | You make the winds
your messengers, and flaming fire your ministers.
You fixed the earth upon its foundation, not to be moved
forever; | with the ocean, as with a garment, you covered it;
above the mountains the waters stood. | At your rebuke they
fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; | as the
mountains rose, they went down the valleys to the place you
had fixed for them. | You set a limit they may not pass, nor
shall they cover the earth again.
You send forth springs into the watercourses that wind
among the mountains, | and give drink to every beast of the
field, till the wild asses quench their thirst. | Beside them the
birds of heaven dwell; from among the branches they send forth
their song. | You water the mountains from your palace; the
earth is replete with the fruit of your works. | You raise grass
for the cattle, and vegetation for men's use, producing bread
from the earth, | and wine to gladden men's hearts, so that
their faces gleam with oil, and bread fortifies the hearts of
men. | Well watered are the trees of the Lord, the cedars of
Lebanon, which he planted; | in them the birds build their nests;
fir trees are the home of the stork. | The high mountains are for
wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge for rock-badgers.
You made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows the
hour of its setting. | You bring darkness, and it is night; then
all the beasts of the forest roam about; | young lions roar for
the prey and seek their food from God. | When the sun rises,

fested in creation. God made everything, and everything depends on Him for continued existence. The order of creation in Gn 1 is roughly followed here. Scholars often compare this psalm with "The Hymn to the Aton" (the sun-disk as life's source) by Pharao Amenophis IV (Akhenaton), the "monotheist" of the fourteenth century B.C. He spearheaded the "heresy" that Aton was the only god of Egypt. This is the closest pagan parallel to Ps 103. Whether the psalmist knew this Egyptian poem even indirectly is debated.

103, 3: *Palace upon the waters:* God's abode was pictured above the waters of the heavenly firmament.

103, 4: *Flaming fire:* lightning. Heb 1, 7 quotes this verse to show the superiority of Christ over the angels.

103, 6-9: According to this poetic picture, all the earth was blanketed with water until God slowly lowered the water so that the earth gradually appeared.

103, 13: Yahweh is represented as letting the rain down from the reservoir of the upper waters referred to in v. 3.

23 they withdraw and couch in their dens. | Man goes forth to his
work and to his tillage till the evening.
24 How manifold are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have
25 wrought them all—the earth is full of your creatures; | the
sea also, great and wide, in which are schools without number
26 of living things both small and great, | and where ships move
about with Leviathan, which you formed to make sport of it.
27 They all look to you to give them food in due time. |
28 When you give it to them, they gather it; when you open your
29 hand, they are filled with good things. | If you hide your face,
they are dismayed; if you take away their breath, they perish
30 and return to their dust. | When you send forth your spirit,
they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.
31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord be
32 glad in his works! | He who looks upon the earth, and it
33 trembles; who touches the mountains, and they smoke! | I will
sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God while
34 I live. | Pleasing to him be my theme; I will be glad in the Lord.
35 | May sinners cease from the earth, and may the wicked be no
more. Bless the Lord, O my soul! Alleluia.

PSALM 104 (105)

1 ***God's Fidelity to His Promise*** Give thanks to the Lord,
invoke his name; make known among the nations his deeds.
2 Sing to him, sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds.
3 Glory in his holy name; rejoice, O hearts that seek the Lord!
4 Look to the Lord in his strength; seek to serve him constantly.
5 | Recall the wondrous deeds that he has wrought, his portents,
6 and the judgments he has uttered, | you descendants of Abra-
ham, his servants, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!
7 He, the Lord, is our God; throughout the earth his judg-
8 ments prevail. | He remembers forever his covenant which he
9 made binding for a thousand generations— | which he entered
10 into with Abraham and by his oath to Isaac; | which he estab-

103, 26: *Leviathan:* the mythological sea monster personifying primeval chaos. In Jb 40, 25, Leviathan is a crocodile; here it is perhaps a whale.

103, 27: *They all:* man and creatures.

103, 30: The liturgy of Pentecost applies this verse to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

104, 1-45: As Ps 77 (see Ps 77, 1-72 n) this is a wisdom historical psalm on how to profit from the ancestors' disobedience to God in history. The psalm is a companion piece to Ps 105. Both were written perhaps during the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C.

104, 1-7: The introduction.

104, 8-11: God's promise to the patriarchs.

lished for Jacob by statute, for Israel as an everlasting cove-
11 nant, | saying, "To you will I give the land of Chanaan as
your allotted inheritance."
12 When they were few in number, a handful, and strangers
13 there, | wandering from nation to nation and from one king-
14 dom to another people, | he let no man oppress them, and for
15 their sake he rebuked kings: | "Touch not my anointed, and to
my prophets do no harm."
16 When he called down a famine on the land and ruined the
17 crop that sustained them, | he sent a man before them, Joseph,
18 sold as a slave; | they had weighed him down with fetters, and
19 he was bound with chains, | till his prediction came to pass and
20 the word of the Lord proved him true. | The king sent and
21 released him, the ruler of the peoples set him free. | He made
22 him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions, | that he
might train his princes to be like him and teach his elders
wisdom.
23 Then Israel came to Egypt, and Jacob sojourned in the land
24 of Ham. | He greatly increased his people and made them
25 stronger than their foes, | whose hearts he changed, so that they
26 hated his people, and dealt deceitfully with his servants. | He
27 sent Moses his servant; Aaron, whom he had chosen. | They
wrought his signs among them, and wonders in the land of
Ham.
28 He sent the darkness; it grew dark, but they rebelled against
29 his words. | He turned their waters into blood and killed their
30 fish. | Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of
31 their kings. | He spoke, and there came swarms of flies; gnats,
32 throughout all their borders. | For rain he gave them hail, with
33 flashing fires throughout their land. | He struck down their
vines and their fig trees and shattered the trees throughout
34 their borders. | He spoke, and there came locusts and grass-
35 hoppers without number; | and they devoured every plant
throughout the land; they devoured the fruit of their soil. |
36 Then he struck every first-born throughout their land, the first
37 fruits of all their manhood. | And he led them forth laden with
38 silver and gold, with not a weakling among their tribes. | Egypt
rejoiced at their going, for the dread of them had fallen upon it.

104, 12-15: God's protection of the wandering patriarchs.
104, 15: *My anointed . . . my prophets:* the patriarchs.
104, 16-22: A reference to the story of Joseph in Genesis.
104, 23-27: The Israelites in Egypt and Moses' mission.
104, 23: *The land of Ham:* a synonym for Egypt.
104, 28-38: This account of the plagues in Egypt differs in order and detail (according to poetic license) from Ex 1—12.

39 He spread a cloud to cover them and fire to give them light
40 by night. | They asked, and he brought them quail, and with
41 bread from heaven he satisfied them. | He cleft the rock, and
the water gushed forth; it flowed through the dry lands like a
42 stream, | for he remembered his holy word to his servant
43 Abraham. | And he led forth his people with joy; with shouts
of joy, his chosen ones.
44 And he gave them the lands of the nations, and they took
45 what the peoples had toiled for, | that they might keep his
statutes and observe his laws. Alleluia.

PSALM 105 (106)
Israel's Confession of Sin

1 Alleluia.
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his kindness
2 endures forever. | Who can tell the mighty deeds of the Lord,
3 or proclaim all his praises? | Happy are they who observe what
4 is right, who do always what is just. | Remember me, O Lord,
as you favor your people; visit me with your saving help, |
5 that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, rejoice in the
joy of your people, and glory with your inheritance.
6 We have sinned, we and our fathers; we have committed
7 crimes; we have done wrong. | Our fathers in Egypt considered
not your wonders; they remembered not your abundant kind-
8 ness, but rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea. | Yet
he saved them for his name's sake, to make known his power. |
9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up, and he led them
10 through the deep as through a desert. | He saved them from
hostile hands and freed them from the hands of the enemy. |
11 The waters covered their foes; not one of them was left. |
12 Then they believed his words and sang his praises.
13 But soon they forgot his works; they waited not for his
14 counsel. | They gave way to craving in the desert and tempted

104, 39-43: The wandering through the wilderness. See Ex 12ff.
104, 44-45: The occupation of Chanaan, the Promised Land.
104, 44: *The lands of the nations:* a reference to the many peoples in Chanaan before the Hebrews entered.
104, 45 God's purpose was to mold an obedient people.
105, 1-48: This is another wisdom historical psalm (see 104, 1-45 n). The stress here is to teach the exiles that their history has been a chain of infidelities toward God from the time of the Exodus.
105, 1-5: Introductory prayer.
105, 6-12: The sin of the people, and God's help at the Red Sea.
105, 13-15: The people sin, but God grants their request for meat. See the quail in Nm 11, vv. 4 and 31-34.

15 God in the wilderness, | He gave them what they asked but
sent a wasting disease against them.
16 They envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron, the holy one of
17 the Lord. | The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and
18 covered the faction of Abiram. | Fire broke out against their
faction; a flame consumed the wicked.
19 They made a calf in Horeb and adored a molten image; |
20 they exchanged their glory for the image of a grass-eating
21 bullock. | They forgot the God who had saved them, who had
22 done great deeds in Egypt, | wondrous deeds in the land of
23 Ham, terrible things at the Red Sea. | Then he spoke of exter-
minating them, but Moses, his chosen one, | withstood him in
the breach to turn back his destructive wrath.
24 Yet they despised the desirable land; they believed not his
25 word. | They murmured in their tents, and obeyed not the voice
26 of the Lord. | Then with raised hand he swore against them
27 to let them perish in the desert, | to scatter their descendants
among the nations, and to disperse them over the lands.
28 And they submitted to the rites of Beelphegor and ate the
29 sacrifices of dead gods. | They provoked him by their deeds,
30 and a plague attacked them. | Then Phinees stood forth in
31 judgment and the plague was checked; | and it was imputed to
him for merit through all generations forever.
32 They angered him at the waters of Meriba, and Moses fared
33 ill on their account, | for they embittered his spirit, and the
rash utterance passed his lips.
34 They did not exterminate the peoples, as the Lord had
35 commanded them, | but mingled with the nations and learned
36 their works. | They served their idols, which became a snare for
37 them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to
38 demons, | and they shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons
and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of

105, 14-15: A reference to the rebellions of Core, Dathan, and Abiram. See Num 16.

105, 19-23: The worship of the golden calf. See Ex 32.

105, 24-27: A reference to Num 14. The first encounter with the Canaanites.

105, 28-31: The people sin at Beelphegor. See Num 25.

105, 32-33: A reference to the people provoking Moses to sin, so that God decreed him from entering into the Promised Land. For the "sin" see Num 20, 2-13.

105, 34-39: More sins in mingling with the Canaanites ("the nations" v. 35).

105, 34: The sacred writers interpreted God's will as a command to exterminate the Canaanites for their crimes.

39 Chanaan, desecrating the land with bloodshed; | they became
defiled by their works, and wanton in their crimes.
40 And the Lord grew angry with his people, and abhorred his
41 inheritance; | he gave them over into the hands of the nations,
42 and their foes ruled over them. | Their enemies oppressed them,
43 and they were humbled under their power. | Many times did
he rescue them, but they embittered him with their counsels
44 and were brought low by their guilt. | Yet he had regard for
45 their affliction when he heard their cry; | and for their sake he
was mindful of his covenant and relented, in his abundant
46 kindness, | and he won for them compassion from all who held
47 them captive. | Save us, O Lord, our God, and gather us from
among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in praising you.

* * *

48 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, through all eternity!
Let all the people say, Amen! Alleluia.

PSALM 106 (107)

1 *God the Savior of Men in Distress* "Give thanks to the
Lord, for he is good, for his kindness endures forever!" |
2 Thus let the redeemed of the Lord say, those whom he has
3 redeemed from the hand of the foe | and gathered from the
lands, from the east and the west, from the north and the south.
4 They went astray in the desert wilderness; the way to an
5 inhabited city they did not find. | Hungry and thirsty, their
6 life was wasting away within them. | They cried to the Lord in
7 their distress; from their straits he rescued them. | And he led
8 them by a direct way to reach an inhabited city. | Let them
give thanks to the Lord for his kindness and his wondrous
9 deeds to the children of men, | because he satisfied the longing
soul and filled the hungry soul with good things.

105, 40-46: God punished the Israelites for their wicked deeds.

105, 47: The poet prays for the home-coming of his people from the "Dispersion" abroad.

105, 48: This doxology is not part of the psalm, but was added later to end the Fourth Book of Psalms.

106, 1-43: This postexilic psalm is a public thanksgiving (vv. 1-32), followed by a prolonged praise to God for His kind deeds (vv. 33-43). Whether there are two independent parts by two different authors is a moot question.

106, 1-3: Introduction: the people praise God for their release from exile.

106, 1: A frequent biblical formula of praise used in the temple liturgy.

106, 4-9: The poet sings about the passage from exile ("the desert wilderness" v. 1) to the homeland ("an inhabited city" v. 7).

10 They dwelt in darkness and gloom, bondsmen in want and in
11 chains, | because they had rebelled against the words of God
12 and scorned the counsel of the Most High. | And he humbled
their hearts with trouble; when they stumbled, there was no
13 one to help them. | They cried to the Lord in their distress;
14 from their straits he rescued them. | And he led them forth
15 from darkness and gloom and broke their bonds asunder. | Let
them give thanks to the Lord for his kindness and his wondrous
16 deeds to the children of men, | because he shattered the gates of
brass and burst the bars of iron.
17 Stricken because of their wicked ways and afflicted because
18 of their sins, | they loathed all manner of food, so that they
19 were near the gates of death. | They cried to the Lord in their
20 distress; from their straits he rescued them. | He sent forth his
21 word to heal them and to snatch them from destruction. | Let
them give thanks to the Lord for his kindness and his wondrous
22 deeds to the children of men. | Let them make thank offerings
and declare his works with shouts of joy.
23 They who sailed the sea in ships, trading on the deep waters,
24 | these saw the works of the Lord and his wonders in the abyss.
25 | His command raised up a storm wind which tossed its waves
26 on high. | They mounted up to heaven; they sank to the depths;
27 their hearts melted away in their plight. | They reeled and
staggered like drunken men, and all their skill was swallowed
28 up. | They cried to the Lord in their distress; from their straits
29 he rescued them. | He hushed the storm to a gentle breeze, and
30 the billows of the sea were stilled; | they rejoiced that they were
31 calmed, and he brought them to their desired haven. | Let them
give thanks to the Lord for his kindness and his wondrous deeds
32 to the children of men. | Let them extol him in the assembly of
the people and praise him in the council of the elders.
33 He changed rivers into desert, water springs into thirsty
34 ground, | fruitful land into salt marsh, because of the wicked-
35 ness of its inhabitants. | He changed the desert into pools of
36 water, waterless land into water springs. | And there he settled
37 the hungry, and they built a city to dwell in. | They sowed
fields and planted vineyards, and they obtained a fruitful yield.
38 | He blessed them, and they became very many; nor did he

106, 10-16: Yahweh freed the imprisoned exiles.
106, 17-22: God saved the people who were wasting away in exile.
106, 23-32: The people were like helpless seafarers whom God rescued.
106, 33-37: God made the land of the people fertile.

39 suffer their cattle to decrease. | And they dwindled and were
40 brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow. | But
he who pours out contempt upon princes, and sends them
41 astray through a trackless waste, | lifted up the needy out of
42 misery and made the families numerous like flocks. | The
upright see this and rejoice, and all the wickedness closes its
43 mouth. | Who is wise enough to observe these things and to
understand the favors of the Lord?

PSALM 107 (108)

Prayer for Victory

1 A song; a psalm of David.
2 My heart is steadfast, O God; my heart is steadfast; I will
3 sing and chant praise. | Awake, O my soul; awake, lyre and
4 harp; I will wake the dawn. | I will give thanks to you among
the peoples, O Lord; I will chant your praise among the
5 nations, | for your kindness towers to the heavens, and your
6 faithfulness to the skies. | Be exalted above the heavens, O
7 God; over all the earth be your glory! | That your loved ones
may escape, help us by your right hand, and answer us.
8 God promised in his sanctuary: "Exultantly I will apportion
9 Sichem, and measure off the valley of Succhoth; | mine is
Galaad, and mine Manasse, Ephraim is the helmet for my head;
10 Juda, my scepter; | Moab shall serve as my washbowl; upon
Edom I will set my shoe; I will triumph over Philistia." |
11 Who will bring me into the fortified city? Who will lead me
12 into Edom? | Have not you, O God, rejected us, so that you go
13 not forth, O God, with our armies? | Give us aid against the
14 foe, for worthless is the help of men. | Under God we shall do
valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

PSALM 108 (109)

Prayer against a Slanderous Enemy

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 O God, whom I praise, be not silent, | for they have opened
wicked and treacherous mouths against me. They have spoken
3 to me with lying tongues, | and with words of hatred they
4 have encompassed me and attacked me without cause. | In

106, 39-41: When the rulers ("princes" v. 40) oppressed the poor people, God helped them.

107, 2-14: This is a compilation of parts from two other psalms: vv. 2-6 are the same as Ps 56, 8-12 n; vv. 7-14 are the same as Ps 59, 7-14.

108, 1-31: A lament of an innocent sufferer like Job. He is accused of sins because of his illness. He asks God for a trial to prove his innocence, to obtain his earthly reward, and to punish his enemies.

5 return for my love they slandered me, but I prayed. | They
repaid me evil for good and hatred for my love.
6 Raise up a wicked man against him, and let the accuser stand
7 at his right hand. | When he is judged, let him go forth con-
8 demned, and may his plea be in vain. | May his days be few;
9 may another take his office. | May his children be fatherless,
10 and his wife a widow. | May his children be roaming vagrants
and beggars; may they be cast out of the ruins of their homes. |
11 May the usurer ensnare all his belongings, and strangers plunder
12 the fruit of his labors. | May there be no one to do him a kind-
13 ness, nor anyone to pity his orphans. | May his posterity meet
with destruction; in the next generation may their name be
14 blotted out. | May the guilt of his fathers be remembered by
15 the Lord; let not his mother's sin be blotted out; | may they
be continually before the Lord, till he banish the memory of
16 these parents from the earth, | because he remembered not to
show kindness, but persecuted the wretched and poor and the
17 brokenhearted, to do them to death. | He loved cursing; may
it come upon him; he took no delight in blessing; may it be far
18 from him. | And may he be clothed with cursing as with a
robe; may it penetrate into his entrails like water and like oil
19 into his bones; | may it be for him like a garment which covers
him, like a girdle which is always about him.
20 May this be the recompense from the Lord upon my accusers
21 and upon those who speak evil against me. | But do you, O
God, my Lord, deal kindly with me for your name's sake; in
22 your generous kindness rescue me; | for I am wretched and
23 poor, and my heart is pierced within me. | Like a lengthening
24 shadow I pass away; I am swept away like the locust. | My
knees totter from my fasting, and my flesh is wasted of its
25 substance. | And I am become a mockery to them; when they
26 see me, they shake their heads. | Help me, O Lord, my God;
27 save me, in your kindness, | and let them know that this is
28 your hand; that you, O Lord, have done this. | Let them curse,
but do you bless; may my adversaries be put to shame, but let

108, 6: The psalmist asks God to appoint an accuser (or "a wicked man") to level charges against "him," the psalmist's enemy. In such court procedures, the one who accuses stands on the "right hand" of the person accused.

108, 7-20: On revenge in the psalms, see Jer 12, 3 n.

108, 8: *May another take his office:* St. Peter (Acts 1, 20) applies this to Judas.

108, 23: *Swept away:* there is an allusion to a powerful wind which sometimes ended a plague of locusts by driving them into the Mediterranean Sea.

29 your servant rejoice. | Let my accusers be clothed with disgrace
30 and let them wear their shame like a mantle. | I will speak my
thanks earnestly to the Lord, and in the midst of the throng
31 I will praise him, | for he stood at the right hand of the poor
man, to save him from those who would condemn him.

PSALM 109 (110)

The Messia: King, Priest and Conqueror

1 A psalm of David.
The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand till I make
2 your enemies your footstool." | The scepter of your power the
Lord will stretch forth from Sion: "Rule in the midst of your
3 enemies. | Yours is princely power in the day of your birth, in
holy splendor; before the daystar, like the dew, I have begotten
you."
4 The Lord has sworn, and he will not repent: "You are a
priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedec."

109, 1-7: This is a royal Messianic psalm. Modern scholars date this psalm before the exile (see v. 4 n). The psalm was most probably written on the occasion of some royal festival. The tendency is to interpret this psalm as a description of the reigning Davidic king as representative and bearer of the hopes of the dynasty (v. 1 n). Later, after the exile of 538 B.C., the same psalm was reread as describing directly the future person of the Messia. The New Testament writers clearly saw Christ fulfilling this psalm, e.g., in Mt 22, 44; Acts 2, 34. The closest non-biblical pagan parallel to this psalm is Ninlil's prophecy to the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal of the seventh century B.C.

The liturgy uses this psalm in feasts of Our Lord.

109, 1: *The Lord said to my Lord:* the psalmist says that Yahweh ("the Lord") said to the king ("my Lord"). To address the king as "Lord" was a polite title of a subject to his king (see 2 Sm 1, 10). *Sit at my right hand:* this was the place of honor. *Till I make your enemies your footstool:* in Mesopotamian art, a conquering king may be seen with his foot on the neck of the conquered as a sign of the latter's submission. See Jos 10, 24.

109, 2: The Hebrew is obscure. It seems to say: God extends the monarch's power to rule from Jerusalem outward over all his enemies.

109, 3: Since the Hebrew of this verse is not only obscure but also corrupt, the translation here comes from ancient translations of the Hebrew. Therefore, the reference of God begetting His Son is not as clear in the original as in the present translation, but even if it were, this sonship is understood by modern scholars as an allusion to Yahweh's *adoptive* sonship of David and his dynasty in 2 Sm 7.

109, 4: The psalmist means here that the king was also a priest of Jerusalem, just as Melchisedec had been ("according to the order of Melchisedec"). See Gn 14, 18-24 n. Ordinarily, in the ancient Near East the monarch was also a priest; but this was not so in Israel except for the first kings, as David and Solomon who exercised priestly functions (see 2 Sm 24, 25).

It would be easier to understand the psalmist here if he had written

5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the
6 day of his wrath. | He will do judgment on the nations, heap-
7 ing up corpses; he will crush heads over the wide earth. | From the brook by the wayside he will drink; therefore will he lift up his head.

PSALM 110 (111)
Praise of God for His Goodness

1 Alleluia.
I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart in the com-
2 pany and assembly of the just. | Great are the works of the
3 Lord, exquisite in all their delights. | Majesty and glory are his
4 work, and his justice endures forever. | He has won renown for his wondrous deeds; gracious and merciful is the Lord. |
5 He has given food to those who fear him; he will forever be
6 mindful of his covenant. | He has made known to his people the power of his works, giving them the inheritance of the
7 nations. | The works of his hands are faithful and just; sure
8 are all his precepts, | reliable forever and ever, wrought in
9 truth and equity. | He has sent deliverance to his people; he has ratified his covenant forever; holy and awesome is his
10 name. | The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; prudent are all who live by it. His praise endures forever.

PSALM 111 (112)
The Blessings of the Just Man

1 Alleluia.
Happy the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in

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this psalm during David or Solomon's reign when tradition still considered the king of Jerusalem as a priest, which double office was directly inherited from Melchisedec.

The reality of Christ's priesthood in the New Testament went far beyond any Old Testament notion of the Messia's priesthood. See Heb 4, 14—7, 28 where Melchisedec is interpreted as a type of Christ who is the *eternal priest-king.* See Jer 33, 21-22 n.

109, 5-7: In spite of the obscure Hebrew of vv. 6-7, Yahweh is depicted as a cruel oriental warrior king of the day who will execute the promise (v. 1) and make the king a universal ruler.

110, 1-10: This is an alphabetic (see Ps 9A, 2-21 n) hymn of praise and thanksgiving for God's deeds and covenant. See Ps 111, 1-10 n.

The liturgy uses this psalm as one of thanksgiving in Sunday Vespers.

110, 1: *In the company and assembly of the just:* in the temple.

110, 5: *Food:* manna in the desert. See Ex 16, 4-36 n.

110, 6: *The inheritance of the nation:* the Promised Land of Chanaan. See Ps 104, 44 n.

110, 10: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:* it means living religiously as in Prv 1, 7 n.

111, 1-10: An alphabetic (see Ps 9A, 2-21 n) wisdom psalm

his commands. | His posterity shall be mighty upon the earth;
the upright generation shall be blessed. | Wealth and riches
shall be in his house; his generosity shall endure forever. |
He dawns through the darkness, a light for the upright; he is
gracious and merciful and just. | Well for the man who is
gracious and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice; |
he shall never be moved; the just man shall be in everlasting
remembrance. | An evil report he shall not fear; his heart is
firm, trusting in the Lord. | His heart is steadfast; he shall
not fear till he looks down upon his foes. | Lavishly he gives
to the poor; his generosity shall endure forever; his horn shall
be exalted in glory. | The wicked man shall see it and be vexed;
he shall gnash his teeth and pine away; the desire of the wicked
shall perish.

PSALM 112 (113)

Praise of the Lord for His Care of the Lowly

Alleluia.
Praise, you servants of the Lord, praise the name of the
Lord. | Blessed be the name of the Lord both now and forever. |
From the rising to the setting of the sun is the name of the Lord
to be praised.
High above all nations is the Lord; above the heavens is his

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praising the virtues of "the man who fears the Lord" (see Ps 110, 10 n). The same author may have composed this and the preceding psalm if we judge by the pronounced similarity of style. Although there is no clue to the date, moderns commonly believe that both psalms were written after the exile of 538 B.C.

111, 3: *Generosity:* although the Hebrew word originally meant justice, it is here given its later meaning of "generosity."

111, 4: *He:* the just man who is the subject throughout the psalm. *He is gracious and merciful and just:* the just man, in his limited way, resembles God.

111, 6: *He shall never be moved:* a frequent description of the just man.

111, 9: *His horn:* his power and dignity.

112, 1-9: This is a hymn praying that God be worshiped (vv. 1-3) because of His glory (vv. 4-6) and His condescension to the "lowly" (vv. 7-9).

Pss 112—117 are known as the Hallel ("Praise") psalms because of the repeated exhortation, "Praise the Lord." These psalms, more precisely called the Little Hallel or Egyptian Hallel, were sung at the Jewish feasts of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Dedication, and the New Moon. (See the Great Hallel, Ps 135, 1-26 n.)

112, 1: *Servants of the Lord:* worshipers especially Levites.

112, 3: *From the rising to the setting of the sun:* it is a moot question whether this expression here is to be taken spatially (from east to west as in Ps 49, 1 and Mal 1, 11n) or temporally (all day long).

5 glory. | Who is like the Lord, our God, who is enthroned on
6 high | and looks upon the heavens and the earth below?
7 He raises up the lowly from the dust; from the dunghill he
8 lifts up the poor | to seat them with princes, with the princes
9 of his own people. | He establishes in her home the barren wife as the joyful mother of children.

PSALM 113A (114)

The Lord's Wonders at the Exodus

1 Alleluia.
When Israel came forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob
2 from a people of alien tongue, | Juda became his sanctuary,
3 Israel his domain. | The sea beheld and fled; Jordan turned
4 back. | The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like the
5 lambs of the flock. | Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan,
6 that you turn back? | You mountains, that you skip like rams?
7 You hills, like the lambs of the flock? | Before the face of the Lord, tremble, O earth, before the face of the God of Jacob, |
8 who turned the rock into pools of water, the flint into flowing springs.

PSALM 113B (115)

1 ***The Greatness and Goodness of the True God*** Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name give glory because of
2 your kindness, because of your truth. | Why should the pagans
3 say, "Where is their God?" | Our God is in heaven; whatever he wills, he does.
4 Their idols are silver and gold, the handiwork of men. |
5 They have mouths but speak not; they have eyes but see not; |
6 they have ears but hear not; they have noses but smell not; |
7 they have hands but feel not; they have feet but walk not;

112, 7-8: See the Canticle of Anna in 1 Sm 2, 8.

113A, 1-8: A hymn celebrating the Exodus and entrance into the Promised Land. It is one of the Hallel psalms. See Ps 112, 1-9 n.

113A, 3: A reference to the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan River. See Ex 14, 21f, and Jos 3, 14ff.

113A, 4: A poetic treatment of the earthquake accompanying God's appearance at Sinai (Ex 19, 18).

113A, 8: A reference to Ex 17, 6 and Nm 20, 11.

113B, 1-18: A Hallel psalm. See Ps 112, 1-9 n.

113B, 1-3: In praise of Yahweh.

113B, 2: *Where is their God?*: the pagans imply that God does not assist His people in time of need.

113B, 4-8: See Is 44, 9-20 n, on the understanding of idolatry by the sacred writers.

8 they utter no sound from their throat. | Their makers shall be
like them, everyone that trusts in them.
9 The house of Israel trusts in the Lord; he is their help and
10 their shield. | The house of Aaron trusts in the Lord; he is
11 their help and their shield. | Those who fear the Lord trust in
12 the Lord; he is their help and their shield. | The Lord remem-
bers us and will bless us: he will bless the house of Israel; he
13 will bless the house of Aaron; | he will bless those who fear the
14 Lord, both the small and the great. | May the Lord bless you
15 more and more, both you and your children. | May you be
16 blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth. | Heaven is
the heaven of the Lord, but the earth he has given to the children
17 of men. | It is not the dead who praise the Lord, nor those who
18 go down into silence; | but we bless the Lord, both now and
forever.

PSALM 114 (116A)
Thanksgiving to God for Help in Need

1 Alleluia.
I love the Lord because he has heard my voice in supplica-
2 tion, | because he has inclined his ear to me the day I called. |
3 The cords of death encompassed me; the snares of the nether
4 world seized upon me; I fell into distress and sorrow, | and I
called upon the name of the Lord, "O Lord, save my life!"
5 Gracious is the Lord and just; yes, our God is merciful. |
6 The Lord keeps the little ones; I was brought low, and he saved
7 me. | Return, O my soul, to your tranquillity, for the Lord has
8 been good to you. | For he has freed my soul from death, my
9 eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. | I shall walk before
the Lord in the lands of the living.

PSALM 115 (116B)

1 I believed, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted"; |

113B, 9-11: This is often called a liturgical litany of the laity ("the house of Israel"), the priests ("the house of Aaron"), and the converts to Judaism ("those who fear the Lord") who confide in God.

113B, 12-15: The priestly blessing.

113B, 16-18: A hymn of praise.

114, 1-9: Together with Ps 115 this forms one thanksgiving hymn of a just man who thanks God for recovery from illness and from near death. See Ps 112, 1-9 n, since this is one of the Hallel psalms.

114, 3: *Cords of death:* a frequent figure of fatal illness. The verse evokes the imagery of a hunter trapping his prey.

114, 8: *Stumbling:* sorrow.

115, 1-10: See Ps 114, 1-9 n. In the current Hebrew text this forms one psalm.

115, 1: The psalmist trusted ("believed") even while he was ill

2.3 I said in my alarm, "No man is dependable." | How shall I
make a return to the Lord for all the good he has done me? |
4 The cup of salvation I will take up, and I will call upon the
5 name of the Lord; | my vows to the Lord I will pay in the
6 presence of all his people. | Precious in the eyes of the Lord is
7 the death of his faithful ones. | O Lord, I am your servant;
I am your servant, the son of your handmaid; you have loosed
8 my bonds. | To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving, and
9 I will call upon the name of the Lord. | My vows to the Lord
10 I will pay in the presence of all his people, | in the courts of
the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem.

PSALM 116 (117)

Doxology of All the Nations

1 Alleluia.
Praise the Lord, all you nations; glorify him, all you peoples! |
2 For steadfast is his kindness toward us, and the fidelity of the
Lord endures forever.

PSALM 117 (118)

Hymn of Thanksgiving to the Savior of Israel

1 Alleluia.
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures
2 forever. | Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures for-
3 ever." | Let the house of Aaron say, "His mercy endures
4 forever." | Let those who fear the Lord say, "His mercy endures
forever."

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that God would restore his health. The translation of this verse is difficult and disputed.

115, 2: *No man is dependable:* literally, "All men are liars."

115, 4: *The cup of salvation:* a probable reference to the thanksgiving offering of wine poured out at the altar. See Nm 15, 1-10. The priest says this verse before drinking the Precious Blood at Mass.

115, 6: The psalmist attributes to God the characteristic sentiments of the psalmist himself, namely, that God considers the death of a worshiper as, unfortunately, one worshiper less to praise Him on earth.

115, 7: *Son of your handmaid:* a synonym for servant.

116, 1-2: This hymn of praise is the shortest of the psalms. It invites all the Gentiles to praise Yahweh for His "kindness" and eternal "fidelity." Since this is a Hallel psalm, see Ps 112, 1-9 n.

117, 1-29: The last Hallel psalm (see Ps 112, 1-9 n) is a liturgy of thanksgiving and praise, which many believe was written for the Feast of Tabernacles, following the completion of the temple walls, in 444 B.C. (see Neh 8, 13-18).

117, 1-4: See Ps 113B, 9-11 n, for this litany of praise includes the same classes of people.

5 In my straits I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me
6 and set me free. | The Lord is with me; I fear not; what can
7 man do against me? | The Lord is with me to help me, and I
8 shall look down upon my foes. | It is better to take refuge in
9 the Lord than to trust in man. | It is better to take refuge in
the Lord than to trust in princes.
10 All the nations encompassed me; in the name of the Lord I
11 crushed them. | They encompassed me on every side; in the
12 name of the Lord I crushed them. | They encompassed me like
bees, they flared up like fire among thorns; in the name of the
13 Lord I crushed them. | I was hard pressed and was falling, but
14 the Lord helped me. | My strength and my courage is the Lord,
and he has been my savior.
15 The joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just: "The
16 right hand of the Lord has struck with power: | the right hand
of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord has struck
17 with power." | I shall not die, but live, and declare the works
18 of the Lord. | Though the Lord has indeed chastised me, yet
he has not delivered me to death.
19 Open to me the gates of justice; I will enter them and give
20 thanks to the Lord. | This gate is the Lord's; the just shall enter
21 it. | I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and
22 have been my savior. | The stone which the builders rejected
23 has become the cornerstone. | By the Lord has this been done;
24 it is wonderful in our eyes. | This is the day the Lord has made;
25 let us be glad and rejoice in it. | O Lord, grant salvation! O
Lord, grant prosperity!
26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; we bless

117, 5-9: The psalmist speaks for the community about confidence in the help of Yahweh.

117, 10-14: The psalmist speaks of the threat of his enemies.

117, 15-18: God's intervening assistance in behalf of the psalmist.

117, 19-29: A dialogue at the gates of the temple between the priests (vv. 20 and 24-27) and the leader of the people (vv. 19, 21-23, 28f) as he enters to make his sacrifice of thanksgiving.

117, 22: The "cornerstone" is the most valuable stone in a building because it connects two adjacent walls. The psalmist may be referring to a proverb about a rejected stone that turned out to be the most necessary. Metaphorically the inspired poet means that Israel, considered worthless by the great Gentile countries, turns out to be God's most valuable nation. New Testament passages "messianize" this text, i.e., they see Christ as a fulfillment of this text. See Mt 21, 42 and parallel Gospel texts; Acts 4, 11; 1 Pt 2, 7. Compare Is 28, 16 n and Jer 51, 26.

117, 25: *Grant salvation:* in Hebrew "Hosanna." See v. 26 n.

117, 26-27a: The priestly blessing.

117, 26: The sense is, "May he who now comes into the temple be blessed by having the Lord's name invoked upon him." These words,

27 you from the house of the Lord. | The Lord is God, and he has
given us light. Join in procession with leafy boughs up to the
28 horns of the altar. | You are my God, and I give thanks to
29 you; O my God, I extol you. | Give thanks to the Lord, for
he is good; for his kindness endures forever.

PSALM 118 (119)
Praise of God's Law

Aleph

1 Happy are they whose way is blameless, who walk in the law
2 of the Lord. | Happy are they who observe his decrees, who
3 seek him with all their heart, | and do no wrong, but walk in
4 his ways. | You have commanded that your precepts be dili-
5 gently kept. | Oh, that I might be firm in the ways of keeping
6 your statutes! | Then should I not be put to shame when I
7 beheld all your commands. | I will give you thanks with an
8 upright heart, when I have learned your just ordinances. | I
will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

Beth

9 How shall a young man be faultless in his way? By keeping
10 to your words. | With all my heart I seek you; let me not stray
11 from your commands. | Within my heart I treasure your prom-
12 ise, that I may not sin against you. | Blessed are you, O Lord;
13 teach me your statutes. | With my lips I declare all the ordi-
14 nances of your mouth. | In the way of your decrees I rejoice,
15 as much as in all riches. | I will meditate on your precepts and

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together with "Hosanna," were said of Christ on Palm Sunday. (See Mk 11, 10.)

117, 28-29: A hymn of praise.

118, 1-176: The longest psalm in the Psalter is a wisdom alphabetic psalm on the joy of keeping the Mosaic Law, God's gift to man. There is a forceful underlying idea of God's omnipotence and man's reliance on Him. Originally the poet planned eight stanzas of eight verses each, with each stanza having a different synonym for "law." The eight synonyms are: law, statutes, commands, ordinances, decrees, precepts, words, and promises. The current Hebrew text does not precisely execute the original plan of the author. In this alphabetic psalm the first word in each line of the first stanza begins with Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the first word in each line of the second stanza begins with Beth, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This procedure continues till all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used. (See Ps 9A, 2-21 n.) Because of this most elaborately structured psalm, there are no developed thoughts, but only snatches of them in the style of Proverbs.

118, 9-16: It is characteristic of the sages to write about the proper care of youth.

16 consider your ways. | In your statutes I will delight; I will not
forget your words.

Gimel

17 Be good to your servant, that I may live and keep your words.
18 | Open my eyes, that I may consider the wonders of your law. |
19 I am a wayfarer of earth; hide not your commands from me.
20 | My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances at all
21 times. | You rebuke the accursed proud, who turn away from
22 your commands. | Take away from me reproach and contempt,
23 for I observe your decrees. | Though princes meet and talk
24 against me, your servant meditates on your statutes. | Yes,
your decrees are my delight; they are my counselors.

Daleth

25 I lie prostrate in the dust; give me life according to your
26 word. | I declared my ways, and you answered me; teach me
27 your statutes. | Make me understand the way of your precepts,
28 and I will meditate on your wondrous deeds. | My soul weeps
29 for sorrow; strengthen me according to your words. | Remove
from me the way of falsehood, and favor me with your law. |
30 The way of truth I have chosen; I have set your ordinances
31 before me. | I cling to your decrees; O Lord, let me not be put
32 to shame. | I will run the way of your commands when you
give me a docile heart.

He

33 Instruct me, O Lord, in the way of your statutes, that I may
34 exactly obesrve them. | Give me discernment, that I may observe
35 your law and keep it with all my heart. | Lead me in the path of
36 your commands, for in it I delight. | Incline my heart to your
37 decrees and not to gain. | Turn away my eyes from seeing what
38 is vain; by your way give me life. | Fulfill for your servant
39 your promise to those who fear you. | Turn away from me the
40 reproach which I dread, for your ordinances are good. | Behold,
I long for your precepts; in your justice give me life.

Vau

41 Let your kindness come to me, O Lord, your salvation accord-
42 ing to your promise. | So shall I have an answer for those who
43 reproach me, for I trust in your words. | Take not the word of
truth from my mouth, for in your ordinances is my hope; |
44 and I will keep your law continually, forever and ever. |
45.46 And I will walk at liberty, because I seek your precepts. | I
will speak of your decrees before kings without being ashamed.

47.48 | And I will delight in your commands, which I love. | And I will lift up my hands to your commands and meditate on your statutes.

Zain

49 Remember your word to your servant since you have given
50 me hope. | My comfort in my affliction is that your promise
51 gives me life. | Though the proud scoff bitterly at me, I turn
52 not away from your law. | I remember your ordinances of old,
53 O Lord, and I am comforted. | Indignation seizes me because
54 of the wicked who forsake your law. | Your statutes are the
55 theme of my song in the place of my exile. | By night I remem-
56 ber your name, O Lord, and I will keep your law. | This has been mine, that I have observed your precepts.

Heth

57 I have said, O Lord, that my part is to keep your words. |
58 I entreat you with all my heart, have pity on me according to
59 your promise. | I considered my ways and turned my feet to
60 your decrees. | I was prompt and did not hesitate in keeping
61 your commands. | Though the snares of the wicked are twined
62 about me, your law I have not forgotten. | At midnight I rise
63 to give you thanks because of your just ordinances. | I am the
64 companion of all who fear you and keep your precepts. | Of your kindness, O Lord, the earth is full; teach me your statutes.

Teth

65 You have done good to your servant, O Lord, according to
66 your word. | Teach me wisdom and knowledge, for in your
67 commands I trust. | Before I was afflicted I went astray, but
68 now I hold to your promise. | You are good and bountiful;
69 teach me your statutes. | Though the proud forge lies against
70 me, with all my heart I will observe your precepts. | Their heart has become gross and fat; as for me, your law is my delight. |
71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn
72 your statutes. | The law of your mouth is to me more precious than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Jod

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me dis-
74 cernment that I may learn your commands. | Those who fear you shall see me and be glad, because I hope in your word. |

118, 70: *Their heart has become gross and fat:* their mind ("heart") has become "cruel," or the phrase may mean "dull."

75 I know, O Lord, that your ordinances are just, and in your faith-
76 fulness you have afflicted me. | Let your kindness comfort me
77 according to your promise to your servants. | Let your com-
passion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight. |
78 Let the proud be put to shame for oppressing me unjustly; I
79 will meditate on your precepts. | Let those turn to me who fear
80 you and acknowledge your decrees. | Let my heart be perfect
in your statutes, that I be not put to shame.

Caph

81 My soul pines for your salvation; I hope in your word. |
82 My eyes strain after your promise; when will you comfort me?
83 | Though I am shriveled like a leathern flask in the smoke, I
84 have not forgotten your statutes. | How many are the days of
your servant? When will you do judgment on my persecutors? |
85 The proud have dug pits for me; this is against your law. |
86 All your commands are steadfast; they persecute me wrong-
87 fully; help me! | They have all but put an end to me on the
88 earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts. | In your kindness
give me life, that I may keep the decrees of your mouth.

Lamed

89 Your word, O Lord, endures forever; it is firm as the heavens.
90 | Through all generations your truth endures; you have estab-
91 lished the earth, and it stands firm. | According to your ordi-
92 nances they still stand firm: all things serve you. | Had not your
law been my delight, I should have perished in my affliction. |
93 Never will I forget your precepts, for through them you give
94 me life. | I am yours; save me, for I have sought your precepts.
95 | Sinners wait to destroy me, but I pay heed to your decrees. |
96 I see that all fulfillment has its limits; broad indeed is your
command.

Mem

97 How I love your law, O Lord! It is my meditation all the day.
98 | Your command has made me wiser than my enemies, for it is
99 ever with me. | I have more understanding than all my teachers
100 when your decrees are my meditation. | I have more discern-
101 ment than the elders, because I observe your precepts. | From
every evil way I withhold my feet, that I may keep your words.
102 | From your ordinances I turn not away, for you have instructed

118, 83: *Leathern flask:* a common water or wine container in the Middle East even today.

118, 97-104: The Law imparts superior wisdom.

me. | How sweet to my palate are your promises, sweeter than
honey to my mouth! | Through your precepts I gain discern-
ment; therefore I hate every false way.

Nun

A lamp to my feet is your word, a light to my path. |
I resolve and swear to keep your just ordinances. | I am very
much afflicted; O Lord, give me life according to your word. |
Accept, O Lord, the free homage of my mouth, and teach me
your decrees. | Though constantly I take my life in my hands,
yet I forget not your law. | The wicked have laid a snare for
me, but from your precepts I have not strayed. | Your decrees
are my inheritance forever; the joy of my heart they are. |
I intend in my heart to fulfill your statutes always, to the letter.

Samech

I hate men of divided heart, but I love your law. | You are
my refuge and my shield; in your word I hope. | Depart from
me, you wrongdoers, and I will observe the commands of my
God. | Sustain me as you have promised, that I may live;
disappoint me not in my hope. | Help me, that I may be safe
and ever delight in your statutes. | You despise all who stray
from your statutes, for their deceitfulness is in vain. | You
account all the wicked of the earth as dross; therefore I love
your decrees. | My flesh shudders with dread of you, and I fear
your ordinances.

Ain

I have fulfilled just ordinances; leave me not to my oppres-
sors. | Be surety for the welfare of your servant; let not the
proud oppress me. | My eyes strain after your salvation and
your just promise. | Deal with your servant according to your
kindness, and teach me your statutes. | I am your servant;
give me discernment that I may know your decrees. | It is time
for the Lord to act: they have broken your law. | For I love
your command more than gold, however fine. | For in all your
precepts I go forward; every false way I hate.

Phe

Wonderful are your decrees; therefore I observe them. |

118, 109: *Though constantly I take my life in my hands:* by observing the Law the just man's life is threatened by his persecutors.

118, 113: *Men of divided heart:* men who are not wholly committed to God.

130 The revelation of your words sheds light, giving understand-
131 ing to the simple. | I gasp with open mouth in my yearning for
132 your commands. | Turn to me in pity as you turn to those who
133 love your name. | Steady my footsteps according to your prom-
134 ise, and let no iniquity rule over me. | Redeem me from the
135 oppression of men, that I may keep your precepts. | Let your
countenance shine upon your servant, and teach me your
136 statutes. | My eyes shed streams of tears because your law
has not been kept.

Sade

137.138 You are just, O Lord, and your ordinance is right. | You
have pronounced your decrees in justice and in perfect faithful-
139 ness. | My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your
140 words. | Your promise is very sure, and your servant loves
141 it. | I am mean and contemptible, but your precepts I have not
142 forgotten. | Your justice is everlasting justice, and your law
143 is permanent. | Though distress and anguish have come upon
144 me, your commands are my delight. | Your decrees are forever
just; give me discernment that I may live.

Coph

145 I call out with all my heart; answer me, O Lord; I will
146 observe your statutes. | I call upon you; save me, and I will
147 keep your decrees. | Before dawn I come and cry out; I hope
148 in your words. | My eyes greet the night watches in meditation
149 on your promise. | Hear my voice according to your kindness,
150 O Lord; according to your ordinance give me life. | I am
attacked by malicious persecutors who are far from your law. |
151 You, O Lord, are near, and all your commands are permanent.
152 | Of old I know from your decrees, that you have established
them forever.

Res

153 Behold my affliction, and rescue me, for I have not forgotten
154 your law. | Plead my cause, and redeem me; for the sake of
155 your promise give me life. | Far from sinners is salvation,
156 because they seek not your statutes. | Your compassion is
great, O Lord; according to your ordinances give me life. |
157 Though my persecutors and my foes are many, I turn not away
158 from your decrees. | I beheld the apostates with loathing,
159 because they kept not to your promise. | See how I love your
160 precepts, O Lord; in your kindness give me life. | Permanence
is your word's chief trait; each of your just ordinances is
everlasting.

Sin

161 Princes persecute me without cause but my heart stands
162 in awe of your word. | I rejoice at your promise, as one who
163 has found rich spoil. | Falsehood I hate and abhor; your law
164 I love. | Seven times a day I praise you for your just ordi-
165 nances. | Those who love your law have great peace, and for
166 them there is no stumbling block. | I wait for your salvation,
167 O Lord, and your commands I fulfill. | I keep your decrees and
168 love them deeply. | I keep your precepts and your decrees, for
all my ways are before you.

Thau

169 Let my cry come before you, O Lord; in keeping with your
170 word, give me discernment. | Let my supplication reach you;
171 rescue me according to your promise. | My lips pour forth
172 your praise, because you teach me your statutes. | May my
tongue sing of your promise, for all your commands are just. |
173 Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your
174 precepts. | I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law
175 is my delight. | Let my soul live to praise you, and may your
176 ordinances help me. | I have gone astray [like a lost sheep];
seek your servant, because your commands I do not forget.

PSALM 119 (120)

A Complaint against Treacherous Tongues

1 A song of ascents.
In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. |
2 O Lord, deliver me from lying lip, from treacherous tongue.
3 What will he inflict on you, with more besides, O treacherous

118, 164: *Seven times:* a common Hebrew way of saying many times.

119, 1-7: Each of the following fourteen psalms is entitled: "A Song of Ascents." The best explanation of this title is that these were the "pilgrim songs" sung by the pilgrims as they ascended "the mountain of Jerusalem" to celebrate there the annual feasts. Ps 83 belongs to this group. This devotional "hymnal" was written after the exile. Two improbable opinions are: that these songs were sung by the exiles as they returned from Babylon and "ascended" to Jerusalem, or sung by the Levites on the fifteen steps which "ascended" from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Israelites in the temple. According to this last opinion, the Roman Breviary calls these songs, "Gradual Psalms" or "Psalms of the Steps." Ps 119 is the lament of an individual against his enemies and thereby raises a problem why this psalm should be one of the "pilgrim songs."

119, 3: *With more besides:* one example of the common cursing formula is in 1 Sm 14, 44: "And Saul said: May God do so and so to me, and add still more!"

4 tongue? | Sharp arrows of a warrior with fiery coals of brush-
wood.
5 Woe is me that I sojourn in Mosoch, that I dwell amid the
6 tents of Cedar! | All too long have I dwelt with those who
7 hate peace. | When I speak of peace, they are ready for war.

PSALM 120 (121)

The Lord Our Guardian

1 A song of ascents.
I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; whence shall help
2 come to me? | My help is from the Lord, who made heaven
and earth.
3 May he not suffer your foot to slip; may he slumber not who
4 guards you: | indeed he neither slumbers nor sleeps, the
guardian of Israel.
5 The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade; he is
6 beside you at your right hand. | The sun shall not harm you by
day, nor the moon by night.
7 The Lord will guard you from all evil; he will guard your
8 life. | The Lord will guard your coming and your going, both
now and forever.

PSALM 121 (122)

The Pilgrim's Greetings to Jerusalem

1 A song of ascents. Of David.
I rejoiced because they said to me, "We will go up to the
2 house of the Lord." | And now we have set foot within your
3 gates, O Jerusalem— | Jerusalem, built as a city with compact
unity.

119, 4: The psalmist's malediction is that he wants the enemy to be shot with an arrow or burned with "fiery coals" of the broom plant ("brushwood"), reputed for its heat.

119, 5: *Mosoch . . . Cedar:* these people are probably used to signify barbarians in general.

120, 1-8: A pilgrim song. See Ps 119, 1-7 n. This psalm on confidence in God is perhaps the most lyrical of the pilgrim songs. Many scholars agree more on its dialogue form than they do on the participants of the dialogue. Are they the psalmist and his companions? The pilgrims and their leader?

120, 1: *The mountains:* the site of the Jerusalem temple.

120, 3: *May . . . slip:* may the Lord not allow you to suffer sorrow.

120, 6: 4 Kgs 4, 18ff is an example of sunstroke in the Bible. The moonlight was also considered harmful.

120, 8: *Your coming and your going:* a biblical expression meaning man's activities in general. See Dt 28, 3-68 n.

121, 1-9: A pilgrim's song in praise of Jerusalem upon his arrival there. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

4 To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, according to the
decree for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. |
5 In it are set up judgment seats, seats for the house of David.
6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May those who love you
7 prosper! | May peace be within your walls, prosperity in your
8 buildings. | Because of my relatives and friends I will say,
9 "Peace be within you!" | Because of the house of the Lord, our
God, I will pray for your good.

PSALM 122 (123)
Israel's Prayer in Persecution

1 A song of ascents.
To you I lift up my eyes who are enthroned in heaven. |
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters,
as the eyes of a maid are on the hands of her mistress, so are
our eyes on the Lord, our God, till he have pity on us.
3 Have pity on us, O Lord, have pity on us, for we are more
4 than sated with contempt; | our souls are more than sated with
the mockery of the arrogant, with the contempt of the proud.

PSALM 123 (124)
The Lord the Rescuer of His People

1 A song of ascents. Of David.
2 Had not the Lord been with us, let Israel say, | had not the
3 Lord been with us—when men rose up against us, | then would
they have swallowed us alive. When their fury was inflamed
4 against us, | then would the waters have overwhelmed us;
5 the torrent would have swept over us; | over us then would
have swept the raging waters.
6 Blessed be the Lord, who did not leave us a prey to their teeth.
7 | We were rescued like a bird from the fowlers' snare; broken
8 was the snare, and we were freed. | Our help is in the name
of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.[1]

121, 6: *Peace:* "shalom" was the Hebrew word of greeting.
122, 1-4: A pilgrim's song of lament. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.
122, 2: Just as a servant depends on his master so do the people depend on God.
122, 3-4: A reference to enemies of the nation.
123, 1-8: A pilgrim song of thanksgiving for deliverance from their enemies in some undetermined national danger. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.
123, 4-5: *Waters:* a frequent biblical figure of trouble and sorrow.

PSALM 124 (125)

The Lord the Protector of Israel

1 A song of ascents.
They who trust in the Lord are like Mount Sion, which is
2 immovable; which forever stands. | Mountains are round about
Jerusalem; so the Lord is round about his people, both now and
forever.
3 For the scepter of the wicked shall not remain upon the
territory of the just, lest the just put forth to wickedness their
hands.
4 Do good, O Lord, to the good and to the upright of heart. |
5 But such as turn aside to crooked ways may the Lord lead away
with the evildoers! Peace be upon Israel!

PSALM 125 (126)

The People's Prayer for Full Restoration

1 A song of ascents.
When the Lord brought back the captives of Sion, we were
2 like men dreaming. | Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with rejoicing. Then they said among the
3 nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." | The
Lord has done great things for us; we are glad indeed.
4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the torrents in the southern
5.6 desert. | Those that sow in tears shall reap rejoicing. | Al-
though they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown, they
shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves.

PSALM 126 (127)

The Need of God's Blessing: His Gift of Sons

1 A song of ascents. Of Solomon.
Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build
it. Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep
2 vigil. | It is vain for you to rise early, or put off your rest, you
that eat hard-earned bread, for he gives to his beloved in sleep

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124, 1-5: A pilgrim song of lament and confidence in God. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

124, 3: The scepter does not necessarily signify domination by a foreign nation.

125, 1-6: A pilgrim song on a happy return from exile (vv. 1-3) and a plea for a bright future in the rebuilding of the nation (vv. 4-6). See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

125, 4: An allusion to an unexpected rainstorm. May God help the people rebuild their nation with similar "stormy" speed.

126, 1-5: A pilgrim's song of wisdom. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

126, 1-2: Man's activities are vain without God's help.

126, 2: The poet, alluding to the ancient farmers ("You that eat

3 Behold, sons are a gift from the Lord; the fruit of the womb
4 is a reward. | Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons
5 of one's youth. | Happy the man whose quiver is filled with them; they shall not be put to shame when they contend with enemies at the gate.

PSALM 127 (128)

The Happy Home of the Just Man

1 A song of ascents.

Happy are you who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways! |
2 For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; happy shall you
3 be, and favored. | Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your home; your children like olive plants around
4 your table. | Behold, thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord.
5 The Lord bless you from Sion: may you see the prosperity
6 of Jerusalem all the days of your life; | may you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel!

PSALM 128 (129)

Prayer for the Overthrow of Israel's Foes

1 A song of ascents.

Much have they oppressed me from my youth, let Israel
2 say, | much have they oppressed me from my youth; yet they
3 have not prevailed against me. | Upon my back the plowers
4 plowed; long did they make their furrows. | But the just Lord has severed the cords of the wicked.
5 May all be put to shame and fall back that hate Sion. |
6 May they be like grass on the housetops, which withers before
7 it is plucked; | with which the reaper fills not his hand, nor the

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hard-earned bread"), says that it is useless to work from early morning ("rise early") to late evening ("put off your rest") unless there is trust in God ("for he gives to his beloved in sleep"). See Mt 6, 25-34 for the same idea taught by Jesus.

126, 3-5: Happy the man whom God blesses with a large family.

126, 5: *Enemies at the gate:* a man has more influence when he appears with many sons to argue his case at the law courts of the square within the city gates.

127, 1-6: A pilgrim's song praising the joys of family life as in Ps 126. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

128, 1-8: A pilgrim's song against the enemies of the nation from its "youth." See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

128, 4: *Cords:* a probable reference to the *yoke* imposed on the nation.

128, 5-8: For this tone of revenge, see Jer 12, 3 n.

128, 6: The grass which grew in the crevices upon the flat-roofed Palestinian houses was short-lived.

8 gatherer of sheaves his arms; | and those that pass by say not,
"The blessing of the Lord be upon you! We bless you in the
name of the Lord!"

PSALM 129 (130)

Prayer for Pardon and Mercy

1 A song of ascents.
Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!
2 | Let your ears be attentive to my voice in supplication:
3 If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, Lord, who can stand? |
4 But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered.
5.6 I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in his word. | My soul
waits for the Lord more than sentinels wait for the dawn.
7 More than sentinels wait for the dawn, | let Israel wait for
the Lord, for with the Lord is kindness and with him is
8 plenteous redemption; | and he will redeem Israel from all
their iniquities.

PSALM 130 (131)

Humble Trust in God

1 A song of ascents. Of David.
O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor are my eyes haughty; I
busy not myself with great things, nor with things too sublime
2 for me. | Nay rather, I have stilled and quieted my soul like a
weaned child. Like a weaned child on its mother's lap, [so is
3 my soul within me.] | O Israel, hope in the Lord, both now
and forever.

128, 8: See Ru 2, 4 for this popular greeting among harvesters.

129, 1-7: This is the sixth penitential psalm (see Ps 6, 2-11 n) of an individual who laments his sins but who has confidence in God. This pilgrim song is commonly used in the liturgy for the faithful departed and known as the *De Profundis*. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

129, 1: *Out of the depths:* the psalmist feels spiritually far away from God.

129, 3: If God were to demand full compensation for sins, who could bear it?

129, 4: Because God forgives so readily, one should revere Him by asking His pardon, and by not offending Him any more.

129, 6-8: *The sentinels:* of the city walls, or the sentinels of a caravan who look anxiously for the first rays of dawn. Passing from himself to the nation, the psalmist is confident that God will also forgive Israel for its sins.

130, 1-3: A pilgrim song of a psalmist who proclaims his confidence in God, and wishes that the nation likewise would confide in God. See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

PSALM 131 (132)

The Pact between David and the Lord

1 A song of ascents.
2 Remember, O Lord, for David all his anxious care: | how he
3 swore to the Lord, vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob: | "I will
not enter the house I live in, nor lie on the couch where I sleep; |
4.5 I will give my eyes no sleep my eyelids no rest, | till I find a
place for the Lord, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob."
6 Behold, we heard of it in Ephratha; we found it in the fields
7 of Jaar. | Let us enter into his dwelling, let us worship at his
8 footstool. | Advance, O Lord, to your resting place you and
9 the ark of your majesty. | May your priests be clothed with
10 justice; let your faithful ones shout merrily for joy. | For the
sake of David your servant, reject not the plea of your anointed.
11 The Lord swore to David a firm promise from which he will
not withdraw: "Your own offspring I will set upon your
12 throne; | if your sons keep my covenant and the decrees which
I shall teach them, their sons, too, forever shall sit upon your
13 throne." | For the Lord has chosen Sion; he prefers her for his
dwelling.
14 "Sion is my resting place forever; in her will I dwell, for I
15 prefer her. | I will bless her with abundant provision, her poor
16 I will fill with bread. | Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
17 and her faithful ones shall shout merrily for joy. | In her will
I make a horn to sprout forth for David; I will place a lamp

131, 1-18: This is a pilgrim song because of the role given to Jerusalem in vv. 14-18. See Ps 119, 1-7 n. What is more important is that this is a royal Messianic psalm in which the psalmist asks God to protect the contemporary Davidic king. The poet establishes his plea on David's past zeal to make a permanent dwelling for the Ark of the Covenant (vv. 1-10), and God's promise of a perpetual Davidic dynasty (vv. 11-13). Some experts believe that this psalm is a verse form of Nathan's prophecy of a perpetual Davidic dynasty (2 Sm 7). Others hold that sometime between the tenth century and 587 B.C. a psalmist prayed that God protect the contemporary king ("your anointed" v. 10 and a "horn" in v. 17), who was in some imminent danger of extinction.

131, 1-5: A reference to David's desire to build the temple. See 2 Sm 7, 1ff.

131, 6-10: A reference to the journey of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, 2 Sm 6.

131, 7: *Footstool:* the Ark of the Covenant was pictured as Yahweh's footstool. See Ps 98, 5.

131, 11-13: A reference to God's promise of a perpetual Davidic dynasty (2 Sm 7, 12ff).

131, 14-18: God's preference for Jerusalem.

131, 17: *A horn to sprout forth for David:* a powerful royal Davidic descendant. See Ps 131, 1-18 n. *A lamp:* a symbol of a perpetual posterity.

18 for my anointed. | His enemies I will clothe with shame, but upon him my crown shall shine."

PSALM 132 (133)

The Benefits of Brotherly Concord

1 A song of ascents. Of David.
Behold, how good it is, and how pleasant, where brethren
2 dwell at one! | It is as when the precious ointment upon the head runs down over the beard, the beard of Aaron, till it
3 runs down upon the collar of his robe. | It is a dew like that of Hermon, which comes down upon the mountains of Sion; for there the Lord has pronounced his blessing, life forever.

PSALM 133 (134)

Exhortation to the Night Watch To Bless the Lord

1 A song of ascents.
Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who stand in the house of the Lord during the hours of night.
2 | Lift up your hands toward the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. |
3 May the Lord bless you from Sion, the maker of heaven and earth.

PSALM 134 (135)

Praise of God, the Lord and Benefactor of Israel

1 Alleluia.
Praise the name of the Lord; praise, you servants of the Lord

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132, 1-3: This wisdom pilgrim song, which praises brethren dwelling together, is generally understood to mean the pilgrims dwelling with their relatives in Jerusalem where the former go for the feasts. The joy of this reunion is expressed by the two metaphors of ointment (v. 2) and dew (v. 3). See Ps 119, 1-7 n.

132, 2: An elaboration of Ex 30, 30.

132, 3: *Hermon:* a mountain in the north of the Holy Land. Perhaps the psalmist was visualizing the numerous people blanketing the mountain city of Jerusalem from top to bottom like ointment or dew.

133, 1-3: This pilgrim song (see Ps 119, 1-7 n) is a hymn sung in the temple. There are several explanations for this psalm besides those given in the annotations.

133, 1: *Servants of the Lord:* priests and Levites.

133, 1-2: These verses were sung by the people perhaps during a closing liturgical function in the evening at one of the feasts, or at the opening evening devotion of the Feast of Tabernacles.

133, 2: *Lift up your hands:* the gesture of blessing.

133, 3: The priests respond by blessing the people.

134, 1-21: This hymn of praise has borrowed from other psalms, and this is one reason why it is dated after the exile.

134, 1-4: An introductory invitation to praise God.

134, 1-2: These verses resemble Ps 133, 1.

who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house
of our God. | Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise
to his name, which we love; | for the Lord has chosen Jacob
for himself, Israel for his own possession.
For I know that the Lord is great; our Lord is greater than all
gods. | All that the Lord wills he does in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and in all the deeps. | He raises storm clouds from
the end of the earth; with the lightning he makes the rain; he
brings forth the winds from his storehouse.
He smote the first-born in Egypt, both of man and of beast. |
He sent signs and wonders into your midst, O Egypt, against
Pharao and against all his servants. | He smote many nations
and slew mighty kings: | Sehon, king of the Amorrites, and
Og, king of Basan, and all the kings of Chanaan; | and he
made their land a heritage, the heritage of Israel his people. |
Your name, O Lord, endures forever; Lord is your title through
all generations, | for the Lord defends his people, and is merci-
ful to his servants.
The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the handiwork
of men. | They have mouths but speak not; they have eyes but
see not; | they have ears but hear not, nor is there breath in
their mouths. | Their makers shall be like them, everyone that
trusts in them.
House of Israel, bless the Lord, house of Aaron, bless the
Lord, | house of Levi, bless the Lord; you who fear the Lord,
bless the Lord. | Blessed from Sion be the Lord, who dwells in
Jerusalem.

PSALM 135 (136)

Hymn of Thanksgiving for the Everlasting Kindness of the Lord

Alleluia.
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures
forever; | give thanks to the God of gods, for his mercy endures
forever; | give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his mercy
endures forever;

134, 5-7: Yahweh's saving acts of creation.
134, 8-14: Yahweh's saving acts of the Exodus and of the conquest of the Promised Land.
134, 10-12: See Nm 21, 21-35; Dt 3, 8-11.
134, 15-18: These verses are the same as Ps 113B, vv. 4-6 and 8.
134, 19-21: These verses resemble Ps 117, 1-4.
135, 1-26: This is a thanksgiving hymn of praise in the dress of a litany with a refrain in each verse. The themes of God's saving acts of creation (vv. 4-9), the Exodus, and the conquest up to the Promised

4 Who alone does great wonders, for his mercy endures for-
5 ever; | who made the heavens in wisdom, for his mercy endures
6 forever; | who spread out the earth upon the waters, for his
7 mercy endures forever; | who made the great lights, for his
8 mercy endures forever; | the sun to rule over the day, for
9 his mercy endures forever; | the moon and the stars to rule over
the night, for his mercy endures forever;
10 Who smote the Egyptians in their first-born, for his mercy
11 endures forever; | and brought out Israel from their midst, for
12 his mercy endures forever; | with a mighty hand and an out-
13 stretched arm, for his mercy endures forever; | who split the
14 Red Sea in twain, for his mercy endures forever; | and led
15 Israel through its midst, for his mercy endures forever; | but
swept Pharao and his army into the Red Sea, for his mercy
16 endures forever; | who led his people through the wilderness,
17 for his mercy endures forever; | who smote great kings, for
18 his mercy endures forever; | and slew powerful kings, for his
19 mercy endures forever; | Sehon, king of the Amorrites, for his
20 mercy endures forever; | and Og, king of Basan, for his mercy
21 endures forever; | and made their land a heritage, for his
22 mercy endures forever; | the heritage of Israel his servant, for
his mercy endures forever;
23 Who remembered us in our abjection, for his mercy endures
24 forever; | and freed us from our foes, for his mercy endures
25 forever; | who gives food to all flesh, for his mercy endures
26 forever. | Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his mercy
endures forever.

PSALM 136 (137)

1 ***The Exile's Remembrance of Sion*** By the streams of
2 Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Sion. | On the

Land (vv. 10-22) resemble the themes of Ps 134. Verses 23-26 may be indicative of an exilic or postexilic date. Perhaps in the temple service the people sang the refrain and the Levites or a soloist sang the rest, or two alternating choirs sang the psalm. In the Jewish liturgy this psalm is known with or without Ps 134 as the Great Hallel, as distinguished from the Little Hallel of Pss 112—117. See Ps 112, 1-9 n.

135, 17-22: These verses, discounting the refrains, resemble Ps 134, 10-12.

136, 1-9: A lamenting song of Sion (Jerusalem). The psalm was probably written after the Babylonian exile by a poet reflecting on his sentiments during the exile.

136, 1: The Offertory verse of the twentieth Sunday after Pentecost uses this verse to make us think of the Holy City of Heaven. *Streams:* the intertwining canals of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. *We sat:* the normal position for mourning in the ancient Near East.

136, 2: *Aspens:* not the "willows" but a Mesopotamian species of poplars.

3 aspens of that land we hung up our harps, | though there our
captors asked of us the lyrics of our songs, and our despoilers
urged us to be joyous: "Sing for us the songs of Sion!"
4 How could we sing a song of the Lord in a foreign land? |
5 If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten!
6 | May my tongue cleave to my palate if I remember you not, if
I place not Jerusalem ahead of my joy.
7 Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom, the day of
Jerusalem, when they said, "Raze it, raze it down to its founda-
8 tions!" | O daughter of Babylon, you destroyer, happy the man
9 who shall repay you the evil you have done us! | Happy the
man who shall seize and smash your little ones against the
rock!

PSALM 137 (138)
Hymn of a Grateful Heart

1 Of David.
I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart, [for you
have heard the words of my mouth;] in the presence of the
2 angels I will sing your praise; | I will worship at your holy
temple and give thanks to your name, because of your kindness
and your truth; for you have made great above all things your
3 name and your promise. | When I called, you answered me;
you built up strength within me.
4 All the kings of the earth shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
5 when they hear the words of your mouth; | and they shall sing
of the ways of the Lord: "Great is the glory of the Lord." |

136, 7-9: Similarly, the prophets often bitterly referred to the Edomites taking advantage of helpless Juda as the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 587 B.C. (v. 7). See the Introduction to Abdia for this background and for an explanation of the unchristian animosity toward Edom and Babylon (vv. 8-9).

136, 8: *Daughter of Babylon:* "daughter" is a frequent biblical Hebrew way of saying "city."

136, 9: The psalmist is not suggesting anything new, but simply refers to an accepted war practice of those days as exemplified in 4 Kgs 8, 12.

137, 1-8: A thanksgiving psalm of an individual liberated from suffering.

137, 1: The words in brackets are in the Greek version but not in the current Hebrew text. They are probably a variant of v. 4*b*, accidentally inserted here. *The angels;* in Hebrew *elohim,* which is the word for "God," "gods," and sometimes "godlike beings," such as the angels.

137, 4-6: The greatness of God in the psalmist's personal deliverance leads him to think of God's greatness in His universal rule which causes the poet to invite "the kings of the earth" in his thanksgiving. This may be an explanation of similar passages as, e.g., in Ps 21, 28-32.

6 The Lord is exalted, yet the lowly he sees, and the proud he
knows from afar.
7 Though I walk amid distress, you preserve me; against the
anger of my enemies you raise your hand; your right hand
8 saves me. | The Lord will complete what he has done for me;
your kindness, O Lord, endures forever; forsake not the work
of your hands.

PSALM 138 (139)
The All-knowing and Ever-present God

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 O Lord, you have probed me and you know me; | you know
when I sit and when I stand; you understand my thoughts from
3 afar. | My journeys and my rest you scrutinize, with all my
4 ways you are familiar. | Even before a word is on my tongue,
5 behold, O Lord, you know the whole of it. | Behind me and
6 before, you hem me in and rest your hand upon me. | Such
knowledge is too wonderful for me; too lofty for me to attain.
7 Where can I go from your spirit? from your presence where
8 can I flee? | If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I sink to
9 the nether world, you are present there. | If I take the wings
10 of the dawn, if I settle at the farthest limits of the sea, | even
there your hand shall guide me, and your right hand hold me
11 fast. | If I say, "Surely the darkness shall hide me, and night
12 shall be my light"— | for you darkness itself is not dark, and
night shines as the day. [Darkness and light are the same.]
13 Truly you have formed my inmost being; you knit me in my
14 mother's womb. | I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonder-
fully made; wonderful are your works. My soul also you knew
15 full well; | nor was my frame unknown to you when I was
made in secret, when I was fashioned in the depths of the
16 earth. | Your eyes have seen my actions; in your book they are

137, 7-8: The poet trusts in future divine assistance.

138, 1-24: A meditative hymn of praise about God's universal presence and knowledge. The psalmist ends with a resolution to avoid the wicked and to live closer to God (vv. 19-24). The majority date this psalm as postexilic.

138, 2: *When I sit and when I stand:* a Hebrew way of saying "all my actions."

138, 6: This psalm is perhaps the apex in the Old Testament on the topic of God's universal knowledge.

138, 9: A poetic description of the two extremities of the East ("dawn") and West ("farthest limits of the sea").

138, 15: *Depths of the earth:* a metaphor for the "womb" which stresses the mystery, not darkness, of procreation which fascinated the ancient mind of premedical days.

138, 16-18: The text of these three verses is obscure in several places.

all written; my days were limited before one of them existed. |
17 How weighty are your designs, O God; how vast the sum of
18 them! | Were I to recount them, they would outnumber the
sands; did I reach the end of them, I should still be with you.
19 If only you would destroy the wicked, O God, and the men of
20 blood were to depart from me! | Wickedly they invoke your
21 name; your foes swear faithless oaths. | Do I not hate, O Lord,
those who hate you? Those who rise up against you do I not
22 loathe? | With a deadly hatred I hate them; they are my
23 enemies. | Probe me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and
24 know my thoughts; | see if my way is crooked, and lead me in
the way of old.

PSALM 139 (140)

Prayer for Deliverance from the Snares of the Wicked

1 For the leader. A psalm of David.
2 Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men; preserve me from
3 violent men, | from those who devise evil in their hearts, and
4 stir up wars every day. | They make their tongues sharp as
those of serpents; the venom of asps is under their lips.
5 Save me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me
6 from violent men who plan to trip up my feet— | the proud
who have hidden a trap for me; they have spread cords for a
7 net; by the wayside they have laid snares for me. | I say to the
Lord, you are my God; hearken, O Lord, to my voice in
8 supplication. | O God, my Lord, my strength and my salvation;
you are my helmet in the day of battle!
9 Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; further not
10 their plans. | Those who surround me lift up their heads; may
11 the mischief which they threaten overwhelm them. | May he
rain burning coals upon them; may he cast them into the
depths, never to rise.
12 A man of wicked tongue shall not abide in the land; evil
13 shall abruptly entrap the violent man. | I know that the Lord
14 renders justice to the afflicted, judgment to the poor. | Surely

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138, 18: *I should still be with you:* if the poet reached the end of recounting God's "designs," God's own "make up" would still be with him as if he had hardly begun recounting.

138, 24: *The way of old:* as in the days of the patriarchs.

139, 2-14: The psalm is a lament of the psalmist against his enemies. The colorful language does not help in specifying the circumstances of the enmity. Vv. 4 and 6 have several metaphors frequently found in the psalms.

139, 4: See Rom 3, 13.

139, 11: For revenge see Jer 12, 3 n.

the just shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall dwell in your presence.

PSALM 140 (141)

Prayer of a Just Man to Be Saved from Wickedness

1 A psalm of David.

O Lord, to you I call; hasten to me; hearken to my voice
2 when I call upon you. | Let my prayer come like incense before you; the lifting up of my hands, like the evening sacrifice.
3 O Lord, set a watch before my mouth, a guard at the door
4 of my lips. | Let not my heart incline to the evil of engaging in deeds of wickedness with men who are evildoers; and let me not
5 partake of their dainties. | Let the just man strike me; that is kindness; let him reprove me; it is oil for the head, which my head shall not refuse, but I will still pray under these afflictions.
6 | Their judges were cast down over the crag, and they heard
7 how pleasant were my words | as when a plowman breaks furrows in the field, so their bones are strewn by the edge of the nether world.
8 For toward you, O God, my Lord, my eyes are turned; in
9 you I take refuge; strip me not of life. | Keep me from the trap they have set for me, and from the snares of evildoers. |
10 Let all the wicked fall, each into his own net, while I escape.

PSALM 141 (142)

Prayer of a Prisoner in Dire Straits

1 A *maskil* of David. A prayer when he was in the cave.
2 With a loud voice I cry out to the Lord; with a loud voice
3 I beseech the Lord. | My complaint I pour out before him; before
4 him I lay bare my distress. | When my spirit is faint within me, you know my path.

In the way along which I walk they have hid a trap for me. |
5 I look to the right to see, but there is no one who pays me heed. I have lost all means of escape; there is no one who cares for my life.
6 I cry out to you, O Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my por-
7 tion in the land of the living." | Attend to my cry, for I am brought low indeed. Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are

140, 1-10: A lament of the psalmist against his enemies.

140, 2: *The lifting up of my hands:* the gesture of prayer. *The evening sacrifice:* the daily cereal offering. See Ex 29, 39-41.

140, 6-7: The translation and meaning are obscure because of the poor condition of the Hebrew text.

141, 2-8: A lament of an individual against powerful enemies. The psalm seems postexilic because of the kinds of words used.

8 too strong for me. | Lead me forth from prison, that I may give
thanks to your name. The just shall gather around me when you
have been good to me.

PSALM 142 (143)

Prayer of a Penitent in Distress

1 A psalm of David.
O Lord, hear my prayer; hearken to my pleading in your
2 faithfulness; in your justice answer me. | And enter not into
judgment with your servant, for before you no living man is
just.
3 For the enemy pursues me; he has crushed my life to the
ground; he has left me dwelling in the dark, like those long
4 dead. | And my spirit is faint within me, my heart within me
5 is appalled. | I remember the days of old; I meditate on all
6 your doings, the works of your hands I ponder. | I stretch out
my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like parched land.
7 Hasten to answer me, O Lord, for my spirit fails me. Hide
not your face from me lest I become like those who go down
8 into the pit. | At dawn let me hear of your kindness, for in you
I trust. Show me the way in which I should walk, for to you
9 I lift up my soul. | Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for in
you I hope.
10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your good
11 spirit guide me on level ground. | For your name's sake, O
12 Lord, preserve me; in your justice free me from distress, | and
in your kindness destroy my enemies; bring to nought all my
foes, for I am your servant.

PSALM 143 (144)

Prayer for Victory and Prosperity

1 Of David.
Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for battle,
2 my fingers for war; | my refuge and my fortress, my strong-

141, 8: *Prison:* this word may be used figuratively for the woes of the psalmist. *The just shall gather around me:* in the temple when the poet offers his thanksgiving sacrifice.

142, 1-12: A lament of the psalmist who requests God's aid in spite of his sins. He seeks relief from enemies. It is the seventh of the Penitential Psalms. See Ps 6, 2-11 n.

142, 2: The psalmist admits that, according to strict justice, his sins would not allow him a hearing before God.

142, 3: Notice the gradual increase of the enemy's persecutions.

143, 1-15: The borrowings from other psalms gave this psalm poor logical unity and made its classification difficult. Some defend the

hold, my deliverer, my shield, in whom I trust, who subdues peoples under me.

3 Lord, what is man, that you notice him; the son of man, that
4 you take thought of him? | Man is like a breath; his days, like
5 a passing shadow. | Incline your heavens, O Lord, and come
6 down; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke; | flash forth lightning, and put them to flight, shoot your arrows, and
7 rout them; | reach out your hand from on high—deliver me and rescue me from many waters, from the hands of aliens, |
8 whose mouths swear false promises while their right hands are raised in perjury.

9 O God, I will sing a new song to you; with a ten-stringed
10 lyre I will chant your praise, | you who give victory to kings,
11 and deliver David, your servant. | From the evil sword deliver me; and rescue me from the hands of aliens, whose mouths swear false promises while their right hands are raised in perjury.

12 May our sons be like plants well-nurtured in their youth, our daughters like wrought columns such as stand at the corners
13 of the temple. | May our garners be full, affording every kind of store; may our sheep be in the thousands, and increase to
14 myriads in our meadows; | may our oxen be well laden. May there be no breach in the walls, no exile, no outcry in our
15 streets. | Happy the people for whom things are thus; happy the people whose God is the Lord.

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position that the psalm falls into two units, but opinions differ on the precise verses of these two units. The date is disputed from the monarchy (tenth century) to after the exile (sixth century). Not all scholars are convinced that the psalm is speaking of a king since v. 10 may be the psalmist's appeal to God's treatment of kings in the past. This way of appealing to God was common in postexilic Hebrew literature.

143, 1-2: Although this prayer of a victory in war sounds like the words of a king, they could be the hyperbolic words of a mighty warrior. These two verses derive from Ps 17, vv. 3, 35, 47f.

143, 3-7: Man's lowliness and God's power.

143, 3-4: The underlying thought is: precisely because God is so kind the psalmist feels encouraged to make a request.

143, 3: This verse resembles Ps 8, 5.

143, 4: The verse seems to derive from phrases in Pss 38, 6; 101, 12.

143, 5-8: Most of these verses seem to be an adaptation from Ps 17, vv. 10, 15, 17 and Ps 103, 32.

143, 5-6: The psalmist alludes to God's theophany at Mount Sinai with its smoke and lightning.

143, 9-10: These verses resemble Pss 17, 51; 32, 2-3.

143, 12: *Like wrought columns . . . of the temple:* although the precise allusion and the Hebrew text are not clear, the sense is that the daughters are beautifully shaped.

PSALM 144 (145)

The Greatness and Goodness of God

1 Praise. Of David.
I will extol you, O my God and King, and I will bless your
2 name forever and ever. | Every day will I bless you, and I will
3 praise your name forever and ever. | Great is the Lord and
4 highly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. | Generation
after generation praises your works and proclaims your might.
5 They speak of the splendor of your glorious majesty and tell
6 of your wondrous works. | They discourse of the power of
7 your terrible deeds and declare your greatness. | They publish
the fame of your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your
8 justice. | The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and
9 of great kindness. | The Lord is good to all and compassionate
toward all his works.
10 Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord, and let your
11 faithful ones bless you. | Let them discourse of the glory of
12 your kingdom and speak of your might, | making known to
men your might and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. |
13 Your kingdom is a kingdom for all ages, and your dominion
endures through all generations.
The Lord is faithful in all his words and holy in all his
14 works. | The Lord lifts up all who are falling and raises up all
15 who are bowed down. | The eyes of all look hopefully to you,
16 and you give them their food in due season; | you open your
hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.
17 The Lord is just in all his ways and holy in all his works. |
18 The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon
19 him in truth. | He fulfills the desire of those who fear him, he
20 hears their cry and saves them. | The Lord keeps all who love
him, but all the wicked he will destroy.
21 May my mouth speak the praise of the Lord, and may all
flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

PSALM 145 (146)

Trust in God Alone

1 Alleluia.
2 Praise the Lord, O my soul; | I will praise the Lord all my
life; I will sing praise to my God while I live.

144, 1-21: In spite of borrowings from other psalms, this is a powerful alphabetic (see Ps 9A, 2-21 n) hymn praising God's majesty and Providence.

144, 10-13: The underlying thought seems to be that the sovereignty of God is the aim of history.

145, 1-10: A praising hymn of deep confidence in God's goodness.

3 Put not your trust in princes, in man, in whom there is no
4 salvation. | When his spirit departs he returns to his earth; on
that day his plans perish.
5 Happy he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in
6 the Lord, his God, | who made heaven and earth, the sea and
7 all that is in them; | who keeps faith forever, secures justice for
the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets captives
8 free; | the Lord gives sight to the blind. The Lord raises up
9 those that were bowed down; the Lord loves the just. | The
Lord protects strangers; the fatherless and the widow he sus-
10 tains, but the way of the wicked he thwarts. | The Lord shall
reign forever; your God, O Sion, through all generations.
Alleluia.

PSALM 146 (147A)

1 ***Sion's Grateful Praise to Her Bountiful Lord*** Praise
the Lord, for he is good; sing praise to our God, for he is
2 gracious; it is fitting to praise him. | The Lord rebuilds Jeru-
3 salem; the dispersed of Israel he gathers. | He heals the broken-
4 hearted and binds up their wounds. | He tells the number of
5 the stars; he calls each by name. | Great is our Lord and mighty
6 in power; to his wisdom there is no limit. | The Lord sustains
the lowly; the wicked he casts to the ground.
7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise with the
8 harp to our God, | who covers the heavens with clouds, who
provides rain for the earth; who makes grass sprout on the
9 mountains and herbs for the service of men; | who gives food
to the cattle, and to the young ravens when they cry to him. |
10 In the strength of the steed he delights not, nor is he pleased
11 with the fleetness of men. | The Lord is pleased with those who
fear him, with those who hope for his kindness.

PSALM 147 (147B)

12 Glorify the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Sion. |

The "alleluia psalm" is the name given to this and the remaining psalms of the Psalter, because alleluia is found either at the beginning or the end of each of these psalms.

145, 9: The wicked always found easy prey among the "strangers," the "fatherless," or the "widows."

146, 1-11: The present edition follows the Greek and Latin translations of the Psalter which divides Ps 146, 1-11 and Ps 147, 12-20 into two psalms. The current Hebrew text treats all this as only Ps 147, 1-20. Regardless, the complete psalm is a hymn of praise to God who rebuilds the new Israel (vv. 1-6); helps those in need (vv. 7-11); and provides for Jerusalem (Ps 147, 12-20).

147, 12-20: See Ps 146, 1-11 n.

13 For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; he has blessed
14 your children within you. | He has granted peace in your
15 borders; with the best of wheat he fills you. | He sends forth his
16 command to the earth; swiftly runs his word! | He spreads snow
17 like wool; frost he strews like ashes. | He scatters his hail like
18 crumbs; before his cold the waters freeze. | He sends his word
and melts them; he lets his breeze blow and the waters run. |
19 He has proclaimed his word to Jacob, his statutes and his
20 ordinances to Israel. | He has not done thus for any other
nation; his ordinances he has not made known to them. Alleluia.

PSALM 148

Hymn of All Creation to the Almighty Creator

1 Alleluia.
Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights;
2 | praise him, all you his angels, praise him, all you his hosts. |
3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.
4 | Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the
5 heavens. | Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he com-
6 manded and they were created; | he established them forever
and ever; he gave them a duty which shall not pass away.
7 Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all
8 depths; | fire and hail, snow and mist, storm winds that fulfill
9 his word; | you mountains and all you hills, you fruit trees and
10 all you cedars; | you wild beasts and all tame animals, you
creeping things and you winged fowl.
11 Let the kings of the earth and all peoples, the princes and all
12 the judges of the earth, | young men too, and maidens, old
13 men and boys, | praise the name of the Lord, for his name
14 alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven, | and
he has lifted up the horn of his people. Be this his praise from
all his faithful ones, from the children of Israel, the people close
to him. Alleluia.

PSALM 149

Invitation to Glorify the Lord with Song and Sword

1 Alleluia.
Sing to the Lord a new song of praise in the assembly of the

148, 1-14: This is a hymn inviting all nature in the heavens (vv. 1-6) and on earth (vv. 7-10) besides all the peoples of the earth (vv. 11-14) to praise God.

148, 4: *Highest heavens:* the place where the "waters above the heavens" are, i.e., above the skies.

148, 14: *He has lifted up the horn of his people:* God has made His people powerful again.

149, 1-9: This may be classified as a psalm of Yahweh-King. See

faithful. | Let Israel be glad in their maker, let the children of
Sion rejoice in their king. | Let them praise his name in the festive dance, let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp.
| For the Lord loves his people, and he adorns the lowly with
victory. | Let the faithful exult in glory; let them sing for joy
upon their couches; | let the high praises of God be in their throats.
And let two-edged swords be in their hands: | to execute
vengeance on the nations, punishments on the peoples; | to bind
their kings with chains, their nobles with fetters of iron; | to execute on them the written sentence. This is the glory of all his faithful. Alleluia.

PSALM 150

Final Doxology with Full Orchestra

Alleluia.
Praise the Lord in his sanctuary, praise him in the firmament
of his strength. | Praise him for his mighty deeds, praise him
for his sovereign majesty. | Praise him with the blast of the
trumpet, praise him with lyre and harp, | praise him with
timbrel and dance, praise him with strings and pipe. | Praise him with sounding cymbals, praise him with clanging cymbals.
| Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Alleluia.

Ps 92, 1-5 n. This hymn of praise is sung in the temple by those who look hopefully to a prosperous future. It is not clear just what national situation this psalm describes.

150, 1-6: The closing hymn of the Psalter invites all the temple musicians to praise God for everything He gave mankind.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Proverbs contains independent and disconnected maxims in addition to some essays on wisdom. The subject matter of this anthology of wisdom literature stretches from sublime theological truths, such as some of God's attributes, down to advice on how to get along with people. A ready-made summary and theme of the book is given in 1, 7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

The poetry of Proverbs is in the form of couplets in rhythmic parallelism of thought without rhyme. The Hebrew puns and assonances are untranslatable. It is always tempting to compare Proverbs with the Psalms. A parallel comparison in English literature may be drawn thus: John Dryden and Proverbs compress into a couplet what John Donne and the Psalms extend into a stanza.

The book is composed, like the Pentateuch, from various sources dating from different centuries. Two of the oldest collections, dating perhaps from the time of Solomon in the tenth century B.C., are Prv 10—22 and 25—29. In the fifth century B.C. Prv 1—9 have been added and the book has attained its final form. It is too difficult to date the rest of the book. Some parts of the book were transmitted orally before being written down. From the history of the composition it follows that, although king Solomon may have been responsible for some of the writing, the wholesale attribution of the book to Solomon in 1, 1 was due to the fact that he was the initiator of Sapiential literature, just as Moses was the initiator of Pentateuchal literature (see Introduction to the Pentateuch).

The biblical Proverbs were not isolated in the literary world of their day. There are several fragmentary Mesopotamian collections of proverbs, largely secular and pessimistic. The most famous of these is a short collection called "The Babylonian Book of Proverbs." Its date is uncertain. The Egyptian proverbial literature is even more copious than the Mesopotamian. The oldest of five Egyptian works, containing instructions by a king or vizier to his son, is "The Teaching of Ptahhotep," dating from about 2500 B.C. Finally, there circulated throughout the ancient Near East "The Story of Ahiqar," which dates from about the sixth century B.C. It was written in Aramaic, the language closest to Hebrew. This story was also popular in post-Christian times and reappears in "Arabian Nights" ("Thousand and One Nights").

In the New Testament there are fourteen quotations and about twenty allusions to Proverbs.

Main divisions of the Book of Proverbs are:

1. The Value of Wisdom, 1—9
2. First Collection of the Proverbs of Solomon, 10, 1—22, 16
3. Sayings of the Wise, 22, 17—24, 22
4. Other Sayings of the Wise, 24, 23-34
5. Second Collection of the Proverbs of Solomon, 25—29

6. The Words of Agur, 30, 1-14
7. Numerical Proverbs, 30, 15-33
8. The Words of Lamuel, 31, 1-9
9. The Ideal Wife, 31, 10-31

I. INTRODUCTION: THE VALUE OF WISDOM

1

1 ***Purpose of the Proverbs of Solomon*** The proverbs of
2 Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel: | that men may
appreciate wisdom and discipline, may understand words of
3 intelligence; | may receive training in wise conduct, in what is
4 right, just and honest; | that resourcefulness may be imparted
to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. |
5 A wise man by hearing them will advance in learning, an
6 intelligent man will gain sound guidance, | that he may com-
prehend proverb and parable, the words of the wise and their
riddles.
7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; wisdom
and instruction fools despise.

8 ***The Path of the Wicked: Greed and Violence*** Hear,
my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's
9 teaching; | a graceful diadem will they be for your head; a
10 torque for your neck. | My son, should sinners entice you, |
11 and say, "Come along with us! Let us lie in wait for the honest
12 man, let us, unprovoked, set a trap for the innocent; | let us
swallow them up, as the nether world does, alive, in the prime
13 of life, like those who go down to the pit! All kinds of precious
wealth shall we gain, we shall fill our houses with booty; |
14 cast in your lot with us, we shall all have one purse!"—
15 My son, walk not in the way with them, hold back your foot

1, 7: The expression "fear of the Lord" is frequently found in the Old Testament, especially after the sixth century exile. The phrase connotes a cringing fear to the modern reader. It is true that the substratum of this concept consists of man's sentiments of dread and insignificance before an awesome and holy God. Yet the expression often embodies a love for God, and that is why fear is often explicitly accompanied with the mention of reverence (Mal 1, 6) and love (Dt 10, 12). Hence in our text "fear" is the essence ("beginning") of knowledge or of wisdom, or of living religiously.

1, 8: *Mother's teaching:* there is no book in the Bible which says more about respecting one's mother than Proverbs.

1, 12: *Pit:* a synonym for "nether world."

16 from their path! | [For their feet run to evil, they hasten to
17 shed blood.] | It is in vain that a net is spread before the eyes
18 of any bird— | These men lie in wait for their own blood, they
19 set a trap for their own lives. | This is the fate of everyone greedy of loot: unlawful gain takes away the life of him who acquires it.

20 ***Wisdom in Person Gives Warning*** Wisdom cries aloud
21 in the street, in the open squares she raises her voice; | down the crowded ways she calls out, at the city gates she utters her
22 words: | "How long, you simple ones, will you love inanity,
23 | how long will you turn away at my reproof? Lo! I will pour out to you my spirit, I will acquaint you with my words.
24 "Because I called and you refused, I extended my hand and
25 no one took notice; | because you disdained all my counsel,
26 and my reproof you ignored— | I, in my turn, will laugh at
27 your doom; I will mock when terror overtakes you; | when terror comes upon you like a storm, and your doom approaches like a whirlwind; when distress and anguish befall you.
28 "Then they call me, but I answer not; they seek me, but find
29 me not; | because they hated knowledge, and chose not the
30 fear of the Lord; | they ignored my counsel, they spurned all my reproof; and in their arrogance they preferred arrogance,
31 and like fools they hated knowledge: | "Now they must eat the fruit of their own way, and with their own devices be glutted.
32 | For the self-will of the simple kills them, the smugness of
33 fools destroys them. | But he who obeys me dwells in security, in peace, without fear of harm."

2

1 ***The Blessings of Wisdom*** My son, if you receive my
2 words and treasure my commands, | turning your ear to wis-
3 dom, inclining your heart to understanding; | yes, if you call
4 to intelligence, and to understanding raise your voice; | if you seek her like silver, and like hidden treasures search her out:
5 Then will you understand the fear of the Lord; the knowl-
6 edge of God you will find; | for the Lord gives wisdom, from
7 his mouth come knowledge and understanding; | he has counsel in store for the upright, he is the shield of those who walk
8 honestly, | guarding the paths of justice, protecting the way of his pious ones.
9 Then you will understand rectitude and justice, honesty,

1, 16: An inspired gloss from Is 59, 7.
1, 20-33: The personification of wisdom.

10 every good path; | for wisdom will enter your heart, knowledge
11 will please your soul, | discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you;
12 saving you from the way of evil men, from men of perverse
13 speech, | who leave the straight paths to walk in ways of dark-
14 ness, | who delight in doing evil, rejoice in perversity; |
15 whose ways are crooked, and devious their paths;
16 saving you from the wife of another, from the adulteress
17 with her smooth words, | who forsakes the companion of her
18 youth and forgets the pact with her God; | for her path sinks
19 down to death, and her footsteps lead to the shades; | none who enter thereon come back again, or gain the paths of life.
20 Thus you may walk in the way of good men, and keep to the
21 paths of the just. | For the upright will dwell in the land, the
22 honest will remain in it; | but the wicked will be cut off from the land, the faithless will be rooted out of it.

3

1 ***Attitude toward the Lord*** My son, forget not my teach-
2 ing, keep in mind my commands; | for many days, and years of life, and peace, will they bring you.
3 Let not kindness and fidelity leave you; bind them around
4 your neck; | then will you win favor and good esteem before God and man.
5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelli-
6 gence rely not; | in all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths.
7 Be not wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and turn away
8 from evil; | this will mean health for your flesh and vigor for your bones.
9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all
10 your produce; | then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow.
11 The discipline of the Lord, my son, disdain not; spurn not his
12 reproof; | for whom the Lord loves he reproves, and he chastises the son he favors.

13 ***The Value of Wisdom*** Happy the man who finds wisdom,
14 the man who gains understanding! | For her profit is better than profit in silver, and better than gold is her revenue; |
15 she is more precious than corals, and none of your choice possessions can compare with her.
16 Long life is in her right hand, in her left are riches and honor;

2, 18: *Shades:* the dead who inhabit the nether world.

17 | her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace; |
18 she is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and he is happy who
holds her fast.
19 The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, established the
20 heavens by understanding; | by his knowledge the depths
21 break open, and the clouds drop down dew. | My son, let not
these slip out of your sight: keep advice and counsel in view;
22 | so will they be life to your soul, and an adornment for your
23 neck. | Then you may securely go your way; your foot will
24 never stumble; | when you lie down, you need not be afraid,
when you rest, your sleep will be sweet.

25 ***Attitude toward Fellow Men*** Be not afraid of sudden
26 terror, of the ruin of the wicked when it comes; | for the Lord
will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from the snare.
27 Refuse no one the good on which he has a claim when it is in
28 your power to do it for him. | Say not to your neighbor,
"Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give," when you can
give at once.
29 Plot no evil against your neighbor, against him who lives at
30 peace with you. | Quarrel not with a man without cause, with
one who has done you no harm.
31 Envy not the lawless man and choose none of his ways: |
32 to the Lord the perverse man is an abomination, but with the
upright is his friendship.
33 The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but the
34 dwelling of the just he blesses; | when he is dealing with the
arrogant, he is stern, but to the humble he shows kindness.
35 [Honor is the portion of wise men, but fools inherit shame.]

4

1 ***Wisdom: the Supreme Guide of Men*** Hear, O children,
a father's instruction, be attentive, that you may gain under-
2 standing! | Yes, excellent advice I give you; my teaching do
3 not forsake. | When I was my father's child, frail, yet the
4 darling of my mother, | he taught me, and said to me: "Let
5 your heart hold fast my words! | Keep my commands, do not
forget; go not astray from the words of my mouth.
7 "The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom; at the cost of all
6 you have, get understanding. | Forsake her not, and she will
8 preserve you; love her, and she will safeguard you; | extol her,
and she will exalt you; she will bring you honors if you embrace

3. 20: *The depths:* the waters beneath the earth. See chart, p. 8.

9 her; | she will put on your head a graceful diadem; a glorious
crown will she bestow on you."

10 ***The Good and the Evil Way*** Hear, my son, and receive
11 my words, and the years of your life shall be many. | On the
way of wisdom I direct you, I lead you on straightforward
12 paths. | When you walk, your step will not be impeded, and
13 should you run, you will not stumble. | Hold fast to instruc-
tion, never let her go; keep her, for she is your life.
14 The path of the wicked enter not, walk not on the way of
15 evil men; | shun it, cross it not, turn aside from it, and pass
16 on. | For they cannot rest unless they have done evil; to have
17 made no one stumble steals away their sleep. | For they eat
the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.
19 But the path of the just is like shining light, that grows in
18 brilliance till perfect day. | The way of the wicked is like
20 darkness; they know not on what they stumble. | My son, to my
21 words be attentive, to my sayings incline your ear; | let them
22 not slip out of your sight, keep them within your heart; | for
they are life to those who find them, to man's whole being they
are health.
23 With closest custody, guard your heart, for in it are the
24 sources of life. | Put away from you dishonest talk, deceitful
25 speech put far from you. | Let your eyes look straight ahead
26 and your glance be directly forward. | Survey the path for your
27 feet, and let all your ways be sure. | Turn neither to right nor
to left, keep your foot far from evil.

5

1 ***Warning against Adultery*** My son, to my wisdom be
2 attentive, to my knowledge incline your ear, | that discretion
3 may watch over you, and understanding may guard you. | The
lips of an adulteress drip with honey, and her mouth is smoother
4 than oil; | but in the end she is as bitter as wormwood, as sharp
5 as a two-edged sword. | Her feet go down to death, to the
6 nether world her steps attain; | lest you see before you the road
to life, her paths will ramble, you know not where.

4, 19: *Till perfect day:* probably till full daylight.

4, 25: *Let your eyes:* of your heart (v. 23). It means: exercise control over the feelings of your heart.

4, 27a: This is a Hebraism for the Latin adage: Virtue stands in the middle. Although it is a characteristic saying of the Book of Deuteronomy, this is its only mention in Proverbs.

5, 1ff: This chapter develops 2, 16-19. The motives of self-interest in vv. 9-14 do not dim the sage's lofty ideals of a monogamous marriage.

7 So now, O children, listen to me, go not astray from the
8 words of my mouth. | Keep your way far from her, approach
9 not the door of her house, | lest you give your honor to others,
10 and your years to a merciless one; | lest strangers have their fill
of your wealth, your hard-won earnings go to an alien's house; |
11 and you groan in the end, when your flesh and your body are
12 consumed; | and you say, "Oh, why did I hate instruction, and
13 my heart spurn reproof! | Why did I not listen to the voice of
14 my teachers, nor to my instructors incline my ear! | I have all
but come to utter ruin, condemned by the public assembly!"
15 Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your
16 own well. | How may your water sources be dispersed abroad,
17 streams of water in the streets? | Let your fountain be yours
18 alone, not one shared with strangers; | and have joy of the
19 wife of your youth, | your lovely hind, your graceful doe. Her
love will invigorate you always, through her love you will
6,22 flourish continually, | when you lie down she will watch over
you, and when you wake, she will share your concerns; wher-
5,20 ever you turn, she will guide you. | Why then, my son, should
you go astray for another's wife and accept the embraces of an
adulteress?
21 For each man's ways are plain to the Lord's sight; all their
22 paths he surveys; | by his own iniquities the wicked man will
be caught, in the meshes of his own sin he will be held fast; |
23 he will die from lack of discipline, through the greatness of his
folly he will be lost.

6

1 ***Miscellaneous Proverbs*** My son, if you have become surety
2 to your neighbor, given your hand in pledge to another, | you
have been snared by the utterance of your lips, caught by the
3 words of your mouth; | so do this, my son, to free yourself,
since you have fallen into your neighbor's power: go, hurry,
4 stir up your neighbor! | Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber

5, 9: *A merciless one:* this refers to the vindictive husband as described in 6, 33-35.

5, 15-17: Note the comparison between marital enjoyment and the enjoyment of drinking water decently at the fountain (vv. 15 and 17), or disgracefully in the gutter (v. 16).

5, 19: *Lovely hind . . . graceful doe:* symbols of feminine beauty and charm.

5, 21-23: These verses are best read after 4, 27.

6, 1-19: These verses interrupt the discourse of chs. 2—7, which should be read apart from them.

5 to your eyelids; | free yourself as a gazelle from the snare, or as
a bird from the hand of the fowler.
6 Go to the ant, O sluggard, study her ways and learn wisdom;
7-8 | for though she has no chief, no commander or ruler, | she
procures her food in the summer, stores up her provisions in
9 the harvest. | How long, O sluggard, will you rest? when will
10 you rise from your sleep? | A little sleep, a little slumber, a
11 little folding of the arms to rest— | Then will poverty come
upon you like a highwayman, and want like an armed man.
12 A scoundrel, a villain, is he who deals in crooked talk. |
13 He winks his eyes, shuffles his feet, makes signs with his
14 fingers; | he has perversity in his heart, is always plotting evil,
15 sows discord. | Therefore suddenly ruin comes upon him; in
an instant he is crushed beyond cure.
16 There are six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomi-
17 nation to him; | haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that
18 shed innocent blood; | a heart that plots wicked schemes, feet
19 that run swiftly to evil, | the false witness who utters lies, and
he who sows discord among brothers.

20 ***Warning against Adultery*** Observe, my son, your father's
21 bidding, and reject not your mother's teaching; | keep them
fastened over your heart always, put them around your neck; |
23 for the bidding is a lamp, and the teaching a light, and a way to
24 life are the reproofs of discipline; | to keep you from your
neighbor's wife, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.
25 Lust not in your heart after her beauty, let her not captivate
26 you with her glance! | For the price of a loose woman may be
scarcely a loaf of bread, but if she is married, she is a trap for
27 your precious life. | Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his
28 garments not be burned? | Or can a man walk on live coals,
29 and his feet not be scorched? | So with him who goes in to his
neighbor's wife—none who touches her shall go unpunished.
30 Men despise not the thief if he steals to satisfy his appetite
31 when he is hungry; | yet if he be caught he must pay back
32 sevenfold; all the wealth of his house he may yield up. | But
he who commits adultery is a fool; he who would destroy him-
33 self does it. | A degrading beating will he get, and his disgrace
34 will not be wiped away; | for vindictive is the husband's wrath,
35 he will have no pity on the day of vengeance; | he will not
consider any restitution, nor be satisfied with the greatest gifts.

6, 22: For the general explanation of the different rearrangement of the text, see Za 4, 4ff n.

7
1.2 My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands. | Keep
my commands and live, my teaching as the apple of your eye; |
3 bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your
4 heart. | Say to Wisdom, "You are my sister!" call Understand-
5 ing, "Friend!" | that they may keep you from another's wife,
from the adulteress with her smooth words.
6 For at the window of my house, through my lattice I looked
7 out; | and I saw among the simple ones, I observed among the
8 young men, a youth with no sense, | going along the street
near the corner, then walking in the direction of her house— |
9 in the twilight, at dusk of day, at the time of the dark of night.
10 And lo! the woman comes to meet him, robed like a harlot,
11 with secret designs— | She is fickle and unruly, in her home
12 her feet cannot rest; | now she is in the streets, now in the open
13 squares, and at every corner she lurks in ambush— | When
she seizes him, she kisses him, and with an impudent look says
to him:
14 "I owed peace offerings, and today I have fulfilled my vows;
15 | so I came out to meet you, to look for you, and I have found
16 you! | With coverlets I have spread my couch, with brocaded
17 cloths of Egyptian linen; | I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh,
with aloes, and with cinnamon.
18 "Come, let us drink our fill of love, until morning, let us
19 feast on love! | For my husband is not at home, he has gone on
20 a long journey; | a bag of money he took with him, not till the
full moon will he return home."
21 She wins him over by her repeated urging, with her smooth
22 lips she leads him astray; | he follows her stupidly, like an ox
that is led to slaughter; like a stag that minces toward the net, |
23 till an arrow pierces its liver; like a bird that rushes into a
snare, unaware that its life is at stake.
24 So now, O children, listen to me, be attentive to the words of
25 my mouth! | Let not your heart turn to her ways, go not astray
26 in her paths; | for many are those she has struck down dead,
27 numerous, those she has slain. | Her house is made up of ways
to the nether world, leading down into the chambers of death.

8
1 *The Discourse of Wisdom* Does not Wisdom call, and
2 Understanding raise her voice? | On the top of the heights

7, 14: She invites him to eat the portion left over from her offering at the altar (Lv 7, 11-14). Note the implied irony between the observance of a ritual vow and the unobservance of her marriage vow.

along the road, at the crossroads she takes her stand; | by the
gates at the approaches of the city, in the entryways she cries
aloud: | "To you, O men, I call; my appeal is to the children
of men. | You simple ones, gain resource, you fools, gain sense.
"Give heed! for noble things I speak; honesty opens my lips. |
Yes, the truth my mouth recounts, but wickedness my lips
abhor. | Sincere are all the words of my mouth, no one of them
is wily or crooked; | all of them are plain to the man of intelli-
gence, and right to those who attain knowledge. | Receive my
instruction in preference to silver, and knowledge rather than
choice gold. | [For Wisdom is better than corals, and no choice
possessions can compare with her.]
"I, Wisdom, dwell with experience, and judicious knowledge
I attain. | [The fear of the Lord is to hate evil;] pride, arro-
gance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth I hate. | Mine are
counsel and advice; mine is strength; I am understanding. | By
me kings reign, and lawgivers establish justice; | by me princes
govern, and nobles; all the rulers of earth.
"Those who love me I also love, and those who seek me find
me. | With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and
prosperity. | My fruit is better than gold, yes, than pure gold,
and my revenue than choice silver. | On the way of duty I walk,
along the paths of justice, | granting wealth to those who love
me, and filling their treasuries.
"The Lord begot me, the firstborn of his ways, the forerunner
of his prodigies of long ago; | from of old I was poured forth,
at the first, before the earth. | When there were no depths I
was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of
water; | before the mountains were settled into place, before the
hills, I was brought forth; | while as yet the earth and the fields
were not made, nor the first clods of the world.
"When he established the heavens I was there, when he
marked out the vault over the face of the deep; | when he
made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the foundations of
the earth; | when he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters

8, 22-31: This wisdom poem is developed in Sir 1, 1-29; and ch. 24; Wis 6—10. Compare Jb 28.

In vv. 22-26 wisdom as a quality of God is personified before the creation of the world. *I was poured forth* (v. 23) probably means "born." In vv. 27-31, wisdom is personified as that quality with which God proceeded to create the world.

Although the author here is not thinking of wisdom as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the passage may be considered a preparation for this New Testament doctrine. It is easy to see how aptly the Church accommodates this passage to Mary in the Roman liturgy.

30 should not transgress his command; | then was I beside him
as his craftsman, and I was his delight day by day, playing
31 before him all the while, | playing on the surface of his earth
[and I found delight in the sons of men].
32.33 "So now, O children, listen to me; | instruction and wisdom
do not reject! Happy the man who obeys me, and happy those
34 who keep my ways, | happy the man watching daily at my
35 gates, waiting at my doorposts; | for he who finds me finds life,
36 and wins favor from the Lord; | but he who misses me harms
himself; all who hate me love death."

9

1 ***The Two Banquets*** Wisdom has built her house, she has
2 set up her seven columns; | she has dressed her meat, mixed her
3 wine, yes, she has spread her table. | She has sent out her
4 maidens; she calls from the heights out over the city: | "Let
whoever is simple turn in here; to him who lacks understanding,
5 I say, | Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have
6 mixed! | Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the
way of understanding."
7 He who corrects an arrogant man earns insult; and he who
8 reproves a wicked man incurs opprobrium. | Reprove not an
arrogant man, lest he hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will
9 love you. | Instruct a wise man, and he becomes still wiser;
teach a just man, and he advances in learning.
10 The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and knowl-
11 edge of the Holy One is understanding; | for by me your days
12 will be multiplied and the years of your life increased. | If you
are wise, it is to your own advantage; and if you are arrogant,
you alone shall bear it.
13 The woman Folly is fickle, she is inane, and knows nothing. |
14 She sits at the door of her house upon a seat on the city heights, |
15.16 calling to passers-by as they go on their straight way: | "Let
whoever is simple turn in here, or who lacks understanding; for
17 to him I say, | Stolen water is sweet, and bread gotten secretly
18 is pleasing!" | Little he knows that the shades are there, that in
the depths of the nether world are her guests!

9, 1-6: Dame Wisdom inviting people to her banquet is contrasted with Dame Folly inviting people to her banquet in vv. 13-18.

9, 10a: See explanation in 1, 7 n.

9, 18: *Shades:* a synonym for guests of the nether world. Note the veiled comparison of Dame Folly's banquet chamber likened to an inescapable death chamber.

II. FIRST COLLECTION OF THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

10

1 The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes his father glad,
but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.
2 Ill-gotten treasures profit nothing, but virtue saves from
death.
3 The Lord permits not the just to hunger, but the craving of
the wicked he thwarts.
4 The slack hand impoverishes, but the hand of the diligent
enriches.
5 A son who fills the granaries in summer is a credit; a son
who slumbers during harvest, a disgrace.
6 Blessings are for the head of the just, but a rod for the back
of the fool.
7 The memory of the just will be blessed, but the name of the
wicked will rot.
8 A wise man heeds commands, but a prating fool will be
overthrown.
9 He who walks honestly walks securely, but he whose ways
are crooked will fare badly.
10 He who winks at a fault causes trouble, but he who frankly
reproves promotes peace.
11 A fountain of life is the mouth of the just, but the mouth of
the wicked conceals violence.
12 Hatred stirs up disputes, but love covers all offenses.
13 On the lips of the intelligent is found wisdom, [but the
mouth of the wicked conceals violence].
14 Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool is
imminent ruin.
15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the ruination of the
lowly is their poverty.
16 The just man's recompense leads to life, the gains of the
wicked, to sin.

10, 1—22, 16: The background of these proverbs in this collection is peopled with villagers engaged in agriculture, trading, and troubled with ordinary family problems and court cases.

Some of the most stressed virtues are social justice and charity, honesty, and thrift. Superficially, good conduct seems to be sanctioned by earthly rewards, yet all man's actions are suffused with what pleases God. This is a little higher than to say that the doctrine taught here is: Virtue is its own reward.

10, 12b: This adage reappears in 1 Pt 4, 8.

17 A path to life is his who heeds admonition, but he who disregards reproof goes astray.
18 It is the lips of the liar that conceal hostility; but he who spreads accusations is a fool.
19 Where words are many, sin is not wanting; but he who restrains his lips does well.
20 Like choice silver is the just man's tongue; the heart of the wicked is of little worth.
21 The just man's lips nourish many, but fools die for want of sense.
22 It is the Lord's blessing that brings wealth, and no effort can substitute for it.
23 Crime is the entertainment of the fool; so is wisdom for the man of sense.
24 What the wicked man fears will befall him, but the desire of the just will be granted.
25 When the tempest passes, the wicked man is no more; but the just man is established forever.
26 As vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, is the sluggard to those who use him as a messenger.
27 The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked are brief.
28 The hope of the just brings them joy, but the expectation of the wicked comes to nought.
29 The Lord is a stronghold to him who walks honestly, but to evildoers, their downfall.
30 The just man will never be disturbed, but the wicked will not abide in the land.
31 The mouth of the just yields wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off.
32 The lips of the just know how to please, but the mouth of the wicked, how to pervert.

11

1 False scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a full weight is his delight.
2 When pride comes, disgrace comes; but with the humble is wisdom.
3 The honesty of the upright guides them; the faithless are ruined by their duplicity.
4 Wealth is useless on the day of wrath, but virtue saves from death.
5 The honest man's virtue makes his way straight, but by his wickedness the wicked man falls.

6 The virtue of the upright saves them, but the faithless are caught in their own intrigue.
7 When a wicked man dies his hope perishes, and what is expected from strength comes to nought.
8 The just man escapes trouble, and the wicked man falls into it in his stead.
9 With his mouth the impious man would ruin his neighbor, but through their knowledge the just make their escape.
10 When the just prosper, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.
11 Through the blessing of the righteous the city is exalted, but through the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown.
12 He who reviles his neighbor has no sense, but the intelligent man keeps silent.
13 A newsmonger reveals secrets, but a trustworthy man keeps a confidence.
14 For lack of guidance a people falls; security lies in many counselors.
15 He is in a bad way who becomes surety for another, but he who hates giving pledges is safe.
16 A gracious woman wins esteem, but she who hates virtue is covered with shame.
The slothful become impoverished, but the diligent gain wealth.
17 A kindly man benefits himself, but a merciless man harms himself.
18 The wicked man makes empty profits, but he who sows virtue has a sure reward.
19 Virtue directs toward life, but he who pursues evil does so to his death.
20 The depraved in heart are an abomination to the Lord, but those who walk blamelessly are his delight.
21 Truly the evil man shall not go unpunished, but those who are just shall escape.
22 Like a golden ring in a swine's snout is a beautiful woman with a rebellious disposition.
23 The desire of the just ends only in good; the expectation of the wicked is wrath.
24 One man is lavish yet grows still richer; another is too sparing, yet is the poorer.
25 He who confers benefits will be amply enriched, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.
26 Him who monopolizes grain, the people curse—but blessings upon the head of him who distributes it!

27 He who seeks the good commands favor, but he who pursues
evil will have evil befall him.
28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, but like green leaves the
just flourish.
29 He who upsets his household has empty air for a heritage;
and the fool will become slave to the wise man.
30 The fruit of virtue is a tree of life, but violence takes lives
away.
31 If the just man is punished on earth, how much more the
wicked and the sinner!

12

1 He who loves correction loves knowledge, but he who hates
reproof is stupid.
2 The good man wins favor from the Lord, but the schemer is
condemned by him.
3 No man is built up by wickedness, but the root of the just
will never be disturbed.
4 A worthy wife is the crown of her husband, but a disgraceful
one is like rot in his bones.
5 The plans of the just are legitimate; the designs of the wicked
are deceitful.
6 The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush, but the speech
of the upright saves them.
7 The wicked are overthrown and are no more, but the house
of the just stands firm.
8 According to his good sense a man is praised, but one with
a warped mind is despised.
9 Better a lowly man who supports himself than one of as-
sumed importance who lacks bread.
10 The just man takes care of his beast, but the heart of the
wicked is merciless.
11 He who tills his own land has food in plenty, but he who
follows idle pursuits is a fool.
12 The stronghold of evil men will be demolished, but the root
of the just is enduring.
13 In the sin of his lips the evil man is ensnared, but the just
comes free of trouble.
14 From the fruit of his words a man has his fill of good
things, and the work of his hands comes back to reward him.
15 The way of the fool seems right in his own eyes, but he who
listens to advice is wise.
16 The fool immediately shows his anger, but the shrewd man
passes over an insult.

17 He tells the truth who states what he is sure of, but a lying witness speaks deceitfully.
18 The prating of some men is like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise is healing.
19 Truthful lips endure forever, the lying tongue, for only a moment.
20 Deceit is in the hands of those who plot evil, but those who counsel peace have joy.
21 No harm befalls the just, but the wicked are overwhelmed with misfortune.
22 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who are truthful are his delight.
23 A shrewd man conceals his knowledge, but the hearts of fools gush forth folly.
24 The diligent hand will govern, but the slothful will be enslaved.
25 Anxiety in a man's heart depresses it, but a kindly word makes it glad.
26 The just man surpasses his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
27 The slothful man catches not his prey, but the wealth of the diligent man is great.
28 In the path of justice there is life, but the abominable way leads to death.

13

1 A wise son loves correction, but the senseless one heeds no rebuke.
2 From the fruit of his words a man eats good things, but the treacherous one craves violence.
3 He who guards his mouth protects his life; to open wide one's lips brings downfall.
4 The soul of the sluggard craves in vain, but the diligent soul is amply satisfied.
5 Anything deceitful the just man hates, but the wicked brings shame and disgrace.
6 Virtue guards one who walks honestly, but the downfall of the wicked is sin.
7 One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.

12, 23: Compare Pope's "Essay on Criticism." Referring to hack writers, he says therein: "They'll talk you dead for fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

8 A man's riches serve as ransom for his life, but the poor man
heeds no rebuke.
9 The light of the just shines gaily, but the lamp of the wicked
goes out.
10 The stupid man sows discord by his insolence, but with those
who take counsel is wisdom.
11 Wealth quickly gotten dwindles away, but amassed little by
little, it grows.
12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a wish fulfilled is a
tree of life.
13 He who despises the word must pay for it, but he who reveres
the commandment will be rewarded.
14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that a man
may avoid the snares of death.
15 Good sense brings favor, but the way of the faithless is their
ruin.
16 The shrewd man does everything with prudence, but the fool
peddles folly.
17 A wicked messenger brings on disaster, but a trustworthy
envoy is a healing remedy.
18 Poverty and shame befall the man who disregards correction,
but he who heeds reproof is honored.
19 Lust indulged starves the soul, but fools hate to turn from
evil.
20 Walk with wise men and you will become wise, but the
companion of fools will fare badly.
21 Misfortune pursues sinners, but the just shall be recompensed
with good.
22 The good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,
but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the just.
23 A lawsuit devours the tillage of the poor, but some men
perish for lack of a law court.
24 He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him
takes care to chastise him.
25 When the just man eats, his hunger is appeased; but the
belly of the wicked suffers want.

14

1 Wisdom builds her house, but Folly tears hers down with her
own hands.
2 He who walks uprightly fears the Lord, but he who is devious
in his ways spurns him.

13, 9: *Light . . . lamp:* symbols of life and prosperity.

3 In the mouth of the fool is a rod for his back, but the lips of
the wise preserve them.
4 Where there are no oxen, the crib remains empty; but large
crops come through the strength of the bull.
5 A truthful witness does not lie, but a false witness utters lies.
6 The senseless man seeks in vain for wisdom, but knowledge
is easy to the man of intelligence.
7 To avoid the foolish man, take steps! But knowing lips one
meets with by surprise.
8 The shrewd man's wisdom gives him knowledge of his way,
but the folly of fools is their deception.
9 Guilt lodges in the tents of the arrogant, but favor in the
house of the just.
10 The heart knows its own bitterness, and in its joy no one else
shares.
11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of
the upright will flourish.
12 Sometimes a way seems right to a man, but the end of it leads
to death!
13 Even in laughter the heart may be sad, and the end of joy
may be sorrow.
14 The scoundrel suffers the consequences of his ways, and the
good man reaps the fruit of his paths.
15 The simpleton believes everything, but the shrewd man meas-
ures his steps.
16 The wise man is cautious and shuns evil; the fool is reckless
and sure of himself.
17 The quick-tempered man makes a fool of himself, but the
prudent man is at peace.
18 The adornment of simpletons is folly, but shrewd men gain
the crown of knowledge.
19 Evil men must bow down before the good, and the wicked, at
the gates of the just.
20 Even by his neighbor the poor man is hated, but the friends
of the rich are many.
21 He sins who despises the hungry; but happy is he who is
kind to the poor!

14, 4: The general sense of this obscure Hebrew verse is that hard work will bring large crops.

14, 10: Compare George Herbert's proverb: "None knows the weight of another's burden."

14, 13: See Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark:" "Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught, our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

22 Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those intent on
good gain kindness and constancy.
23 In all labor there is profit, but mere talk tends only to penury.
24 The crown of the wise is resourcefulness; the diadem of fools
is folly.
25 The truthful witness saves lives, but he who utters lies is a
betrayer.
26 In the fear of the Lord is a strong defense; even for one's
children he will be a refuge.
27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that a man may
avoid the snares of death.
28 In many subjects lies the glory of the king; but if his people
are few, it is the prince's ruin.
29 The patient man shows much good sense, but the quick-
tempered man displays folly at its height.
30 A tranquil mind gives life to the body, but jealousy rots the
bones.
31 He who oppresses the poor blasphemes his Maker, but he
who is kind to the needy glorifies him.
32 The wicked man is overthrown by his wickedness, but the
just man finds a refuge in his honesty.
33 In the heart of the intelligent wisdom abides, but in the
bosom of fools it is unknown.
34 Virtue exalts a nation, but sin is a people's disgrace.
35 The king favors the intelligent servant, but the worthless one
incurs his wrath.

15

1 A mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
2 The tongue of the wise pours out knowledge, but the mouth
of fools spurts forth folly.
3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the
evil and the good.
4 A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse one crushes
the spirit.
5 The fool spurns his father's admonition, but prudent is he
who heeds reproof.
6 In the house of the just there are ample resources, but the
earnings of the wicked are in turmoil.
7 The lips of the wise disseminate knowledge, but the heart of
fools is perverted.
8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but
the prayer of the upright is his delight.
9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but he
loves the man who pursues virtue.

10 Severe punishment is in store for the man who goes astray,
he who hates reproof will die.
11 The nether world and the abyss lie open before the Lord;
how much more the hearts of men!
12 The senseless man loves not to be reproved; to wise men he
will not go.
13 A glad heart lights up the face, but by mental anguish the
spirit is broken.
14 The mind of the intelligent man seeks knowledge, but the
mouth of fools feeds on folly.
15 Every day is miserable for the depressed, but a lighthearted
man has a continual feast.
16 Better a little with fear of the Lord than a great fortune with
anxiety.
17 Better a dish of herbs where love is than a fatted ox and
hatred with it.
18 An ill-tempered man stirs up strife, but a patient man allays
discord.
19 The way of the sluggard is hemmed in as with thorns, but
the path of the diligent is a highway.
20 A wise son makes his father glad, but a fool of a man despises
his mother.
21 Folly is joy to the senseless man, but the man of understand-
ing goes the straight way.
22 Plans fail when there is no counsel, but they succeed when
counselors are many.
23 There is joy for a man in his utterance; a word in season,
how good it is!
24 The path of life leads the prudent man upward, that he may
avoid the nether world below.
25 The Lord overturns the house of the proud, but he preserves
intact the widow's landmark.
26 The wicked man's schemes are an abomination to the Lord,
but the pure speak what is pleasing to him.
27 He who is greedy of gain brings ruin on his own house, but
he who hates bribes will live.
28 The just man weighs well his utterance, but the mouth of
the wicked pours out evil.
29 The Lord is far from the wicked, but the prayer of the just
he hears.
30 A cheerful glance brings joy to the heart; good news invigor-
ates the bones.
31 He who listens to salutary reproof will abide among the wise.
32 He who rejects admonition despises his own soul, but he who
heeds reproof gains understanding.

33 The fear of the Lord is training for wisdom, and humility goes before honors.

16

1 Man may make plans in his heart, but what the tongue utters is from the Lord.
2 All the ways of a man may be pure in his own eyes, but it is the Lord who proves the spirit.
3 Entrust your works to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.
4 The Lord has made everything for his own ends, even the wicked for the evil day.
5 Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord; I assure you that he will not go unpunished.
6 By kindness and piety guilt is expiated, and by the fear of the Lord man avoids evil.
7 When the Lord is pleased with a man's ways, he makes even his enemies be at peace with him.
8 Better a little with virtue, than a large income with injustice.
9 In his mind a man plans his course, but the Lord directs his steps.
10 The king's lips are an oracle; no judgment he pronounces is false.
11 Balance and scales belong to the Lord; all the weights used with them are his concern.
12 Kings have a horror of wrongdoing, for by righteousness the throne endures.
13 The king takes delight in honest lips, and the man who speaks what is right he loves.
14 The king's wrath is like messengers of death, but a wise man can pacify it.
15 In the light of the king's countenance is life, and his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.
16 How much better to acquire wisdom than gold! To acquire understanding is more desirable than silver.
17 The path of the upright avoids misfortune; he who pays attention to his way safeguards his life.
18 Pride goes before disaster, and a haughty spirit before a fall.
19 It is better to be humble with the meek than to share plunder with the proud.
20 He who plans a thing will be successful; happy is he who trusts in the Lord!
21 The wise man is esteemed for his discernment, yet pleasing speech increases his persuasiveness.
22 Good sense is a fountain of life to its possessor, but folly brings chastisement on fools.

23 The mind of the wise man makes him eloquent, and augments
the persuasiveness of his lips.
24 Pleasing words are a honeycomb, sweet to the taste and
healthful to the body.
25 Sometimes a way seems right to a man, but the end of it leads
to death!
26 The laborer's appetite labors for him, for his mouth urges
him on.
27 A scoundrel is a furnace of evil, and on his lips there is a
scorching fire.
28 An intriguer sows discord, and a talebearer separates bosom
friends.
29 A lawless man allures his neighbor, and leads him into a way
that is not good.
30 He who winks his eye is plotting trickery; he who compresses
his lips has mischief ready.
31 Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by virtuous living.
32 A patient man is better than a warrior, and he who rules his
temper, than he who takes a city.
33 When the lot is cast into the lap, its decision depends entirely
on the Lord.

17

1 Better a dry crust with peace than a house full of feasting
with strife.
2 An intelligent servant will rule over a worthless son, and will
share the inheritance with the brothers.
3 The crucible for silver, and the furnace for gold, but the
tester of hearts is the Lord.
4 The evil man gives heed to wicked lips, and listens to falsehood from a mischievous tongue.
5 He who mocks the poor blasphemes his Maker; he who is
glad at calamity will not go unpunished.
6 Grandchildren are the crown of old men, and the glory of
children is their parentage.
7 Fine words are out of place in a fool; how much more, lying
words in a noble!
8 A man who has a bribe to offer rates it a magic stone; at
every turn it brings him success.

16, 28b: Note the similarity in Coleridge's "Christabel": "Alas, they had been friends in youth, but whispering tongues can poison truth."

16, 33: The decision by lot, of public affairs in particular, is a frequent Old Testament practice. The underlying thought here is that God controls all human acts.

9 He who covers up a misdeed fosters friendship, but he who gossips about it separates friends.
10 A single reprimand does more for a man of intelligence than a hundred lashes for a fool.
11 On rebellion alone is the wicked man bent, but a merciless messenger will be sent against him.
12 Face a bear robbed of her cubs, but never a fool in his folly!
13 If a man returns evil for good, from his house evil will not depart.
14 The start of strife is like the opening of a dam; therefore, check a quarrel before it begins!
15 He who condones the wicked, he who condemns the just, are both an abomination to the Lord.
16 Of what use in the fool's hand are the means to buy wisdom, since he has no mind for it?
17 He who is a friend is always a friend, and a brother is born for the time of stress.
18 Senseless is the man who gives his hand in pledge, who becomes surety for his neighbor.
19 He who loves strife loves guilt; he who builds his gate high courts disaster.
20 He who is perverse in heart finds no good, and a double-tongued man falls into trouble.
21 To be a fool's parent is grief for a man; the father of a numskull has no joy.
22 A joyful heart is the health of the body, but a depressed spirit dries up the bones.
23 The wicked man accepts a concealed bribe to pervert the course of justice.
24 The man of intelligence fixes his gaze on wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
25 A foolish son is vexation to his father, and bitter sorrow to her who bore him.
26 It is wrong to fine an innocent man, but beyond reason to scourge princes.
27 He who spares his words is truly wise, and he who is chary of speech is a man of intelligence.
28 Even a fool, if he keeps silent, is considered wise; if he closes his lips, intelligent.

17, 19: *He who builds his gate high courts disaster:* one meaning may be: He who ostentatiously builds the door of his house ("gate") may court financial disaster.

18

1 In estrangement one seeks pretexts: with all persistence he
picks a quarrel.
2 The fool takes no delight in understanding, but rather is
displaying what he thinks.
3 With wickedness comes contempt, and with disgrace comes
scorn.
4 The words from a man's mouth are deep waters, but the
source of wisdom is a flowing brook.
5 It is not good to be partial to the guilty, and so to reject a
rightful claim.
6 The fool's lips lead him into strife, and his mouth provokes
a beating.
7 The fool's mouth is his ruin; his lips are a snare to his life.
8 The words of a talebearer are like dainty morsels that sink
into one's inmost being.
9 The man who is slack in his work is own brother to the man
who is destructive.
10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the just man runs
to it and is safe.
11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city; he fancies it a high
wall.
12 Before his downfall a man's heart is haughty, but humility
goes before honors.
13 He who answers before he hears—his is the folly and the
shame.
14 A man's spirit sustains him in infirmity—but a broken spirit
who can bear?
15 The mind of the intelligent gains knowledge, and the ear of
the wise seeks knowledge.
16 A man's gift clears the way for him, and gains him access to
great men.
17 The man who pleads his case first seems to be in the right;
then his opponent comes and puts him to the test.
18 The lot puts an end to disputes, and is decisive in a contro-
versy between the mighty.
19 A brother is a better defense than a strong city, and a friend
is like the bars of a castle.
20 From the fruit of his mouth a man has his fill; with the
yield of his lips he sates himself.
21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue; those who
make it a friend shall eat its fruit.

18, 10: *The name of the Lord:* here it is equivalent to "religion."

22 He who finds a wife finds happiness; it is a favor he receives
from the Lord.
23 The poor man implores, but the rich man answers harshly.
24 Some friends bring ruin on us, but a true friend is more loyal
than a brother.

19

1 Better a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is
crooked in his ways and rich.
2 Without knowledge even zeal is not good; and he who acts
hastily, blunders.
3 A man's own folly upsets his way, but his heart is resentful
against the Lord.
4 Wealth adds many friends, but the friend of the poor man
deserts him.
5 The false witness will not go unpunished, and he who utters
lies will not escape.
6 Many curry favor with a noble; all are friends of the man
who has something to give.
7 All the poor man's brothers hate him; how much more do
his friends shun him!
8 He who gains intelligence is his own best friend; he who
keeps understanding will be successful.
9 The false witness will not go unpunished, and he who utters
lies will perish.
10 Luxury is not befitting a fool; much less should a slave rule
over princes.
11 It is good sense in a man to be slow to anger, and it is his
glory to overlook an offense.
12 The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor,
like dew on the grass.
13 The foolish son is ruin to his father, and the nagging of a
wife is a persistent leak.
14 Home and possessions are an inheritance from parents, but a
prudent wife is from the Lord.
15 Laziness plunges a man into deep sleep, and the sluggard
must go hungry.
16 He who keeps the precept keeps his life, but the despiser of
the word will die.
17 He who has compassion on the poor lends to the Lord, and
he will repay him for his good deed.
18 Chastise your son, for in this there is hope; but do not desire
his death.
19 The man of violent temper pays the penalty; even if you
rescue him, you will have it to do again.

20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may eventually become wise.
21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the decision of the Lord that endures.
22 From a man's greed comes his shame; rather be a poor man than a liar.
23 The fear of the Lord is an aid to life; one eats and sleeps without being visited by misfortune.
24 The sluggard loses his hand in the dish; he will not even lift it to his mouth.
25 If you beat an arrogant man, the simple learn a lesson; if you rebuke an intelligent man, he gains knowledge.
26 He who mistreats his father, or drives away his mother, is a worthless and disgraceful son.
27 If a son ceases to hear instruction, he wanders from words of knowledge.
28 An unprincipled witness perverts justice, and the mouth of the wicked pours out iniquity.
29 Rods are prepared for the arrogant, and blows for the backs of fools.

20

1 Wine is arrogant, strong drink is riotous; none who goes astray for it is wise.
2 The dread of the king is as when a lion roars; he who incurs his anger forfeits his life.
3 It is honorable for a man to shun strife, while every fool starts a quarrel.
4 In seedtime the sluggard plows not; when he looks for the harvest, it is not there.
5 The intention in the human heart is like water far below the surface, but the man of intelligence draws it forth.
6 Many are declared to be men of virtue: but who can find one worthy of trust?
7 When a man walks in integrity and justice, happy are his children after him!
8 A king seated on the throne of judgment dispels all evil with his glance.
9 Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am cleansed of my sin"?

20, 9: Who can be certain that he is free from sin? This profound moral concept resurfaces frequently in the Bible. It is also found in the Egyptian wisdom work of Amen-em-Ope. See 22, 17—23, 14 n.

10 Varying weights, varying measures, are both an abomination
to the Lord.
11 Even by his manners the child betrays whether his conduct is
innocent and right.
12 The ear that hears, and the eye that sees—the Lord has made
them both.
13 Love not sleep, lest you be reduced to poverty; eyes wide
open mean abundant food.
14 "Bad, bad!" says the buyer; but once he has gone his way, he
boasts.
15 Like gold or a wealth of corals, wise lips are a precious
ornament.
16 Take his garment who becomes surety for another, and for
strangers yield it up!
17 The bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his
mouth will be filled with gravel.
18 Plans made after advice succeed; so with wise guidance wage
your war.
19 A newsmonger reveals secrets; so have nothing to do with a
babbler!
20 If one curses his father or mother, his lamp will go out at
the coming of darkness.
21 Possessions gained hastily at the outset will in the end not be
blessed.
22 Say not, "I will repay evil!" Trust in the Lord and he will
help you.
23 Varying weights are an abomination to the Lord, and false
scales are not good.
24 Man's steps are from the Lord; how, then, can a man under-
stand his way?
25 Rashly to pledge a sacred gift is a trap for a man, or to regret
a vow once made.
26 A wise king winnows the wicked, and threshes them under
the cartwheel.
27 A lamp from the Lord is the breath of man; it searches
through all his inmost being.
28 Kindness and piety safeguard the king, and he upholds his
throne by justice.
29 The glory of young men is their strength, and the dignity of
old men is gray hair.

20, 14: The shopper protests that the object is too expensive and then boasts of his good bargain.

20, 20: *Lamp:* a symbol of prosperity. He will lose his prosperity.

30 Evil is cleansed away by bloody lashes, and a scourging to
the inmost being.

21

1 Like a stream is the king's heart in the hand of the Lord;
wherever it pleases him, he directs it.
2 All the ways of a man may be right in his own eyes, but it is
the Lord who proves hearts.
3 To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord
than sacrifice.
4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart—the tillage of the wicked is
sin.
5 The plans of the diligent are sure of profit, but all rash haste
leads certainly to poverty.
6 He who makes a fortune by a lying tongue is chasing a
bubble over deadly snares.
7 The oppression of the wicked will sweep them away, because
they refuse to do what is right.
8 The way of the culprit is crooked, but the conduct of the
innocent is right.
9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than in a
roomy house with a quarrelsome woman.
10 The soul of the wicked man desires evil; his neighbor finds
no pity in his eyes.
11 When the arrogant man is punished, the simple are the wiser;
when the wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge.
12 The just man appraises the house of the wicked: there is one
who brings down the wicked to ruin.
13 He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will himself also
call and not be heard.
14 A secret gift allays anger, and a concealed present, violent
wrath.
15 To practice justice is a joy for the just, but terror for evildoers.
16 The man who strays from the way of good sense will abide
in the assembly of the shades.
17 He who loves pleasure will suffer want; he who loves wine
and perfume will not be rich.
18 The wicked man serves as ransom for the just, and the
faithless man for the righteous.
19 It is better to dwell in a wilderness than with a quarrelsome
and vexatious wife.
20 Precious treasure remains in the house of the wise, but the
fool consumes it.

21, 16: *Shades:* inhabitants of the abode for the dead.

21 He who pursues justice and kindness will find life and honor.
22 The wise man storms a city of the mighty, and overthrows the stronghold in which it trusts.
23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from trouble.
24 Arrogant is the name for the man of overbearing pride who acts with scornful effrontery.
25 The sluggard's propensity slays him, for his hands refuse to work.
Some are consumed with avarice all the day, but the just man gives unsparingly.
27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, the more so when they offer it with a bad intention.
28 The false witness will perish, but he who listens will finally have his say.
29 The wicked man is brazenfaced, but the upright man pays heed to his ways.
30 There is no wisdom, no understanding, no counsel, against the Lord.
31 The horse is equipped for the day of battle, but victory is the Lord's.

22
1 A good name is more desirable than great riches, and high esteem, than gold and silver.
2 Rich and poor have a common bond: the Lord is the maker of them all.
3 The shrewd man perceives evil and hides, while simpletons continue on and suffer the penalty.
4 The reward of humility and fear of the Lord is riches, honor and life.
5 Thorns and snares are on the path of the crooked; he who would safeguard his life will shun them.
6 Train a boy in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not swerve from it.
7 The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.
8 He who sows iniquity reaps calamity, and the rod destroys his labors.
9 The kindly man will be blessed, for he gives of his sustenance to the poor.

22, 6: See Pope's famous couplet: "'Tis education forms the common mind, just as a twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

10 Expel the arrogant man and discord goes out; strife and
insult cease.
11 The Lord loves the pure of heart; the man of winning speech
has the king for his friend.
12 The eyes of the Lord safeguard knowledge, but he defeats
the projects of the faithless.
13 The sluggard says, "A lion is outside; in the streets I might
be slain."
14 The mouth of the adulteress is a deep pit; he with whom the
Lord is angry will fall into it.
15 Folly is close to the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline
will drive it far from him.
16 He who oppresses the poor to enrich himself will yield
up his gains to the rich as sheer loss.

III. SAYINGS OF THE WISE

17 The sayings of the wise: Incline your ear, and hear my words,
18 and apply your heart to my doctrine; | for it will be well if
you keep them in your bosom, if they all are ready on your
19 lips. | That your trust may be in the Lord, I make known to you
20 the words of Amen-em-Ope. | Have I not written for you the
21 "Thirty," with counsels and knowledge, | to teach you truly
how to give a dependable report to one who sends you?
22 Injure not the poor because they are poor, nor crush the
23 needy at the gate; | for the Lord will defend their cause, and
will plunder the lives of those who plunder them.
24 Be not friendly with a hotheaded man, nor the companion of
25 a wrathful man, | lest you learn his ways, and get yourself
into a snare.
26 Be not one of those who give their hand in pledge, of those

22, 11: *Pure of heart:* does not mean chastity, but sincerity as in Mt 5, 8.

22, 13: To avoid the effort of going outdoors to do what he is supposed to do.

22, 17—23, 14: In 1924 the famous Egyptologist, Adolph Erman, discovered the parallel between "The Teaching of Amen-em-Ope" (or Amen-em-Ophis), an Egyptian scribe's instruction to his children, and this section of Proverbs. The Egyptian papyrus, originating from Thebes, is dated by scholars from the twelfth to the sixth century B.C.

It is commonly held that the biblical inspired editor of Proverbs 22, 17—23, 14, did not translate but condensed and rearranged the thirty chapters of "The Teaching of Amen-em-Ope" into thirty proverbs (see "Thirty" in Prv 22, 20).

22, 22: *Gate:* of the city where court trials were conducted, and business transactions and town meetings took place.

27 who become surety for debts; | for if you have not the means
to pay, your bed will be taken from under you.
28 [Remove not the ancient landmark which your fathers set
up.]
29 You see a man skilled at his work? He will stand in the
presence of kings; he will not stand in the presence of obscure
men.

23

1 When you sit down to dine with a ruler, keep in mind who is
2 before you; | and put a knife to your throat if you have a
ravenous appetite.
4 Toil not to gain wealth, cease to be concerned about it; |
5 while your glance flits to it, it is gone! for assuredly it grows
wings, like the eagle that flies toward heaven.
6 Do not dine with a grudging man, and do not desire his
7 dainties; | for like a storm within you will be that deceitful
food. "Eat and drink," he says to you, though his heart is not
8 with you; | the little you have eaten you will vomit up, and
you will have wasted your agreeable words.
9 Speak not for the fool's hearing; he will despise the wisdom
of your words.
10 Remove not the ancient landmark, nor invade the fields of
11 orphans; | for their redeemer is strong; he will defend their
cause against you.
12 Apply your heart to instruction, and your ears to words of
knowledge.
13 Withhold not chastisement from a boy; if you beat him with
14 the rod, he will not die. | Beat him with the rod, and you will
save him from the nether world.
15 My son, if your heart be wise, my own heart also will rejoice;
16 | and my inmost being will exult, when your lips speak what is
right.
17 Let not your heart emulate sinners, but be zealous for the
18 fear of the Lord always; | for you will surely have a future, and
your hope will not be cut off.
19 Hear, my son, and be wise, and guide your heart in the right
20 way. | Consort not with winebibbers, nor with those who eat
21 meat to excess; | for the drunkard and the glutton come to
poverty, and torpor clothes a man in rags.
22 Listen to your father who begot you, and despise not your
23 mother when she is old. | Get the truth, and sell it not—wis-
24 dom, instruction and understanding. | The father of a just man

23, 2a: A proverb on curbing the appetite.

will exult with glee; he who begets a wise son will have joy in
25 him. | Let your father and mother have joy; let her who bore
you exult.
26 My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes keep to my
27 ways. | For the harlot is a deep ditch, and the adulteress a
28 narrow pit; | yes, she lies in wait like a robber, and increases
the faithless among men.
29 Who scream? Who shriek? Who have strife? Who have
anxiety? Who have wounds for nothing? Who have black
30 eyes? | Those who linger long over wine, those who engage in
31 trials of blended wine. | Look not on the wine when it is red,
32 when it sparkles in the glass. It goes down smoothly; | but in
33 the end it bites like a serpent, or like a poisonous adder. | Your
eyes behold strange sights, and your heart utters disordered
34 thoughts; | you are like one now lying in the depths of the
35 sea, now sprawled at the top of the mast. | "They struck me,
but it pained me not; they beat me, but I felt it not; when shall
I awake to seek wine once again?"

24

1 Be not emulous of evil men, and desire not to be with them;
2 | for their hearts plot violence, and their lips speak of foul
play.
3 By wisdom is a house built, by understanding is it made firm;
4 | and by knowledge are its rooms filled with every precious and
pleasing possession.
5 A wise man is more powerful than a strong man, and a man
6 of knowledge than a man of might; | for it is by wise guidance
that you wage your war, and the victory is due to a wealth of
7 counselors. | For a fool, to be silent is wisdom; not to open his
mouth at the gate.
8.9 He who plots evil doing—men call him an intriguer. | Beyond
intrigue and folly and sin, it is arrogance that men find
abominable.
10 If you remain indifferent in time of adversity, your strength
11 will depart from you. | Rescue those who are being dragged to
12 death, and from those tottering to execution withdraw not. | If
you say, "I know not this man!" does not he who tests hearts
perceive it? He who guards your life knows it, and he will
repay each one according to his deeds.

23, 29-35: A vivid description of the evil effects, physical and psychological, of intoxication.
24, 7: *Gate:* see 22, 22 n.
24, 10: *If you remain indifferent:* to those suffering unjustly.
24, 11: *Dragged to death:* through illegal procedures.

13 If you eat honey, my son, because it is good, if virgin honey
14 is sweet to your taste; | such, you must know, is wisdom to
your soul. If you find it, you will have a future, and your hope
will not be cut off.
15 Lie not in wait against the home of the just man, ravage not
16 his dwelling place; | for the just man falls seven times and rises
again, but the wicked stumble to ruin.
17 Rejoice not when your enemy falls, and when he stumbles,
18 let not your heart exult, | lest the Lord see it, be displeased with
you and withdraw his wrath from your enemy.
19 Be not provoked with evildoers, nor envious of the wicked;
20 | for the evil man has no future, the lamp of the wicked will
be put out.
21 My son, fear the Lord and the king; have nothing to do with
22 those who rebel against them; | for suddenly arises the destruction they send, and the ruin from either one, who can measure?

IV. OTHER SAYINGS OF THE WISE

23 These also are sayings of the wise: To show partiality in
24 judgment is not good. | He who says to the wicked man, "You
are just"—men will curse him, people will denounce him; |
25 but those who convict the evildoer will fare well, and on them
26 will come the blessing of prosperity. | He gives a kiss on the
lips who makes an honest reply.
27 Complete your outdoor tasks, and arrange your work in the
field; afterward you can establish your house.
28 Be not a witness against your neighbor without just cause,
thus committing folly with your lips.
29 Say not, "As he did to me, so will I do to him; I will repay
the man according to his deeds."
30 I passed by the field of the sluggard, by the vineyard of the
31 man without sense; | and behold! it was all overgrown with
thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall
32 broken down. | And as I gazed at it, I reflected; I saw and
33 learned the lesson: | a little sleep, a little slumber, a little fold-

24, 16: *Seven times:* an indefinite number.

24, 20: *Lamp:* his prosperity.

24, 26: *He gives a kiss on the lips:* a sign of true friendship. Found only here in the Old Testament. The meaning is: frank speech is a sign of true friendship.

24, 27: This verse is commonly interpreted as advocating careful and practical preparation for marriage.

24, 29: This verse marks an advance over the law of retaliation. See Ex 21, 23-25 n.

34 ing of the arms to rest— | then will poverty come upon you
like a highwayman, and want like an armed man.

V. SECOND COLLECTION OF THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

25

1 These also are proverbs of Solomon. The men of Ezechias,
king of Juda, transmitted them.
2 God has glory in what he conceals, kings have glory in what
they fathom.
3 As the heavens in height, and the earth in depth, the heart of
kings is unfathomable.
4 Remove the dross from silver, and it comes forth perfectly
5 purified; | remove the wicked from the presence of the king,
and his throne is made firm through righteousness.
6 Claim no honor in the king's presence, nor occupy the place
7 of great men; | for it is better that you be told, "Come up
closer!" than that you be humbled before the prince.
8 What your eyes have seen bring not forth hastily against an
opponent; for what will you do later on when your neighbor
9 puts you to shame? | Discuss your case with your neighbor,
10 but another man's secret do not disclose; | lest, hearing it, he
reproach you, and your ill repute cease not.
11 Like golden apples in silver settings are words spoken at the
proper time.
12 Like a golden earring, or a necklace of fine gold, is a wise
reprover to an obedient ear.
13 Like the coolness of snow in the heat of the harvest is a faith-
ful messenger for the one who sends him. [He refreshes the
soul of his master.]
14 Like clouds and wind when no rain follows is the man who
boastfully promises what he never gives.
15 By patience is a ruler persuaded, and a soft tongue will
break a bone.

25, 1—29, 27: Sages of king Ezechias' "royal academy" are represented as transcribing the proverbs from other collections. Ezechias (716-687 B.C.) was a religious reformer whose goal was a return to the pure sources of Moses' religion.

In chs. 25—27 the parallelism is synonymous. In chs. 28—29 it is dominantly antithetic. The content of the former chapter group is secular, and that of the latter group is religious.

25, 7: Compare the lesson on humility (Lk 14, 7-11) taught by Christ.

16 If you find honey, eat only what you need, lest you become
glutted with it and vomit it up.
17 Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house, lest he
have more than enough of you, and hate you.
18 Like a club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow, is the man who
bears false witness against his neighbor.
19 Like an infected tooth or an unsteady foot is [dependence
on] a faithless man in time of trouble.
20 Like a moth in clothing, or a maggot in wood, sorrow gnaws
at the human heart.
21 If your enemy be hungry, give him food to eat, if he be thirsty,
22 give him to drink; | for live coals you will heap on his head,
and the Lord will vindicate you.
23 The north wind brings rain, and a backbiting tongue an
angry countenance.
24 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than in a
roomy house with a quarrelsome woman.
25 Like cool water to one faint from thirst is good news from
a far country.
26 Like a troubled fountain or a polluted spring is a just man
who gives way before the wicked.
27 To eat too much honey is not good; nor to seek honor after
honor.
28 Like an open city with no defenses is the man with no check
on his feelings.

26

1 Like snow in summer, or rain in harvest, honor for a fool
is out of place.
2 Like the sparrow in its flitting, like the swallow in its flight,
a curse uncalled-for arrives nowhere.
3 The whip for the horse, the bridle for the ass, and the rod
for the back of fools.
4 Answer not the fool according to his folly, lest you too
become like him.
5 Answer the fool according to his folly, lest he become wise
in his own eyes.

25, 22a: Either remorse and embarrassment for the harm done, or increased punishment for refusing reconciliation. Rom. 12, 20 quotes these vv. 21-22.

25, 27: *Nor . . . honor after honor:* the text is uncertain.

26, 4-5: There is no contradiction between these two proverbs. In any answer that the wise man gives he must protect his own interest against the fool.

6 He cuts off his feet, he drinks down violence, who sends
messages by a fool.
7 A proverb in the mouth of a fool hangs limp, like crippled
legs.
8 Like one who entangles the stone in the sling is he who gives
honor to a fool.
9 Like a thorn stick brandished by the hand of a drunkard is
a proverb in the mouth of fools.
10 Like an archer wounding all who pass by is he who hires a
drunken fool.
11 As the dog returns to his vomit, so the fool repeats his folly.
12 You see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for
a fool than for him.
13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the street, a lion in the
middle of the square!"
14 The door turns on its hinges, the sluggard, on his bed!
15 The sluggard loses his hand in the dish; he is too weary to
lift it to his mouth.
16 The sluggard imagines himself wiser than seven men who
answer with good sense.
17 Like the man who seizes a passing dog by the ears is he who
meddles in a quarrel not his own.
18 Like a crazed archer scattering firebrands and deadly arrows
19 | is the man who deceives his neighbor, and then says, "I was
only joking."
20 For lack of wood, the fire dies out; and when there is no
talebearer, strife subsides.
21 What a bellows is to live coals, what wood is to fire, such is a
contentious man in enkindling strife.
22 The words of a talebearer are like dainty morsels that sink
into one's inmost being.
23 Like a glazed finish on earthenware are smooth lips with a
wicked heart.
24 With his lips an enemy pretends, but in his inmost being he
25 maintains deceit; | when he speaks graciously, trust him not,
for seven abominations are in his heart.
26 A man may conceal hatred under dissimulation, but his
malice will be revealed in the assembly.

26, 13: For the same idea see 22, 13 n.
26, 14: Note the influence of this verse on Isaac Watts: " 'Tis the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain, You've waked me too soon, I must slumber again, As the door on its hinges, so is he on his bed, turns his side over. . . ."
26, 15: Almost a repetition of 19, 24.
26, 25: *Seven abominations:* many evil intentions.

27 He who digs a pit falls into it; and a stone comes back upon
him who rolls it.
28 The lying tongue is its owner's enemy, and the flattering
mouth works ruin.

27

1 Boast not of tomorrow, for you know not what any day may
bring forth.
2 Let another praise you—not your own mouth; someone else
—not your own lips.
3 Stone is heavy, and sand a burden, but a fool's provocation
is heavier than both.
4 Anger is relentless, and wrath overwhelming—but before
jealousy who can stand?
5 Better is an open rebuke than a love that remains hidden.
6 Wounds from a friend may be accepted as well meant, but
the greetings of an enemy one prays against.
7 One who is full, tramples on virgin honey; but to the man
who is hungry, any bitter thing is sweet.
8 Like a bird that is far from its nest is a man who is far from
his home.
9 Perfume and incense gladden the heart, but by grief the soul
is torn asunder.
10 Your own friend and your father's friend forsake not; but if
ruin befalls you, enter not a kinsman's house. Better is a neighbor
near at hand than a brother far away.
11 If you are wise, my son, you will gladden my heart, and I
will be able to rebut him who taunts me.
12 The shrewd man perceives evil and hides; simpletons con-
tinue on and suffer the penalty.
13 Take his garment who becomes surety for another, and for
the sake of a stranger, yield it up!
14 When one greets his neighbor with a loud voice [in the early
morning], a curse can be laid to his charge.
15 For a persistent leak on a rainy day the match is a quarrel-
16 some woman. | He who keeps her stores up a stormwind; he
cannot tell north from south.
17 As iron sharpens iron, so man sharpens his fellow man.
18 He who tends a fig tree eats its fruit, and he who is attentive
to his master will be enriched.
19 As one face differs from another, so does one human heart
from another.

27, 13: Repetition of 20, 16.
27, 14a: The loud voice suggests hypocrisy in the greeting.

20 The nether world and the abyss are never satisfied; so too
the eyes of men.
21 As the crucible tests silver and the furnace gold, so a man is
tested by the praise he receives.
22 Though you should pound the fool to bits [with the pestle
amid the grits in a mortar], his folly would not go out of him.
23 Take good care of your flocks, give careful attention to your
24 herds; | for wealth lasts not forever, nor even a crown from
25 age to age. | When the grass is taken away and the aftergrowth
26 appears, and the mountain greens are gathered in, | the lambs
will provide you with clothing, and the goats will bring the
27 price of a field, | and there will be ample goat's milk to supply
you, [to supply your household,] and maintenance for your
maidens.

28

1 The wicked man flees although no one pursues him; but the
just man, like a lion, feels sure of himself.
2 If a land is rebellious, its princes will be many; but with a
prudent man it knows security.
3 A rich man who oppresses the poor is like a devastating rain
that leaves no food.
4 Those who abandon the law praise the wicked man, but those
who keep the law war against him.
5 Evil men understand nothing of justice, but those who seek
the Lord understand all.
6 Better a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is
crooked in his ways and rich.
7 He who keeps the law is a wise son, but the gluttons' com-
panion disgraces his father.
8 He who increases his wealth by interest and overcharge
gathers it for him who is kind to the poor.
9 When one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his
prayer is an abomination.
10 He who seduces the upright into an evil way will himself fall
into his own pit. [And blameless men will gain prosperity.]
11 The rich man is wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who is
intelligent sees through him.
12 When the just are triumphant, there is great jubilation; but
when the wicked gain pre-eminence, people hide.

28, 2: The meaning of this poorly preserved verse seems to be that frequent changes of rulers often result from moral corruption and political disorder.

13 He who conceals his sins prospers not, but he who confesses
and forsakes them obtains mercy.
14 Happy the man who is always on his guard; but he who
hardens his heart will fall into evil.
15 Like a roaring lion or a ravenous bear is a wicked ruler over a
poor people.
16 The less prudent the prince, the more his deeds oppress. He
who hates ill-gotten gain prolongs his days.
17 Though a man burdened with human blood were to flee to the
grave, none should support him.
18 He who walks uprightly is safe, but he whose ways are
crooked falls into the pit.
19 He who cultivates his land will have plenty of food, but from
idle pursuits a man has his fill of poverty.
20 The trustworthy man will be richly blessed; he who is in
haste to grow rich will not go unpunished.
21 To show partiality is never good: for even a morsel of bread
a man may do wrong.
22 The avaricious man is perturbed about his wealth, and he
knows not when want will come upon him.
23 He who rebukes a man gets more thanks in the end than one
with a flattering tongue.
24 He who defrauds father or mother and calls it no sin, is a
partner of the brigand.
25 The greedy man stirs up disputes, but he who trusts in the
Lord will prosper.
26 He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in
wisdom is safe.
27 He who gives to the poor suffers no want, but he who ignores
them gets many a curse.
28 When the wicked gain pre-eminence, other men hide; but at
their fall the just flourish.

29

1 The man who remains stiff-necked and hates rebuke will be
crushed suddenly beyond cure.
2 When the just prevail, the people rejoice; but when the
wicked rule, the people groan.
3 He who loves wisdom makes his father glad, but he who
consorts with harlots squanders his wealth.
4 By justice a king gives stability to the land; but he who im-
poses heavy taxes ruins it.
5 The man who flatters his neighbor is spreading a net under
his feet.

6 The wicked man steps into a snare, but the just man runs on joyfully.
7 The just man has a care for the rights of the poor; the wicked man has no such concern.
8 Arrogant men set the city ablaze, but wise men calm the fury.
9 If a wise man disputes with a fool, he may rage or laugh but can have no peace.
10 Bloodthirsty men hate the honest man, but the upright show concern for his life.
11 The fool gives vent to all his anger; but by biding his time, the wise man calms it.
12 If a ruler listens to lying words, his servants all become wicked.
13 The poor and the oppressor have a common bond: the Lord gives light to the eyes of both.
14 If a king is zealous for the rights of the poor, his throne stands firm forever.
15 The rod of correction gives wisdom, but a boy left to his whims disgraces his mother.
16 When the wicked prevail, crime increases; but their downfall the just will behold.
17 Correct your son, and he will bring you comfort, and give delight to your soul.
18 Without prophecy the people become demoralized; but happy is he who keeps the law.
19 By words no servant can be trained; for he understands what is said, but obeys not.
20 Do you see a man hasty in his words? More can be hoped for from a fool!
21 If a man pampers his servant from childhood, he will turn out to be stubborn.
22 An ill-tempered man stirs up disputes, and a hotheaded man is the cause of many sins.
23 Man's pride causes his humiliation, but he who is humble of spirit obtains honor.
24 The accomplice of a thief is his own enemy: he hears himself put under a curse, yet discloses nothing.
25 The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord is safe.
26 Many curry favor with the ruler, but the rights of each are from the Lord.
27 The evildoer is an abomination to the just, and he who walks uprightly is an abomination to the wicked.

29, 18: *Without prophecy:* without the activity of the prophets.

VI. THE WORDS OF AGUR

30
1 The words of Agur, son of Yakeh the Massaite: The pronouncement of mortal man: "I am not God; I am not God,
2 that I should prevail. | Why, I am the most stupid of men, and
3 have not even human intelligence; | neither have I learned
4 wisdom, nor have I the knowledge of the Holy One. | Who has gone up to heaven and come down again—who has cupped the wind in his hands? Who has bound up the waters in a cloak—who has marked out all the ends of the earth? What is
5 his name, what is his son's name, if you know it?" | Every word of God is tested; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
6 | Add nothing to his words, lest he reprove you, and you be exposed as a deceiver.
7 Two things I ask of you, deny them not to me before I die:
8 | Put falsehood and lying far from me, give me neither poverty
9 nor riches: [provide me only with the food I need;] | lest, being full, I deny you, saying, "Who is the Lord?" Or, being in want, I steal, and profane the name of my God.
10 Slander not a servant to his master, lest he curse you, and you have to pay the penalty.
11 There is a group of people that curses its father, and blesses
12 not its mother. | There is a group that is pure in its own eyes,
13 yet is not purged of its filth. | There is a group—how haughty
14 their eyes! how overbearing their glance! | There is a group whose incisors are swords, whose teeth are knives, devouring the needy from the earth, and the poor from among men.

VII. NUMERICAL PROVERBS

15 The two daughters of the leech are, "Give, Give." Three
16 things are never satisfied, four never say, "Enough!" | The nether world, and the barren womb; the earth, that is never saturated with water, and fire, that never says, 'Enough!" | The

30, 1ff: The words of Agur come from a non-Israelite source. Agur emphasizes man's insignificance in comparison with God.

30, 8: *Give me neither poverty nor riches:* it is astonishing to read of the rejection of riches for religious reasons in the Old Testament.

30, 11-14: Perverted people are here classified as unfilial (v. 11), self-righteous (v. 12), proud (v. 13) and rapacious (v. 14).

30, 15-16: *The two daughters . . . Give:* the text is obscure but the general idea seems to be that the leech is insatiable in its desire for blood, just as are the nether world for victims, the barren womb for offspring, the parched earth for water, and fire for fuel (v. 16).

17 eye that mocks a father, or scorns an aged mother, will be
plucked out by the ravens in the valley; the young eagles will
devour it.
18 Three things are too wonderful for me, yes, four I cannot
19 understand: | the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a
serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and
20 the way of a man with a maiden. | Such is the way of an
adulterous woman: she eats, wipes her mouth, and says, "I have
done no wrong."
21 Under three things the earth trembles, yes, under four it
22 cannot bear up: | under a slave when he becomes king, and a
23 fool when he is glutted with food; | under an odious woman
when she is wed, and a maidservant when she displaces her
mistress.
24 Four things are among the smallest on the earth, and yet are
25 exceedingly wise: | ants—a species not strong, yet they store
26 up their food in the summer; | rock-badgers—a species not
27 mighty, yet they make their home in the crags; | locusts—they
28 have no king, yet they migrate all in array; | lizards—you can
catch them with your hands, yet they find their way into kings'
palaces.
29 Three things are stately in their stride, yes, four are stately
30 in their carriage: | the lion, mightiest of beasts, who retreats
31 before nothing; | the strutting cock, and the he-goat, and the
king at the head of his people.
32 If you have foolishly been proud or presumptuous—put your
33 hand on your mouth; | for the stirring of milk brings forth
curds, and the stirring of anger brings forth blood.

VIII. THE WORDS OF LAMUEL

31
1 The words of Lamuel, king of Massa. The advice which his
2 mother gave him: | What, my son, my first-born! what, O son
3 of my womb; what, O son of my vows! | Give not your vigor
4 to women, nor your strength to those who ruin kings. | It is not
for kings, O Lamuel, not for kings to drink wine; strong drink
5 is not for princes! | lest in drinking they forget what the law
6 decrees, and violate the rights of all who are in need. | Give
strong drink to one who is perishing, and wine to the sorely

30, 26: *Rock-badgers:* a small, harelike, hoofed mammal.

31, 1-9: Lamuel is unknown, but Massa may be an Israelite tribe (Gn 25, 14). Only a queen mother would dare to advise a king with a "mirror-of-princes"-warning, for she was the most important person in the kingdom after the king.

7 depressed; | when they drink, they will forget their misery, and
8 think no more of their burdens. | Open your mouth in behalf
9 of the dumb, and for the rights of the destitute; | open your mouth, decree what is just, defend the needy and the poor!

IX. THE IDEAL WIFE

10 When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond
11 pearls. | Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an
12 unfailing prize. | She brings him good, and not evil, all the days
13 of her life. | She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with
14 skillful hands. | Like merchant ships, she secures her pro-
15 visions from afar. | She rises while it is still night, and dis-
16 tributes food to her household. | She picks out a field to
17 purchase; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. | She is
18 girt about with strength, and sturdy are her arms. | She enjoys
19 the success of her dealings; at night her lamp is undimmed. | She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. |
20 She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms
21 to the needy. | She fears not the snow for her household; all her
22 charges are doubly clothed. | She makes her own coverlets; fine
23 linen and purple are her clothing. | Her husband is prominent
24 at the city gates as he sits with the elders of the land. | She makes garments and sells them, and stocks the merchants with
25 belts. | She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs
26 at the days to come. | She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on
27 her tongue is kindly counsel. | She watches the conduct of her
28 household, and eats not her food in idleness. | Her children
29 rise up and praise her; her husband, too, extols her: | "Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them
30 all." | Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who
31 fears the Lord is to be praised. | Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

31, 10-31: Proverbs ends with one of the fifteen alphabetic poems in the Bible. The backdrop is a bourgeoise woman who manages all the business of the estate. Although the portrait is ideal, it serves as a corrective of women's "low position" in the ancient Near East.

The Roman liturgy uses this section in the feasts of women who are neither martyrs nor virgins.

31, 12a: Prosperity not adversity.

31, 18: *Lamp*, a symbol of prosperity.

31, 23: *City Gates:* see 22, 22 n.

31, 25b: She is confident of a happy future.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

INTRODUCTION

Ecclesiastes is the Latin transcription of the Greek name. The author calls himself by his Hebrew name, Coheleth, which may mean "preacher." This wise man, writing about 300 B.C. in the vicinity of Galilee ascribed his wisdom book to Solomon (1, 1).

The book is composed of large and small notations on the general theme of the meaning of life. There is no clear logical progress of thought ending in a synthesis. The problem is reflected upon from various aspects. Questions are asked, insights are offered, thoughts are left undeveloped and later resumed from other vantage points.

The fragmentary treatment of the theme naturally causes scholars to speculate about the number of authors responsible for these disparate paragraphs. However, the book could have one author, if we agree that the literary form is similar to that of a diary or to the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius or Pascal's *Pensées,* or perhaps even the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. This literary form squares well with the fragmentary or reflective treatment of Coheleth.

The most crucial and debated problem is the answer that Coheleth gives to his basic question: Is life worth living? or, What is happiness here on earth? Coheleth was certainly a provocative thinker whose new sayings must have been received "like goads" (12, 11) by his sympathizers and labeled as heretical by the traditionalists. The rebel sage dared to deny the tenets of the traditionalists who held that happiness in life was pleasure, riches, and wisdom. Coheleth's contribution was to look for something beyond earthly joys even though he never found it. All he found was that the traditional joys do not bestow *lasting* happiness. Therefore, man should aim at legitimate attainable happiness given to him by God on earth, namely, the joys of family life (9, 9), bodily pleasures, and even the joys of his job ("toil"). Coheleth's doctrine seems commonplace to us, but in his day there was no revelation of the rewards of an afterlife of the beatific vision, but only earthly rewards. Coheleth's idea of the afterlife was the gloomy "sheol," the dreary inactive abode of the dead (9, 10). His contribution can also be stated as having prepared the way for Mt 16, 26: "For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?"

It is easier to see why, depending on their interpretation of Coheleth, commentators call him an agnostic, a cynic, a pessimist, an Epicurean, or a pagan. All are wrong because Coheleth was a man of deep faith in God, in His Providence and wisdom.

Unsuccessful attempts have been made to trace Coheleth's thoughts back to Greek influences, such as the Epicureans, Stoics, and even to Theognis, an elegist of the sixth century B.C. The Greek influence on this Jewish sage was only a general one. If anything, the affinities with Egyptian influences are more pronounced. Moreover, scholars often point to a Babylonian Coheleth who wrote, "A Dialogue about Human Misery," about the tenth century B.C. Modern counterparts of Coheleth

are T. S. Eliot and even the best in beatnik poetry. Although the question of modern parallels may be debated, the emergent factor is that Coheleth has something for everyone in every age.

1

1 ***Vanity of Earthly Things*** The words of David's son,
2 Coheleth, king in Jerusalem: | Vanity of vanities, says Coheleth,
3 vanity of vanities! All things are vanity! | What profit has
4 man from all the labor which he toils at under the sun? | One
generation passes and another comes, but the world forever
5 stays. | The sun rises and the sun goes down; then it presses
6 on to the place where it rises. | Blowing now toward the south,
then toward the north, the wind turns again and again, resum-
7 ing its rounds. | All rivers go to the sea, yet never does the sea
become full. To the place where they go, the rivers keep on
8 going. | All speech is labored; there is nothing man can say.
The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor is the ear filled with
hearing.
9 What has been, that will be; what has been done, that will
10 be done. Nothing is new under the sun. | Even the thing of
which we say, "See, this is new!" has already existed in the
11 ages that preceded us. There is no remembrance of the men of
old; nor of those to come will there be any remembrance among
those who come after them.

12 ***Vanity of Wisdom*** I, Coheleth, was king over Israel in
13 Jerusalem, | and I applied my mind to search and investigate
in wisdom all things that are done under the sun. A thankless
14 task God has appointed for men to be busied about. | I have

1, 1: By a recognized literary device, the author Coheleth identifies himself with king Solomon, David's son, from 1, 12 to 2, 12.

1, 2: The theme of the book is vanity, and this word is used forty times in the Hebrew text. It means the emptiness or uselessness of life. *Vanity of vanities:* a Hebrew superlative meaning most vain, just as the Canticle of Canticles means the best Canticle.

1, 3-11: Just as there is nothing new in the course of nature, neither is there anything new in the course of human existence. We would render the author's popular phrase *under the sun* as "on the face of the earth."

1, 5: *Then it presses on to the place where it rises:* in those days the sun was thought to travel beneath the earth during the night.

1, 7: The author, according to the ideas of his time, thinks it is vain and meaningless that all rivers keep emptying into the sea without ever filling it.

1, 8: *All speech . . . say:* speech cannot describe how much things keep toiling uselessly.

seen all things that are done under the sun, and behold, all is
15 vanity and a chase after wind. | What is crooked cannot be
made straight, and what is missing cannot be supplied.
16 Though I said to myself, "Behold, I have become great and
stored up wisdom beyond all who were before me in Jeru-
salem, and my mind has broad experience of wisdom and knowl-
17 edge"; yet when I applied my mind to know wisdom and
knowledge, madness and folly, I learned that this also is a
18 chase after wind. | For in much wisdom there is much sorrow,
and he who stores up knowledge stores up grief.

2

1 ***Vanity of Pleasure*** I said to myself, "Come, now, let me
try you with pleasure and the enjoyment of good things." But
2 behold, this too was vanity. | Of laughter I said: "Mad!" and
3 of mirth: "What good does this do?" | I thought of beguiling
my senses with wine, though my mind was concerned with
wisdom, and of taking up folly, until I should understand what
is best for men to do under the heavens during the limited days
of their life.
4 I undertook great works; I built myself houses and planted
5 vineyards; I made gardens and parks, and set out in them fruit
6 trees of all sorts. And I constructed for myself reservoirs to
7 water a flourishing woodland. I acquired male and female
slaves, and slaves were born in my house. I also had growing
herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, more than all who had been
8 before me in Jerusalem. I amassed for myself silver and gold,
and the wealth of kings and provinces. I got for myself male
9 and female singers and all human luxuries. I became great, and
I stored up more than all others before me in Jerusalem; my
10 wisdom, too, stayed with me. Nothing that my eyes desired did
I deny them, nor did I deprive myself of any joy, but my heart
rejoiced in the fruit of all my toil. This was my share for all
11 my toil. But when I turned to all the works that my hands had
wrought, and to the toil at which I had taken such pains,
behold! all was vanity and a chase after wind, with nothing
12 gained under the sun. For what will the man do who is to come
after the king? What men have already done!

2, 1-12: The author makes Solomon admit, to use a modern paraphrase, that wine (v. 3), women (vv. 7 and 10), and song (v. 8) are also vanity. To be a king, who is known as a great builder, a millionaire, a man of wisdom, is equally profitless.

13 *Wisdom and Folly Compared* I went on to the consid-
eration of wisdom, madness and folly. And I saw that wisdom
had the advantage over folly as much as light has the advan-
14 tage over darkness. | The wise man has eyes in his head, but
the fool walks in darkness. Yet I know that one lot befalls both
15 of them. | So I said to myself, if the fool's lot is to befall me
also, why then should I be wise? Where is the profit for me?
16 And I concluded in my heart that this too is vanity. Neither
of the wise man nor of the fool will there be an abiding
remembrance, for in days to come both will have been for-
gotten. How is it that the wise man dies as well as the fool!
17 Therefore I loathed life, since for me the work that is done
under the sun is evil; for all is vanity and a chase after wind.

18 *Vanity of Toil* And I detested all the fruits of my labor
under the sun, because I must leave them to a man who is to
19 come after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man
or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruits of my
20 wise labor under the sun. This also is vanity. So my feelings
21 turned to despair of all the fruits of my labor under the sun. For
here is a man who has labored with wisdom and knowledge and
skill, and to another, who has not labored over it, he must leave
22 his property. This also is vanity and a great misfortune. | For
what profit comes to a man from all the toil and anxiety of
23 heart with which he has labored under the sun? All his days
sorrow and grief are his occupation; even at night his mind
is not at rest. This also is vanity.
24 There is nothing better for man than to eat and drink and
provide himself with good things by his labors. Even this, I
25 realized, is from the hand of God. For who can eat or drink
26 apart from him? For to whatever man he sees fit he gives
wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives the
task of gathering possessions to be given to whatever man God
sees fit. This also is vanity and a chase after wind.

3

1 *Unchanging Order of Events* There is an appointed time
for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. |
2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a

2, 13-17: Coheleth admits the superiority of wisdom over folly even though wisdom does not last.

2, 24-25: Coheleth proposes that the joys of one's work are given by God for enjoyment.

3, 1-22: The most famous section of the book is the monotonous, melancholy chant of man's activities according to God's appointed times

3 time to uproot the plant. | A time to kill, and a time to heal;
4 a time to tear down, and a time to build. | A time to weep, and
5 a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. | A time
to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace,
6 and a time to be far from embraces. | A time to seek, and a time
7 to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. | A time to
rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak.
8 | A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time
of peace.
9.10 What advantage has the worker from his toil? I have con-
sidered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied
11 about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has
put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discover-
12 ing, from beginning to end, the work which God has done. I
recognized that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do
13 well during life. For every man, moreover, to eat and drink and
enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God.

14 ***Uncertainty of the Future*** I recognized that whatever
God does will endure forever; there is no adding to it, or taking
15 from it. Thus has God done that he may be revered. What now
is has already been; what is to be, already is; and God restores
16 what would otherwise be displaced. And still under the sun in
the judgment place I saw wickedness, and in the seat of justice,
17 iniquity. | And I said to myself, both the just and the wicked
God will judge, since there is a time for every affair and on
18 every work a judgment. I said to myself: As for the children of
men, it is God's way of testing them and of showing that they
19 are in themselves like beasts. For the lot of man and of beast
is one lot; the one dies as well as the other. Both have the same
life-breath, and man has no advantage over the beast; but all is
20 vanity. Both go to the same place; both were made from the
21 dust, and to the dust they both return. Who knows if the life-
breath of the children of men goes upward and the life-breath
22 of beasts goes earthward? And I saw that there is nothing better
for a man than to rejoice in his work; for this is his lot. Who will
let him see what is to come after him?

(vv. 1-8). Man cannot understand God's purpose in governing the world according to these appointed times (vv. 9-11). Therefore, the best thing for man to do is to enjoy the good things God gives him (vv. 12-13) because man cannot modify the course of events (vv. 14-15), and there is no hope of any change in the future (vv. 18-22). The proof that Coheleth in vv. 18-21 does not mean to say animal and man have the same destiny is 12, 7, where he completes this thought. See Gn 2, 7 n.

4

1 *Social Disorders* Again I considered all the oppressions
that take place under the sun: the tears of the victims with
none to comfort them! From the hand of their oppressors comes
2 violence, and there is none to comfort them! And those now dead,
I declared more fortunate in death than are the living to be still
3 alive. And better off than both is the yet unborn, who has not
4 seen the wicked work that is done under the sun. Then I saw
that all toil and skillful work is the rivalry of one man for
5 another. This also is vanity and a chase after wind. | "The fool
6 folds his arms and consumes his own flesh"— | Better is one
handful with tranquillity than two with toil and a chase after
wind!

7.8 Again I found this vanity under the sun: a solitary man with
no companion; with neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end
to all his toil, and riches do not satisfy his greed. "For whom
do I toil and deprive myself of good things?" This also is vanity
9 and a worthless task. Two are better than one: they get a good
10 wage for their labor. If the one falls, the other will lift up his
companion. Woe to the solitary man! For if he should fall, he
11 has no one to lift him up. | So also, if two sleep together, they
keep each other warm. How can one alone keep warm? |
12 Where a lone man may be overcome, two together can resist.
A three-ply cord is not easily broken.

13 Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king
14 who no longer knows caution; for from a prison house one
comes forth to rule, since even in his royalty he was poor at
15 birth. Then I saw all those who are to live and move about
under the sun with the heir apparent who will succeed to his
16 place. There is no end to all these people, to all over whom he
takes precedence; yet the later generations will not applaud
him. This also is vanity and a chase after wind.

4, 5-6: While it is suicidal to be lazy to the extreme of neglecting the necessities of life (we would say "twiddles his thumbs" for "folds his arms," v. 5), yet it is better to be quiet than to work hard but uselessly. Just as moderns use adjectives to qualify a noun, Coheleth uses one proverb to qualify another. These two proverbs or sayings are only loosely supporting the foregoing verses 1-4.

4, 7-8: Another example of futility is a lonely man who works so hard for riches that he never has time to ask why he is working himself to death.

4, 12: *A three-ply cord is not easily broken:* this saying may imply that three are even better than two.

4, 13-16. Is Coheleth thinking of a poor boy who finally becomes a king? The inspired writer looks to the end and dismisses the typical success story as vanity.

17 ***Reverence for God*** Guard your step when you go to the house of God. Let your approach be obedience, rather than the fools' offering of sacrifice; for they know not how to keep from doing evil.

5

1 Be not hasty in your utterance and let not your heart be quick to make a promise in God's presence. God is in heaven
2 and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few. | For nightmares come with many cares, and a fool's utterance with many words.
3 When you make a vow to God, delay not its fulfillment. For
4 God has no pleasure in fools; fulfill what you have vowed. You had better not make a vow than make it and not fulfill it.
5 Let not your utterances make you guilty, and say not before his representative, "It was a mistake," lest God be angered by such
6 words and destroy the works of your hands. | Rather, fear God!

7 ***Perverted Justice*** If you see oppression of the poor, and violation of rights and justice in the realm, do not be shocked by the fact, for the high official has another higher than he
8 watching him and above these are others higher still—. Yet an advantage for a country in every respect is a king for the arable land.

9 ***Vanity of Riches*** The covetous man is never satisfied with money, and the lover of wealth reaps no fruit from it; so this
10 too is vanity. | Where there are great riches, there are also many to devour them. Of what use are they to the owner except
11 to feast his eyes upon? Sleep is sweet to the laboring man, whether he eats little or much, but the rich man's abundance allows him no sleep.
12 This is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun:
13 riches kept by their owner to his hurt. Should the riches be lost through some misfortune, he may have a son when he is
14 without means. As he came forth from his mother's womb, so again shall he depart, naked as he came, having nothing from
15 his labor that he can carry in his hand. This too is a grievous

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4, 17: The general meaning is: obedience is better than sacrifice.

5, 1: *God is in heaven and you are on earth:* this gap should make us reverent.

5, 6: *Rather, fear God!:* this seems to mean a warning: "beware" rather than an exhortation: "fear God."

5, 8: Scholars disagree widely on how to translate this verse.

evil, that he goes just as he came. What then does it profit him
16 to toil for wind? All the days of his life are passed in gloom
and sorrow, under great vexation, sickness and wrath.
17 Here is what I recognize as good: it is well for a man to eat
and drink and enjoy all the fruits of his labor under the sun
during the limited days of the life which God gives him; for
18 this is his lot. Any man to whom God gives riches and property,
and grants power to partake of them, so that he receives his
lot and finds joy in the fruits of his toil, has a gift from God. |
19 For he will hardly dwell on the shortness of his life, because
God lets him busy himself with the joy of his heart.

6
1 There is another evil which I have seen under the sun, and
2 it weighs heavily upon man: there is the man to whom God gives
riches and property and honor, so that he lacks none of all the
things he craves; yet God does not grant him power to partake
of them, but a stranger devours them. This is vanity and a
3 dire plague. | Should a man have a hundred children and live
many years, no matter to what great age, still if he has not the
full benefit of his goods, or if he is deprived of burial, of this
man I proclaim that the child born dead is more fortunate than
4 he. Though it came in vain and goes into darkness and its name
5 is enveloped in darkness; though it has not seen or known the
sun, yet the dead child is at rest rather than such a man.
6 Should he live twice a thousand years and not enjoy his goods,
do not both go to the same place?

7 ***Vanity of Desires*** All man's toil is for his mouth, yet his
8 desire is not fulfilled. For what advantage has the wise man
over the fool, or what advantage has the poor man in knowing
9 how to conduct himself in life? "What the eyes see is better
than what the desires wander after." This also is vanity and
a chase after wind.

6, 1-6: According to Coheleth the inability to enjoy life is a disastrous misfortune. He gives some examples.

6, 3: Many of the ancients, not only the Jews, could imagine nothing more disgraceful than to die and not be buried.

6, 6: If the rich man did not enjoy his possessions during life, he would be equal to a still-born child because they both end up in the same abode for the dead.

6, 8: The wise man, the fool, and the poor man all find life's joys insufficient.

6, 9: Actual enjoyment of something, however trifling, is preferable to desiring the unattainable.

10 Whatever is, was long ago given its name, and the nature
of man is known, and that he cannot contend in judgment with
11 one who is stronger than he. For though there are many sayings
12 that multiply vanity, what profit is there for a man? For who
knows what is good for a man in life, the limited days of his
vain life (which God has made like a shadow)? Because—who
is there to tell a man what will come after him under the sun?

7

1 ***Wisdom and Folly Contrasted*** A good name is better
than good ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth. |
2 It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house
of feasting, for that is the end of every man, and the living
3 should take it to heart. | Sorrow is better than laughter, because
4 when the face is sad the heart grows wiser. | The heart of the
wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the
5 house of mirth. | It is better to hearken to the wise man's
6 rebuke than to hearken to the song of fools; | for as the crack-
ling of thorns under a pot, so is the fool's laughter.
7 This also is vanity, | for oppression can make a fool of a
8 wise man, and a bribe corrupts the heart. | Better is the end of
speech than its beginning; better is the patient spirit than the
9 lofty spirit. | Do not in spirit become quickly discontented,
10 for discontent lodges in the bosom of a fool. | Do not say: How
is it that former times were better than these? For it is not in
11 wisdom that you ask about this. | Wisdom and an inheritance
12 are good, and an advantage to those that see the sun. | For the
protection of wisdom is as the protection of money; and the
advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of
its owner.

13 ***The World an Enigma*** Consider the work of God. Who
14 can make straight what he has made crooked? On a good day
enjoy good things, and on an evil day consider: Both the one
and the other God has made, so that man cannot find fault
with him in anything.

6, 10: *Given its name:* its existence. The world remains changeless on the whole and so does man. Man cannot change God's ways of ruling the world and, therefore, man cannot realize all his desires.

6, 11: To repeat words is of no profit to man.

6, 12: Man does not know what is good for him to do on earth because he does not know what his future earthly life has in store for him.

7, 13: It is futile to try to change what God did.

7, 14: *Both the one:* good things. *And the other:* adversity.

15 I have seen all manner of things in my vain days: a just man perishing in his justice, and a wicked one surviving in his
16 wickedness. "Be not just to excess, and be not overwise, lest you
17 be ruined. Be not wicked to excess, and be not foolish. Why
18 should you die before your time?" It is good to hold to this rule, and not to let that one go; but he who fears God will win through at all events.
19 Wisdom is a better defense for the wise man than would be
20 ten princes in the city; yet there is no man on earth so just as
21 to do good and never sin. Do not give heed to every word that
22 is spoken lest you hear your servant speaking ill of you, for you know in your heart that you have many times spoken ill of others.
23 All these things I probed in wisdom. I said, "I will acquire
24 wisdom"; but it was beyond me. What exists is far-reaching; it
25 is deep, very deep: who can find it out? I turned my thoughts toward knowledge; I sought and pursued wisdom and reason, and I recognized that wickedness is foolish and folly is madness.

26 *Women* More bitter than death I find the woman who is a hunter's trap, whose heart is a snare and whose hands are prison bonds. He who is pleasing to God will escape her, but
27 the sinner will be entrapped by her. Behold, this have I found, says Coheleth, adding one thing to another that I might dis-
28 cover the answer | which my soul still seeks and has not found: One man out of a thousand have I come upon, but a
29 woman among them all I have not discerned. Behold, only this have I found out: God made mankind straight, but men have had recourse to many subtleties.

8

1 Who is like the wise man, and who knows the explanation of things? A man's wisdom illumines his face, but an impudent look is resented.

7, 16: A warning against excessive legalism.
7, 17: Alluding to v. 16, the inspired author warns against the opposite extreme of sinning and therefore, according to the ideas of the time, dying prematurely.
7, 21: Do not be too curious to ascertain everything *lest you hear your servant speaking ill of you.*
7, 26: The prostitute is an example of: "wickedness is folly and folly is madness" (v. 25).
7, 28-29: It is rare to find a perfect man and even rarer to find a perfect woman, but this is not God's fault.

2 ***Obedience to Rulers*** Observe the precept of the king, an
3 in view of your oath to God, be not hasty to withdraw fron
the king; do not join in with a base plot, for he does whatev
4 he pleases, | because his word is sovereign, and who can sa
to him, "What are you doing?"

5 ***Indiscernible Moral Sanction*** "He who keeps the com
mandment experiences no evil, and the wise man's heart know
6 times and judgments; for there is a time and a judgment fo
7 everything." Yet it is a great affliction for man | that he i
ignorant of what is to come; for who will make known to hin
8 how it will be? There is no man who is master of the breath o
life so as to retain it, and none has mastery of the day of death
There is no exemption from the struggle, nor are the wicke
9 saved by their wickedness. All these things I considered and
applied my mind to every work that is done under the sun, whil
10 one man tyrannizes over another to his hurt. Meanwhile I saw
wicked men approach and enter; and as they left the sacred
place, they were praised in the city for what they had done
11 This also is vanity. | Because the sentence against evildoers
is not promptly executed, therefore the hearts of men are fille
12 with the desire to commit evil—because the sinner does evil a
hundred times and survives. Though indeed I know that it shal
be well with those who fear God, for their reverence toward
13 him; and that it shall not be well with the wicked man, and he
shall not prolong his shadowy days, for his lack of reverence
toward God.
14 This is a vanity which occurs on earth: there are just men
treated as though they had done evil and wicked men treated
as though they had done justly. This, too, I say is vanity.
15 Therefore I commend mirth, because there is nothing good for
man under the sun except eating and drinking and mirth: for
this is the accompaniment of his toil during the limited days
of the life which God gives him under the sun.

16 ***The Same Lot for All*** When I applied my heart to know
17 wisdom and to observe what is done on earth, I recognized that
man is unable to discover all God's work that is done under the
sun, even though neither by day nor by night do his eyes find

8, 9-15: Coheleth says: daily experience disproves the traditional Jewish doctrine that the holy are happy and the evil are unhappy on earth. Therefore, Coheleth recommends legitimate God-given pleasures.

8, 10: The Hebrew text is not clear.

8, 16-17: Even a studious wise man does not understand God's wisdom as it is manifested on earth.

rest in sleep. However much man toils in searching, he does not find it out; and even if the wise man says that he knows, he is unable to discover it.

9

1 All this I have kept in mind and recognized: the just, the wise, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Love from hatred
2 man cannot tell; both appear equally vain, | in that there is the same lot for all, for the just and the wicked, for the good and the bad, for the clean and the unclean, for him who offers sacrifice and him who does not. As it is for the good man, so it is for the sinner; as it is for him who swears rashly, so it is for him
3 who fears an oath. Among all the things that happen under the sun, this is the worst, that things turn out the same for all. Hence the minds of men are filled with evil, and madness is in their hearts during life; and afterward they go to the dead.
4 Indeed, for any among the living there is hope; a live dog is
5 better off than a dead lion. For the living know that they are to die, but the dead no longer know anything. There is no further
6 recompense for them, because all memory of them is lost. For them, love and hatred and rivalry have long since perished. They will never again have part in anything that is done under the sun.
7 Go, eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart, because it is now that God favors your works.
8 At all times let your garments be white, and spare not the
9 perfume for your head. Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of the fleeting life that is granted you under the sun. This is your lot in life, for the toil of your labors under the
10 sun. Anything you can turn your hand to, do with what power you have; for there will be no work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the nether world where you are going.

11 ***Uncertainty of Fortune*** Again I saw under the sun that the race is not won by the swift, nor the battle by the valiant, nor a livelihood by the wise, nor riches by the shrewd, nor favor
12 by the experts; for a time of calamity comes to all alike. Man no more knows his own time than fish taken in the fatal net, or

9, 1: *The just . . . are in the hand of God:* to do as He pleases. *Love from hatred man cannot tell:* man cannot tell when God favors someone or not.

9, 2-3: Because the same thing happens to good and evil people, this results in an increase of sins by the evil people.

9, 4: See a different view in 4, 2.

birds trapped in the snare; like these the children of men are
caught when the evil time falls suddenly upon them.
13 On the other hand I saw this wise deed under the sun, which
14 I thought sublime. Against a small city with few men in it
advanced a mighty king, who surrounded it and threw up great
15 siegeworks about it. But in the city lived a man who, though
poor, was wise, and he delivered it through his wisdom. Yet no
16 one remembered this poor man. | Though I had said, "Wisdom
is better than force," yet the wisdom of the poor man is despised
and his words go unheeded.
17 "The quiet words of the wise are better heeded than the shout
of a ruler of fools"—!

18 ***Sundry Proverbs*** "A fly that dies can spoil the perfumer's
ointment, and a single slip can ruin much that is good."

10

1 More weighty than wisdom or wealth is a little folly!
2 The wise man's understanding turns him to his right; the
fool's understanding turns him to his left.
3 When the fool walks through the street, in his lack of under-
standing he calls everything foolish.
4 Should the anger of the ruler burst upon you, forsake not
your place; for mildness abates great offenses.
5 I have seen under the sun another evil, like a mistake that
6 proceeds from the ruler: a fool put in lofty position while the
7 rich sit in lowly places. I have seen slaves on horseback, while
princes walked on the ground like slaves.
8 He who digs a pit may fall into it, and he who breaks through
a wall may be bitten by a serpent.
9 He who moves stones may be hurt by them, and he who
chops wood is in danger from it.
10 If the iron becomes dull, though at first he made easy progress,
he must increase his efforts; but the craftsman has the advantage
of his skill.
11 If the serpent bites because it has not been charmed, then
there is no advantage for the charmer.

9, 13-17: The lesson of this historically unidentifiable story is that "wisdom is better than force" (v. 16).

10, 2: The wise man turns his intelligence on important matters; the fool does not.

10, 4-7: Be submissive when confronted with rulers who appoint the inept for important positions.

10, 8-11: The type of wisdom here seems to be a "safety-first" prudence in occupational hazards.

12 Words from the wise man's mouth win favor, but the fool's
13 lips consume him. | The beginning of his words is folly, and
14 the end of his talk is utter madness; | yet the fool multiplies
words. Man knows not what is to come, for who can tell him
15 what is to come after him? | When will the fool be weary of his
labor, he who knows not the way to the city?
16 Woe to you, O land, whose king was a servant, and whose
17 princes dine in the morning! | Blessed are you, O land, whose
king is of noble birth, and whose princes dine at the right time
18 (for vigor and not in drinking bouts). | When hands are lazy,
19 the rafters sag; when hands are slack, the house leaks. | Bread
and oil call forth merriment and wine makes the living glad,
20 but money answers for everything. | Even in your thoughts do
not make light of the king, nor in the privacy of your bedroom
revile the rich, because the birds of the air may carry your voice,
a winged creature may tell what you say.

11

1 Cast your bread upon the waters; after a long time you may
2 find it again. | Make seven or eight portions; you know not
3 what misfortune may come upon the earth. | When the clouds
are full, they pour out rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls
to the south or to the north, wherever it falls, there shall it lie. |
4 One who pays heed to the wind will not sow, and one who
5 watches the clouds will never reap. | Just as you know not how
the breath of life fashions the human frame in the mother's
womb, so you know not the work of God which he is accom-
6 plishing in the universe. | In the morning sow your seed, and
at evening let not your hand be idle: for you know not which of
the two will be successful, or whether both alike will turn out
well.

7 ***Youth*** Light is sweet! and it is pleasant for the eyes to see
8 the sun. However many years a man may live, let him, as he

11, 1-2: Commentators do not agree on the precise meaning. One probable interpretation is that v. 1 is an exhortation to be venturesome in overseas trading, whereas v. 2 counsels not to put all of one's cargo in one ship.

11, 3: Nature keeps moving and does not stop.

11, 4: A farmer must not wait for ideal weather or else he will never sow nor reap.

11, 5-6: Just as God's activity in embryonic growth is mysterious, so are the results of planting mysterious, but that should not prevent you from sowing early and late in the day or season.

enjoys them all, remember that the days of darkness will be
many. All that is to come is vanity.
9 Rejoice, O young man, while you are young and let your
heart be glad in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of
your heart, the vision of your eyes; yet understand that as
10 regards all this God will bring you to judgment. | Ward off
grief from your heart and put away trouble from your presence,
though the dawn of youth is fleeting.

12

1 ***Old Age*** Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,
before the evil days come and the years approach of which you
2 will say, I have no pleasure in them; | before the sun is dark-
ened, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, while the
3 clouds return after the rain; | when the guardians of the house
tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders are idle
because they are few, and they who look through the windows
4 grow blind; | when the doors to the street are shut, and the
sound of the mill is low; when one waits for the chirp of a bird,
5 but all the daughters of song are suppressed; | and one fears
heights, and perils in the street; when the almond tree blooms,
and the locust grows sluggish and the caper berry is destroyed,
because man goes to his lasting home, and mourners go about
6 the streets; | before the silver cord is snapped and the golden
bowl is broken, and the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and
7 the broken pulley falls into the well, | and the dust returns to
the earth as it once was, and the life-breath returns to God who
gave it.
8 Vanity of vanities, says Coheleth, all things are vanity!

9 ***Epilogue*** Besides being wise, Coheleth taught the people
knowledge, and weighed, scrutinized and arranged many prov-
10 erbs. Coheleth sought to find pleasing sayings, and to write
11 down true sayings with precision. The sayings of the wise are
like goads; like fixed pegs are the topics given by one collector.

12, 1-7: An allegory on the approach of old age and death.

12, 2: In old age, darkness replaces light and warmth.

12, 3: *When the guardians:* the men servants. *Strong men:* masters. *Grinders:* women servants. *They who look . . . blind:* mistresses. These are also interpreted as arms, legs, teeth, and eyes.

12, 4: The verse describes the approach of deafness. *The daughters of song:* the songbirds.

12, 5: *When the almond tree blooms:* when the hair turns white. *And the locust grows sluggish:* when one's gait is slowed up. *The caper berry:* an appetizer.

12, 6: All four metaphors portray death by some form of breaking.

12 As to more than these, my son, beware. Of the making of many
books there is no end, and in much study there is weariness for
the flesh.
13 The last word, when all is heard: Fear God and keep his
14 commandments, for this is man's all; | because God will bring
to judgment every work, with all its hidden qualities, whether
good or bad.

THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

INTRODUCTION

The Canticle of Canticles is a Hebraic way of saying "the best song of all." It was written in the fifth century B.C., by an anonymous writer, but attributed to Solomon (see Introduction to the Wisdom Books). Its lasting influence is evidenced by its prescribed reading in the present-day Jewish liturgy on the Passover Feast. The Roman liturgy applies it extensively to the Blessed Virgin Mary on her feast days. Small wonder that the Canticle was a favorite of the mystics.

There is perhaps more extreme diversity of opinion on the literary form of this song than on the literary form of any other book of the Bible. Is it a drama between Solomon and a shepherdess? Is it an allegory? A story of human love between husband and wife? Some maintain it is a collection of nuptial songs on human love which are connected with many liturgical hymns sung at the marriage of the gods. This is the current non-Catholic view especially in Germany. A popular current Catholic view, far from unanimous, considers it a parable, i.e., a developed comparison in the form of a story like the Good Samaritan of the Gospel. In an allegory every detail has a meaning. Insofar as even a parable has some details with specific meanings, it can be called an allegorizing parable, and, in this sense, the Canticle is often so called. In a parable there is only one main point, and here it is the love between God (the bridegroom) and His people (the bride). This love between God and His people is cast in terms of human love through disconnected love scenes. The division between the Catholic and Protestant opinions is based more on literary than on doctrinal considerations.

Irrespective of the type of literature, it is especially important to recall several peculiarities in reading the Song of Solomon, as it is sometimes called. In the Canticle it is especially important to take cognizance of the revealing difference between the oriental and the western way of interpreting metaphors. When the Westerner reads "You are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil" (4, 1), he automatically compares eyes with doves and quizzically asks: "What beauty is there in a pair of eyes compared with a pair of doves?" He interprets this comparison very literally, materially. But the inspired oriental writer meant this metaphor more "metaphorically," less literally and less materially. What the Oriental compares is his reaction, his feelings. His feelings on seeing the eyes of his beloved, he compares with the feelings he experiences in beholding two beautiful doves. Again, in "Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down the mountains of Galaad" (4, 1), we Westerners see a comparison between her hair and goats. The oriental shepherd, seeing numerous well-fed goats meandering down the mountain slope under a sparkling sun, experiences a true delight, dear to men of his calling. He compares this sensation with the sensation he registers in gazing upon the flowing hair of his shepherdess.

In the same Canticle, when the sacred writer composes metaphors

describing the delicate parts of the body, this description is technically called a "wasf." A Westerner is embarrassed when he reads "Your breasts are like twin fawns" (7, 4). What we said above about the psychology of the oriental metaphor applies here. Although these praises of the parts of the bodies of both male ("His legs are columns of marble" [5, 15]) and female ("your breasts are like clusters" [7, 8]) are considered poor taste in our culture, they are very respectable in Semitic culture. Even today at Arabic wedding feasts, such descriptions are sung at great length.

It will not be rewarding to look for logical sequence of ideas, not even for consistent grammar, because this is the language of love. Even geographical names must not always be taken literally because they may be used for poetic reasons such as alliteration (in Hebrew).

There are many similarities between the Canticle and Assyrian-Babylonian literature, Egyptian love songs of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C., and love songs still sung by modern Arabs. However, there is no proof that the biblical Canticle depended on them. Rather, the Canticle reveals more numerous verbal and doctrinal similarities with, and more dependency on, Old Testament books.

1

1 The Song of Songs by Solomon.

2 B ***Love's Desires*** Let him kiss me with kisses of his mouth!
3 More delightful is your love than wine! | Your name spoken
is a spreading perfume—that is why the maidens love you.
4 Draw me!—
D We will follow you eagerly!
B Bring me, O king, to your chambers.
D With you we rejoice and exult, we extol your love; it is beyond wine: how rightly you are loved!

5 B ***Love's Boast*** I am as dark—but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem—as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Salma. |

1, 2ff: The marginal letters indicate the speaker of the verses: B-Bride; D-Daughters of Jerusalem; G-Bridegroom.

1, 3: *Perfume:* this is an ever recurring image in the Canticle. It symbolizes the charms which capture the heart.

1, 4: *O king:* in the nuptial language of the Canticle, the bridegroom is addressed as king and shepherd by the bride and the chorus, i.e., the daughters of Jerusalem, who represent the villagers. The chorus voices the sentiments of the principal actor after the manner of a Greek chorus.

1, 5: The tents and curtains were made from black goat hair. The bride contrasts her sunburnt complexion with the fair complexion of the daughters of Jerusalem. The contrast is common in Arabic love poems.

6 Do not stare at me because I am swarthy, because the sun has
burned me. My brothers have been angry with me; they
charged me with the care of the vineyards: my own vineyard
I have not cared for.

7 B ***Love's Inquiry*** Tell me, you whom my heart loves, where
you pasture your flock, where you give them rest at midday,
lest I be found wandering after the flocks of your companions.
8 G If you do not know, O most beautiful among women,
follow the tracks of the flock and pasture the young ones near
the shepherds' camps.

9 G ***Love's Vision*** To the steeds of Pharao's chariots would
10 I liken you, my beloved: | your cheeks lovely in pendants,
11 your neck in jewels. | We will make pendants of gold for
you, and silver ornaments.

12 B ***Love's Union*** For the king's banquet my nard gives forth
13 its fragrance. | My lover is for me a sachet of myrrh to rest
14 in my bosom. | My lover is for me a cluster of henna from
the vineyards of En-gaddi.
15 G Ah, you are beautiful, my beloved, ah, you are beautiful;
your eyes are doves!
16 B Ah, you are beautiful, my lover—yes, you are lovely. Our
17 couch, too, is verdant; | the beams of our house are cedars,
our rafters, cypresses.

2

1 B I am a flower of Saron, a lily of the valley.

1, 6: *My own vineyard I have not cared for:* the bride says metaphorically that she has not taken care of her heart but given it to her lover.

1, 7-8: The poetic motifs of searching and finding return in 2, 8ff and 3, 1f.

1, 9-11: The same comparison is found in ancient Egyptian and modern Arabic love poems. The admiration enjoyed upon viewing the rich festive ornaments of the royal steeds is compared with the admiration evoked upon beholding the dazzling attire of the bride.

1, 12-14: In returning the compliment, the bride compares the joy she derives from perfume ("henna") to the joy from the presence of her lover-king.

1, 15: *Your eyes are doves:* same comparison as in 4, 1, but see Introduction to the Canticle.

1, 16-17: This may be a poetic description of their rustic bower.

2, 1: *Saron:* the fertile Mediterranean coastal plain from Carmel to Jaffa.

2 G As a lily among thorns, so is my beloved among women.
3 B As an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my lover among men. I delight to rest in his shadow, and his
4 fruit is sweet to my mouth. | He brings me into the banquet
5 hall and his emblem over me is love. | Strengthen me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love. |
6 His left hand is under my head and his right arm embraces
7 me. | I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and hinds of the field, do not arouse, do not stir up love before its own time.

8 B ***A Tryst in the Spring*** Hark! my lover—here he comes
9 springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills. | My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the
10 lattices. | My lover speaks; he says to me, "Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!
11 "For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. |
12 The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove is heard in our
13 land. | The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines, in bloom, give forth fragrance. Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!
14 "O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff, let me see you, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and you are lovely."
15 B Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that damage the vineyards; for our vineyards are in bloom!
16 My lover belongs to me and I to him; he browses among
17 the lilies. | Until the day breathes cool and the shadows lengthen, roam, my lover, like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether.

3
1 B ***Loss and Discovery*** On my bed at night I sought him whom my heart loves—I sought him but I did not find him. |

2, 2: The bridegroom transforms the modest remarks of his bride (2, 1) into a gracious compliment.

2, 6: This verse has been described as "the most elemental cry of feminine love."

2, 7: The refrain distracts the reader from giving an erotic interpretation to the previous verses 3-6. *By the gazelles and hinds of the field:* may mean "by all that is lovely and free."

2, 8ff: See 1, 7-8 n.

3, 1ff: See 1, 7-8 n.

2 I will rise then and go about the city; in the streets and cross-
ings I will seek him whom my heart loves. I sought him but
3 I did not find him. | The watchmen came upon me as they
made their rounds of the city: Have you seen him whom my
4 heart loves? | I had hardly left them when I found him whom
my heart loves. I took hold of him and would not let him go
till I should bring him to the home of my mother, to the
5 room of my parent. | I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles and hinds of the field, do not arouse, do not
stir up love before its own time.

6 D ***Regal State of the Bridegroom*** What is this coming
up from the desert, like a column of smoke laden with myrrh,
with frankincense, and with the perfume of every exotic
7 dust? | Ah, it is the litter of Solomon; sixty valiant men
8 surround it, of the valiant men of Israel: | All of them expert
with the sword, skilled in battle, each with his sword at his
side against danger in the watches of the night.
9 King Solomon made himself a carriage of wood from
10 Lebanon. | He made its columns of silver, its roof of gold, its
seat of purple cloth, its framework inlaid with ivory. |
11 Daughters of Jerusalem, come forth and look upon King
Solomon in the crown with which his mother has crowned
him on the day of his marriage, on the day of the joy of his
heart.

4

1 G ***The Charms of the Beloved*** Ah, you are beautiful, my
beloved, ah, you are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind
your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down
2 the mountains of Galaad. | Your teeth are like a flock of ewes
to be shorn, which come up from the washing, all of them big
3 with twins, none of them thin and barren. | Your lips are
like a scarlet strand; your mouth is lovely. Your cheek is like
a half-pomegranate behind your veil.
4 Your neck is like David's tower girt with battlements; a
thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the shields of valiant

3, 5: See 2, 7 n.

3, 6-11: Not even king Solomon in all the glory of his wedding march can match the glory with which the groom approaches the bride.

4, 1-11: See Introduction to the Canticle for metaphors and wasfs.

4, 4: This is a comparison between the feeling of seeing trophy-shields on a tower, forming part of the city walls, and the feeling upon seeing the jewelry on her neck. The impression intended by the author may be one of force in repose.

men. | Your breasts are like twin fawns, the young of a
gazelle that browse among the lilies. | Until the day breathes
cool and the shadows lengthen, I will go to the mountain of
myrrh, to the hill of incense. | You are beautiful, my beloved,
and there is no blemish in you.

Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon, come!
Descend from the top of Amana, from the top of Sanir and
Hermon, from the haunts of lions, from the leopards' moun-
tains. | You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride;
you have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes,
with one bead of your necklace. | How beautiful is your love,
my sister, my bride, how much more delightful is your love
than wine, and the fragrance of your ointments than all
spices! | Your lips drip honey, my bride, and sweetmeats and
milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your gar-
ments is the fragrance of Lebanon.

G ***The Lover and His Garden*** You are an enclosed gar-
den, my sister, my bride, an enclosed garden, a fountain
sealed. | You are a park that puts forth pomegranates, with
all choice fruits; | nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
with all kinds of incense; myrrh and aloes, with all the finest
spices. | You are a garden fountain, a well of water flowing
fresh from Lebanon. | Arise, north wind! Come, south wind!
blow upon my garden that its perfumes may spread abroad.

B Let my lover come to his garden and eat its choice fruits.

5

G I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I gather my
myrrh and my spices, I eat my honey and my sweetmeats, I
drink my wine and my milk.

D Eat, friends; drink! Drink freely of love!

B ***A Fruitless Search*** I was sleeping, but my heart kept
vigil; I heard my lover knocking: "Open to me, my sister, my
beloved, my dove, my perfect one! For my head is wet with
dew, my locks with the moisture of the night." | I have taken
off my robe, am I then to put it on? I have bathed my feet,
am I then to soil them?

4, 8: The lover is speaking hyperbolically. He does not really mean that the beloved was in all those places and dangers which he describes.

4, 9: *My sister:* Egyptian love poems also use the terms brother and sister to express deep affection and understanding.

4, 11: *Your lips drip honey . . . tongue:* your words are sweet as honey.

4, 12: You are chaste.

4 My lover put his hand through the opening; my heart
trembled within me, and I grew faint when he spoke. |
5 I rose to open to my lover, with my hands dripping myrrh:
with my fingers dripping choice myrrh upon the fittings of
6 the lock. | I opened to my lover—but my lover had departed,
gone. I sought him but I did not find him; I called to him but
he did not answer me.
7 The watchmen came upon me as they made their rounds of
the city; they struck me, and wounded me, and took my
8 mantle from me, the guardians of the walls. | I adjure you,
daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my lover—what shall you
tell him?—that I am faint with love.

9 D ***The Charms of the Lost Lover*** How does your lover
differ from any other, O most beautiful among women? How
does your lover differ from any other, that you adjure us so?
10 B My lover is radiant and ruddy; he stands out among
11 thousands. | His head is pure gold; his locks are palm
12 fronds, black as the raven. | His eyes are like doves beside
running waters, his teeth would seem bathed in milk, and are
13 set like jewels. | His cheeks are like beds of spice with ripen-
ing aromatic herbs. His lips are red blossoms; they drip choice
myrrh.
14 His arms are rods of gold adorned with chrysolites. His
15 body is a work of ivory covered with sapphires. | His legs
are columns of marble resting on golden bases. His stature is
16 like the trees on Lebanon, imposing as the cedars. | His mouth
is sweetness itself; he is all delight. Such is my lover, and
such my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

6
1 D ***Discovery*** Where has your lover gone, O most beautiful
among women? Where has your lover gone that we may
seek him with you?
2 B My lover has come down to his garden, to the beds of
3 spice, to browse in the garden and to gather lilies. | My lover
belongs to me and I to him; he browses among the lilies.

4 G ***The Charms of the Beloved*** You are as beautiful as
Thersa, my beloved, as lovely as Jerusalem, as awe-inspiring

5, 10-16: Another example of a wasf. See Introduction to the Canticle.
5, 14-15: Just as gold and ivory bedecked with jewels appeal to an aesthete, so does his appearance appeal to her.
6, 4: *Thersa:* means "city of delight." The comparison is not with

5 as bannered troops. | Turn your eyes from me, for they tor-
ment me. Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down
6 from Galaad. | Your teeth are like a flock of ewes which
come up from the washing, all of them big with twins, none
7 of them thin and barren. | Your cheek is like a half-pome-
granate behind your veil.
8 There are sixty queens, eighty concubines, and maidens
9 without number— | one alone is my dove, my perfect one,
her mother's chosen, the dear one of her parent. The daugh-
ters saw her and declared her fortunate, the queens and
concubines, and they sang her praises.
10 D Who is this that comes forth like the dawn, as beautiful
as the moon, as resplendent as the sun, as awe-inspiring as
bannered troops?

11 B ***Love's Meeting*** I came down to the nut garden to look
at the fresh growth of the valley, to see if the vines were in
12 bloom, if the pomegranates had blossomed. | Before I knew
it, my heart had made me the blessed one of my kinswomen.

7

1 D ***The Beauty of the Bride*** Turn, turn, O Sulamite, turn,
turn, that we may look at you!
B Why would you look at the Sulamite as at the dance of
the two companies?
2 D How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daugh-
ter! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the handiwork of an

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the city but with its meaning. A French poet would say, "You are as beautiful as Beaulieu" (beautiful place).

6, 5b-7: Resembles 4, 1-3.

6, 8-9: The wealth of an oriental king, which is expressed by the size of his harem, is contrasted with the wealth of the groom's one true love.

6, 10: The climax of praise for the bride.

6, 11-12: A poetic way of saying that she was living a quiet life (v. 11) when suddenly she was captured by the joy of marriage (v. 12). The Hebrew of v. 12 is not clear.

7, 1: The bride is invited to dance. Perhaps she is addressed "Sulamite" because she came from a village called Sulam. *As at the dance of the two companies:* this is the usual translation. It is not clear from the Hebrew whether the bride dances or not, but vv. 2-6 indicate that she did dance. Some commentators suggest that this is a sword-dance was. As the bride dances she brandishes a sword.

7, 2-10: The description of the parts of the body begins with the feet, since they are the most obvious in a dance, and move to the head. The description is addressed to the heart, not to the eyes. It would be offensive to the canons of Semitic taste to understand these as the coarse comments of leering spectators.

7, 2b-3: The images of jewels, bowl, wheat, lilies are meant to be

artist. | Your navel is a round bowl that should never lack
for mixed wine. Your body is a heap of wheat encircled with
lilies. | Your breasts are like twin fawns, the young of a
gazelle. | Your neck is like a tower of ivory. Your eyes are
like the pools in Hesebon by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your
nose is like the tower on Lebanon that looks toward Damas-
cus. | Your head rises like Carmel; your hair is like draperies
of purple; a king is held captive in its tresses.

G ***Love's Desires*** How beautiful you are, how pleasing, my
love, my delight! | Your very figure is like a palm tree, your
breasts are like clusters. | I said: I will climb the palm tree,
I will take hold of its branches. Now let your breasts be like
clusters of the vine and the fragrance of your breath like
apples, | and your mouth like an excellent wine—
B that flows smoothly for my lover, spreading over the lips
and the teeth.

Love's Union I belong to my lover and for me he yearns.
| Come, my lover, let us go forth to the fields and spend the
night among the villages. | Let us go early to the vineyards,
and see if the vines are in bloom, if the buds have opened, if
the pomegranates have blossomed; there will I give you my
love. | The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and at our doors
are all choice fruits; both fresh and mellowed fruits, my lover,
I have kept in store for you.

8

B Oh, that you were my brother, nursed at my mother's
breasts! If I met you out of doors, I would kiss you and none
would taunt me. | I would lead you, bring you in to the
home of my mother. There you would teach me to give you
spiced wine to drink, and pomegranate juice. | His left hand
is under my head and his right arm embraces me. | I adjure

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aesthetically gratifying. They are not literal reports. See 5, 14-15 n.

7, 4-8: The oriental comparison focuses on the reaction of one point of the comparison with the reaction of the other. See Introduction to the Canticle for wasfs.

7, 9: The bridegroom desires to possess his bride.

7, 14: *The mandrakes:* see Gn 30, 14 n.

8, 1: See 4, 9 n.

8, 3-4: A repetition. See 2, 6 n and 2, 7 n.

you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and hinds of the field, do not arouse, do not stir up love, before its own time.

5 D ***Homecoming*** Who is this coming up from the desert, leaning upon her lover?

G Under the apple tree I awakened you; it was there that your mother conceived you, it was there that your parent conceived.

6 B ***True Love*** Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; for stern as death is love, relentless as the nether
7 world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire. | Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away. Were one to offer all he owns to purchase love, he would be roundly mocked.

8 ***Chastity and Its Welcome*** "Our sister is little and she has no breasts as yet. What shall we do for our sister when
9 her courtship begins? | If she is a wall, we will build upon it a silver parapet; if she is a door, we will reinforce it with a cedar plank."

10 I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. So now in his eyes I have become one to be welcomed.

11 B ***The Bride and Her Dowry*** Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-Hamon; he gave over the vineyard to caretakers.

8, 5a: The chorus describes the homecoming of the married couple in fulfillment of the bride's desire in 8, 1-2. See 3, 6 and 6, 10.

8, 5b: The groom may be alluding to the first time they met.

8, 6: The seal could be worn on the arm as here, or on the neck. See Gn 38, 18 n. *Stern . . . devotion:* true love or devotion is just as unrelenting as death or the other world.

8, 7b: This notion of love rises above the physical and emotional. Since it was in the author's mind from the beginning of the Canticle, it is against the background of this concept that we must understand the wasfs and the previous emotional description. In the Old Testament, love is never lust.

8, 8: The bride reflects on how her brothers reared her from a child to a youthful maiden.

8, 9: *If she is a wall:* if she protects her virginity, they will reward her with a silver crown. *If she is a door:* if she shows signs of frivolity, they will take the proper measures of guarding her virginity.

8, 10: Since she remained a virgin, she feels certain of her husband's welcome.

8, 11-12: These enigmatic verses may mean: Solomon can keep his wealth. My wealth is my vineyard, i.e., my bridegroom.

For its fruit one would have to pay a thousand silver pieces.
12 My vineyard is at my own disposal; the thousand pieces ar
for you, O Solomon, and two hundred for the caretakers o
its fruit.

13 G ***Life Together*** O garden-dweller, my friends are listenin
for your voice, let me hear it!
14 B Be swift, my lover, like a gazelle or a young stag on th
mountains of spices!

8, 13: This obscure verse may mean that the groom is introducing the bride, "garden-dweller," to his friends.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM

INTRODUCTION

About fifty B.C., or sometime during the first century B.C., an anonymous Jewish sage, living perhaps in Alexandria, Egypt, wrote the Book of Wisdom in Greek. He wrote in the person of king Solomon to give his words prestige. This was the last of the Wisdom books series and the last book of the Old Testament to be written. It is the best composed of the Wisdom books. Wisdom has been called not only the deepest Wisdom book (hence, its name), but the deepest book in the Old Testament from the viewpoint of doctrine.

The refined author wrote to strengthen his fellow Jews in Egypt against Hellenistic culture and perhaps against the Egyptian persecution of the Jews. His general message was that true wisdom is not found in the idolatry of Egyptian Hellenism (chs. 13—15), but in God's wisdom, the highway to eternal life. Eternal life or immortality is the greatest contribution of the book. But first a word of background.

The greatest inspired thinkers of Israel from the very beginning of her history had never answered the problem of retribution, a problem so characteristic of the sapiential authors. The question of retribution was: Why do the good suffer and the evil prosper? The traditional answer was that both good and evil men were rewarded and punished in many different earthly ways. There were occasional rays of light illuminating horizons beyond this simple answer, but the author of Wisdom announced the breakthrough with the greatest of ease. The brand of immortality revealed in the Wisdom book is not the immortality of the soul. This was the philosopher's notion of immortality. The inspired author, in the main stream of Israel's tradition, supposes it, even though he would not express it in the same terms. The precise kind of immortality of the Book of Wisdom is a happy immortality which the person was to spend with God (2, 23; 5, 15; 6, 19). This joyful immortality went beyond the traditional gloomy sheol, the abode where the dead gathered for a most inactive existence.

A favorite problem among scholars is: what was the influence of Greek culture, and especially Greek philosophy, on this Jewish author? It is true that the author found better formulas in the current eclectic Greek philosophy then dominated by Stoicism, to express current ideas in Israel, e.g., Providence and conscience. Greek language also aided him in expressing traditional notions, e.g., omniscience and omnipresence, more precisely and more deeply.

However, the verdict of the scholars is that these influences are superficial, for no deep doctrine came from the Greeks, not even immortality. The assimilation of Greek thought was incomplete, e.g., sometimes the soul is opposed to the body according to Plato (Wis 9, 15), and sometimes the soul or the body may designate the whole living person (Wis 1, 4), which is according to typical Hebrew usage. Without denying Greek stimuli, the teachings of Wisdom find their natural home in the Old Testament.

The Protestants today follow the tradition of the Jews who never accepted the Book of Wisdom as "Scripture."

Although Wisdom is never quoted in the New Testament, it has influenced Sts. Paul and John, notably the latter, in their teaching about Christ. We shall indicate some of these influences in the annotations.

The Roman liturgy makes extensive use of Wisdom, especially in the feasts of the saints.

Main divisions of the Book of Wisdom are:

1. Reward of Justice, 1, 1—6, 21
2. Praise of Wisdom by Solomon, 6, 22—11, 1
3. Special Providence of God during the Exodus, 11, 2—12, 27
4. Folly and Shame of Idolatry, 13, 1—15, 17
5. Providence during the Exodus, 15, 18—19, 22

I. THE REWARD OF JUSTICE

1

1 ***Justice Is the Key to Life*** Love justice, you who judge
the earth; think of the Lord in goodness, and seek him in
2 integrity of heart; | because he is found by those who test him
not, and he manifests himself to those who do not disbelieve
3 him. | For perverse counsels separate a man from God, and
4 his power, put to the proof, rebukes the foolhardy; | because
into a soul that plots evil wisdom enters not, nor dwells she in
5 body under debt of sin. | For the holy spirit of discipline flees
deceit and withdraws from senseless counsels; and when wicked
6 ness occurs it is rebuked. | For wisdom is a kindly spirit, yet
she acquits not the blasphemer of his guilty lips; because God
is the witness of his inmost self and the sure observer of his

1, 1: *Justice:* this word means the divine will as expressed through the Mosaic Law and conscience. *You who judge the earth:* the author speaks in the name of Solomon (9, 7-8) as he addresses his royal colleagues right from the beginning in v. 1, and explicitly in 6, 1. The author is really telling his fellow Jews to practice "justice" in spite of their pagan surroundings. *Seek him:* this is a constant theme among the wise men and the prophets. It means that one should commit himself totally to God in daily living. The New Testament deepens this doctrine in "seeking the Kingdom" (Mt 6, 33).

1, 2: To test God means to disobey Him.

1, 3-4: *His power:* God's power. *Rebukes the foolhardy:* the fool or foolhardy are those who do not live according to God's laws. God rebukes them by withdrawing His wisdom from them.

1, 5: *Discipline:* a frequent synonym for wisdom. *From senseless counsels:* of the foolhardy of v. 3. *When wickedness occurs it is rebuked:* the meaning is obscure.

1, 6: *A kindly spirit:* see 7, 23.

7 heart and the listener to his tongue. | For the spirit of the Lord
fills the world, is all-embracing, and knows man's utterance. |
8 Therefore no one who speaks wickedly can go unnoticed, nor
9 will chastising condemnation pass him by. | For the devices of
the wicked man shall be scrutinized, and the sound of his words
shall reach the Lord, for the chastisement of his transgressions;
10 | because a jealous ear hearkens to everything, and discordant
11 grumblings are no secret. | Therefore guard against profitless
grumbling, and from calumny withhold your tongues; for a
stealthy utterance does not go unpunished, and a lying mouth
12 slays the soul. | Court not death by your erring way of life, nor
draw to yourselves destruction by the works of your hands. |
13 Because God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the
14 destruction of the living. | For he fashioned all things that they
might have being; and the creatures of the world are whole-
some, and there is not a destructive drug among them nor any
15 domain of the nether world on earth, | for justice is immortal. |
16 It was the wicked who with hands and words invited death,
considered it a friend and pined for it; they made a covenant
with it, because they deserve to be in its possession.

2

1 ***The Wicked Reject Immortality and Justice alike*** For
they said among themselves, thinking not aright: "Brief and
troublous is our lifetime; neither is there any remedy for man's
dying, nor is anyone known to have come back from the nether
2 world. | For haphazard were we born, and hereafter we shall
be as though we had not been; because the breath in our
nostrils is a smoke and reason is a spark at the beating of our
3 hearts, | and when this is quenched, our body will be ashes

1, 7: Since God is present everywhere, He knows every word spoken by men. The Introit of Pentecost applies this verse to the diffusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and through them to the whole world (see Acts 2, 2-4). Neither here nor any place in the Old Testament do the sacred writers speak of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. They personify God's wisdom but we had to wait for the New Testament writers to personalize the Divine Wisdom.

1, 10: *A jealous ear:* of God.

1, 11: Do not complain against God's way of governing the world.

1, 13: *God did not make death:* sin caused physical and spiritual death.

1, 14: *Nor any domain . . . earth:* there is no power of death ruling the world.

1, 15: He who practices justice (1, 1) will be immortal.

1, 16: *The wicked:* apostate Jews.

2, 2: *Reason . . . hearts:* this alludes to some Greek philosophers who believed that thought originated from the heart.

4 and our spirit will be poured abroad like unresisting air. | Ever
our name will be forgotten in time, and no one will recall our
deeds. So our life will pass away like the traces of a cloud, and
will be dispersed like a mist pursued by the sun's rays and
5 overpowered by its heat. | For our lifetime is the passing of a
shadow; and our dying cannot be deferred because it is fixed
6 with a seal; and no one returns. | Come, therefore, let us enjoy
the good things that are real, and use the freshness of creation
7 avidly. | Let us have our fill of costly wine and perfumes, and
8 let no springtime blossom pass us by. | Let us crown ourselves
9 with rosebuds ere they wither; let no meadow be free from our
wantonness. Everywhere let us leave tokens of our rejoicing
10 for this our portion is, and this our lot. | Let us oppress the
needy just man; let us neither spare the widow nor revere the
11 old man for his hair grown white with time. | But let our
strength be our norm of justice; for weakness proves itself
12 worthless. | Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to
us; he sets himself against our doings, reproaches us for trans-
gressions of the Law and charges us with violations of our
13 training. | He professes to have knowledge of God and styles
14 himself a child of the Lord. | To us he is the censure of our
15 thoughts; merely to see him is a hardship for us, | because his
16 life is not like other men's, and different are his ways. | He
judges us debased; he holds aloof from our paths as from
things impure. He calls blest the destiny of the just and boasts
17 that God is his Father. | Let us see whether his words be true;
18 let us find out what will happen to him. | For if the just one
be the son of God, he will defend him and deliver him from the
19 hand of his foes. | With revilement and torture let us put him
to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try
20 his patience. | Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for
according to his own words, God will take care of him."

21 ***God's Plan Brings the Just to Glory after Trial*** These
were their thoughts, but they erred; for their wickedness blinded
22 them, | and they knew not the hidden counsels of God; neither
did they count on a recompense of holiness nor discern the
23 innocent souls' reward. | For God formed man to be imperisha-
24 ble; the image of his own nature he made him. | But by the

2, 12-20: The author is making the Jewish apostates satirize the faithful Jews of Alexandria. However, the text can be accommodated to Christ during His life and especially to His dying on the cross.

2, 22: *Hidden counsels of God:* about man's destiny.

2, 24: The devil was envious of man's privileges.

envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are in his possession experience it.

3
1 But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no
2 torment shall touch them. | They seemed, in the view of the
foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was judged an
3 affliction | and their going forth from us, utter destruction.
4 But they are in peace. | For if before men, indeed, they be
punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; | chastised a
little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and
6 found them worthy of himself. | As gold in the furnace, he
proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to him-
7 self. | In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall
8 dart about as sparks through stubble; | they shall judge nations
and rule over peoples, and the Lord shall be their King forever. |
9 Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful
shall abide with him in love: because grace and mercy are with
his chosen ones.

10 ***Even on Earth, the Just and Not the Wicked Are Blessed***
But the wicked shall receive a punishment to match their
thoughts, since they neglected justice and forsook the Lord. |
11 For he who despises wisdom and instruction is doomed. Vain
is their hope, fruitless are their labors, and worthless are their
12 works. | Their wives are foolish and their children wicked;
13 accursed is their brood. | Yes, blessed is she who, childless and
undefiled, knew not transgression of the marriage bed; she
14 shall bear fruit at the visitation of souls. | So also the eunuch
whose hand wrought no misdeed, who held no wicked thoughts
against the Lord—for he shall be given fidelity's choice re-
ward and a more gratifying heritage in the Lord's temple. |
15 For the fruit of noble struggles is a glorious one; and unfailing
16 is the root of understanding. | But the children of adulterers
will remain without issue, and the progeny of an unlawful

3, 1: *Hand of God:* under His protection.
3, 3: *Peace:* enjoying everything in intimacy with God.
3, 4: *If . . . be punished:* through earthly trials. *Immortality:* this is the first appearance of this word in the Old Testament.
3, 5: *God tried them:* a frequent Old Testament idea which finds its most perfect expression in Heb 12, 11.
3, 7: *In the time of their visitation:* at the last judgment.
3, 7b: A symbol of Israel victorious over her enemies.
3, 13: *At the visitation of souls:* at judgment time.
3, 14: *In the Lord's temple:* in heaven.

17 bed will disappear. | For should they attain long life, they will
be held in no esteem, and dishonored will their old age be at
18 last; while should they die abruptly, they have no hope nor
19 comfort in the day of scrutiny; | for dire is the end of the
wicked generation.

4

1 Better is childlessness with virtue; for immortal is its memory:
2 because both by God is it acknowledged, and by men. | When
it is present men imitate it, and they long for it when it is gone;
and forever it marches crowned in triumph, victorious in un-
3 sullied deeds of valor. | But the numerous progeny of the
wicked shall be of no avail; their spurious offshoots shall not
4 strike deep root nor take firm hold. | For even though their
branches flourish for a time, they are unsteady and shall be
rocked by the wind and, by the violence of the winds, uprooted;
5 | their twigs shall be broken off untimely, and their fruit be
6 useless, unripe for eating, and fit for nothing. | For children
born of lawless unions give evidence of the wickedness of their
7 parents, when they are examined. | But the just man, though
8 he die early, shall be at rest. | For the age that is honorable
comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in
9 terms of years. | Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for
10 men, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age. | He who
pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was trans-
11 ported— | snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or
12 deceit beguile his soul; | for the witchery of paltry things
obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the
13 innocent mind. | Having become perfect in a short while, he
14 reached the fullness of a long career; | for his soul was pleasing
to the Lord, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wicked-
ness. But the people saw and did not understand; nor did they
15 take this into account; | that God's grace and mercy are with
16 his holy ones and his care is with his elect. | Yes, the just man
dead condemns the sinful who live, and youth swiftly com-

4, 1: See Sir 16, 3.

4, 6: *When they are examined:* may mean when they are examined by God on Judgment Day.

4, 7: *Though he die early:* the traditional doctrine in the Old Testament was that a long life on earth was a reward of a holy life, and a premature death was a sign of some sort of sin. This is the first time in the Old Testament that a satisfactory answer is given to this problem. *At rest:* means same as peace. See 3, 3 n.

4, 10: *Transported:* this description alludes to Henoch in Gn 5, 24; Sir 44, 16.

4, 16: *Condemns the sinful who live:* because the just man lived virtuously.

pleted condemns the many years of the wicked man grown old.
17 | For they see the death of the wise man and do not understand
what the Lord intended for him, or why he made him secure. |
18 They see, and hold him in contempt; but the Lord laughs them
19 to scorn. | And they shall afterward become dishonored corpses
and an unceasing mockery among the dead. For he shall strike
them down speechless and prostrate and rock them to their
foundations; they shall be utterly laid waste and shall be in
grief and their memory shall perish.

20 ***The Final Judgment of the Wicked*** Fearful shall they
come, at the counting up of their misdeeds, and their trans-
gressions shall convict them to their face.

5

1 Then shall the just one with great assurance stand before his
2 oppressors who set at nought his labors. | Seeing this, they shall
be shaken with dreadful fear, and amazed at the unlooked-for
3 salvation. | They shall say among themselves, rueful and groan-
ing through anguish of spirit: "This is he whom once we held
4 as a laughingstock and as a type for mockery, | fools that we
were! His life we deemed madness, and his death dishonored. |
5 See how he is accounted among the sons of God; how his lot is
6 with the saints! | We, then, have strayed from the way of truth,
and the light of justice did not shine for us, and the sun did
7 not rise for us. | We had our fill of the ways of mischief and
of ruin; we journeyed through impassable deserts, but the way
8 of the Lord we knew not. | What did our pride avail us? What
9 have wealth and its boastfulness afforded us? | All of them
10 passed like a shadow and like a fleeting rumor; | like a ship
traversing the heaving water, of which, when it has passed, no
11 trace can be found, no path of its keel in the waves. | Or like a
bird flying through the air; no evidence of its course is to be

4, 19: *Their memory shall perish:* a characteristic notion of punishment in the Wisdom books.

4, 20: *At the counting up of their misdeeds:* by God.

4, 20—5, 2: Compare the General Judgment in Mt 25, 31-46, which pivots on Christ's pronouncement of the sentence, and the present description that focuses on the state of the sinners' souls.

5, 3-13: The confession of the condemned at the General Judgment is a retraction of their proposals described in 2, 1-20.

5, 5: *The sons of God:* and *saints* are synonyms.

5, 6: *Light of justice:* and *sun* are synonyms.

5, 7: *Impassable deserts:* we did not follow God's path. *We knew not:* because we refused to know.

found—but the fluid air, lashed by the beat of pinions, and cle
by the rushing force of speeding wings, is traversed: and afte
12 ward no mark of passage can be found in it. | Or as, when a
arrow has been shot at a mark, the parted air straightway flow
together again so that none discerns the way it went through-
13 | even so we, once born, abruptly came to nought and had r
sign of virtue to display, but were consumed in our wickedness
14 | Yes, the hope of the wicked is like thistledown borne on th
wind, and like fine, tempest-driven foam; like smoke scattere
by the wind, and like the passing memory of the nomad camp
15 ing for a single day. | But the just live forever, and in the Lor
is their recompense, and the thought of them is with the Mo
16 High. | Therefore shall they receive the splendid crown, th
beauteous diadem, from the hand of the Lord—for he sha
shelter them with his right hand, and protect them with h
17 arm. | He shall take his zeal for armor and he shall arm cre
18 tion to requite the enemy; | he shall don justice for a breas
19 plate and shall wear sure judgment for a helmet; | he shall tak
20 invincible rectitude as a shield | and whet his sudden anger fo
a sword, and the universe shall war with him against the foo
21 hardy. | Well-aimed shafts of lightnings shall go forth and fro
the clouds as from a well-drawn bow shall leap to the mark
22 | and as from his sling, wrathful hailstones shall be hurled
The water of the sea shall be enraged against them and th
23 streams shall abruptly overflow; | a mighty wind shall com
against them and winnow them out like the tempest; thus law
lessness shall lay the whole earth waste and evildoing overtur
the thrones of potentates.

6

1 ***To the Mighty, Wisdom Offers True Kingship*** Hear
therefore, kings, and understand; learn, you magistrate
2 of the earth's expanse! | Hearken, you who rule the multitud
3 and lord it over throngs of peoples! | Because authority wa

5, 15-16: This is a brief description of the just which was treate
more at length in 3, 1-9.

5, 15: In contrast to the impious in v. 13, the spiritual life of th
just begins on earth and never ends.

5, 17-23: The author makes God vest like a warrior ready fo
combat to describe how He will punish the condemned. The imager
is called apocalyptic, i.e., pertaining to the end.

5, 21: The storm is a traditional image of God's intervention. Se
Jgs 5, 4-5.

5, 22: *Against them:* the enemies.

6, 1: See 1, 1 n.

given you by the Lord and sovereignty by the Most High, who
4 shall probe your works and scrutinize your counsels! | Because,
though you were ministers of his kingdom, you judged not
rightly, and did not keep the Law, nor walk according to the
5 will of God, | terribly and swiftly shall he come against you,
6 because judgment is stern for the exalted— | for the lowly
may be pardoned out of mercy but the mighty shall be mightily
7 put to the test. | For the Lord of all shows no partiality, nor
does he fear greatness, because he himself made the great as
8 as well as the small, and he provides for all alike; but for the
9 powerful a rigorous scrutiny impends. | To you, therefore, O
princes, are my words addressed that you may learn wisdom
10 and that you may not sin. | For those who keep the holy precepts
hallowed shall be found holy, and those learned in them will
11 have ready a response. | Desire therefore my words; long for
them and you shall be instructed.

12 Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom, and she is readily
perceived by those who love her, and found by those who seek
13 her. | She hastens to make herself known in anticipation of
14 men's desire. | He who watches for her at dawn shall not be
15 disappointed, for he shall find her sitting by his gate. | For
taking thought of her is the perfection of prudence, and he who
16 for her sake keeps vigil shall quickly be free from care; | because
she makes her own rounds, seeking those worthy of her, and
graciously appears to them in the ways, and meets them with
17 all solicitude. | For the first step toward discipline is a very
earnest desire for her; then, care for discipline is love of her; |
18 love means the keeping of her laws; to observe her laws is the
19 basis for incorruptibility; | and incorruptibility makes one close
20 to God; | thus the desire for Wisdom leads up to a kingdom.
21 | If, then, you find pleasure in throne and scepter, you princes
of the peoples, honor Wisdom, that you may reign forever.

II. PRAISE OF WISDOM BY SOLOMON

22 ***Solomon as the Model Lover of Wisdom*** Now what
Wisdom is, and how she came to be, I shall relate; and I shall
hide no secrets from you, but from the very beginning I shall
search out and bring to light knowledge of her, nor shall I

6, 4: *The Law:* since the author is addressing pagan kings, he means the natural law.

6, 14: To watch at dawn is a biblical expression meaning to seek eagerly. *By his gate:* we would say at his doorstep.

6, 18: *Incorruptibility:* the blissful immortality of the saved.

6, 20: *A kingdom:* of the elect, spoken of in 3, 7-8.

23 diverge from the truth. | Neither shall I admit consuming
jealousy to my company, because that can have no fellowship
24 with Wisdom. | A great number of wise men is the safety of
25 the world, and a prudent king, the stability of his people; | so
take instruction from my words, to your profit.

7

1 I too am a mortal man, like all the rest, and a descendant of
the first man formed of earth. And in my mother's womb I was
2 molded into flesh | in a ten-months' period—body and blood,
from the seed of man, and the pleasure that accompanies mar-
3 riage. | And I too, when born, inhaled the common air, and fell
upon the kindred earth; wailing, I uttered that first sound
4 common to all. | In swaddling clothes and with constant care
5 I was nurtured. | For no king has any different origin or birth; |
6 but one is the entry into life for all; and in one same way they
7 leave it. | Therefore I prayed, and prudence was given me;
8 I pleaded, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me. | I preferred
her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in com-
9 parison with her. | Nor did I liken any priceless gem to her;
because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand, and before her
10 silver is to be accounted mire. | Beyond health and comeliness
I loved her, and I chose to have her rather than the light, because
11 the splendor of her never yields to sleep. | Yet all good things
together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her
12 hands; | and I rejoiced in them all, because Wisdom is their
leader, though I had not known that she is the mother of these.
13 | Simply I learned about her, and ungrudgingly do I share
14 her riches I do not hide away; | for to men she is an unfailing
treasure; those who gain this treasure win the friendship of
God, to whom the gifts they have from discipline commend
them.

15 ***Nature and Incomparable Dignity of Wisdom*** Now
God grant I speak suitably and value these endowments at
their worth: for he is the guide of Wisdom and the director of
16 the wise. | For both we and our words are in his hand, as well

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6, 23: *Consuming jealousy:* this may allude to the members of the mystery religions and some philosophers who limited their secrets to the initiated.

7, 1: *Mortal man:* the author, assuming to be king Solomon, may be alluding to the Hellenistic kings who claimed to be divine. *Of the first man:* see Gn 2, 7.

7, 14: *Discipline:* see 1, 5 n.

7, 16: *In his hand:* see 3, 1 n.

17 as all prudence and knowledge of crafts. | For he gave me
sound knowledge of existing things, that I might know the
organization of the universe and the forces of its elements, |
18 the beginning and the end and the midpoint of times, the changes
19 in the sun's course and the variations of the seasons. | Cycles
20 of years, positions of the stars. | natures of animals, tempers of
beasts, powers of the winds and thoughts of men, uses of
21 plants and virtues of roots— | such things as are secret I
22 learned, and such as are plain; | for Wisdom, the artificer of
all, taught me. For in her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique,
manifold, subtle, agile, clear, unstained, certain, not baneful,
23 loving the good, keen, unhampered, beneficent, | kindly, firm,
secure, tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing, and pervading all
24 spirits, though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle. | For
Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion, and she penetrates and
25 pervades all things by reason of her purity. | For she is an aura
of the might of God and a pure effusion of the glory of the
26 Almighty; therefore nought that is sullied enters into her. | For
she is the refulgence of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the
27 power of God, the image of his goodness. | And she, who is
one, can do all things, and renews everything while herself
perduring; and passing into holy souls from age to age, she
28 produces friends of God and prophets. | For there is nought
29 God loves, be it not one who dwells with Wisdom. | For she
is fairer than the sun and surpasses every constellation of the
30 stars. Compared to light, she takes precedence; | for that,
indeed, night supplants, but wickedness prevails not over
Wisdom.

8

1 Indeed, she reaches from end to end mightily and governs
all things well.

7, 17-21: In order to say that Hellenistic culture does not offer more than biblical culture, the author attributes to Solomon the knowledge of all the Hellenistic sciences of his day.

7, 22-30: A personification of God's wisdom in twenty-one attributes, which number symbolizes perfection (vv. 22-23 ending with "all seeing"). See 1, 7 n.

7, 26: *Light:* the Old Testament never says that God is "the light" but light accompanies God. It is only in the New Testament that God is called "the light," e.g., 1 Jn 1, 5.

7, 27: Just as God's wisdom produces friends, so will Jesus call His disciples "friends." See Jn 15, 14-15.

8, 1: *From end to end:* of the heavens. *Governs:* the expression comes from Stoic philosophy, but the idea of God ruling the world comes from other parts of the Bible.

2 ***Fruits of Wisdom for Human Life*** Her I loved and
sought after from my youth; I sought to take her for my bride
3 and was enamored of her beauty. | She adds to nobility the
splendor of companionship with God; even the Lord of all loves
4 her. | For she is instructress in the understanding of God, the
5 selector of his works. | And if riches be a desirable possession in
life, what is more rich than Wisdom, who produces all things?
6 And if prudence renders service, who in the world is a better
7 craftsman than she? | Or if one loves justice, the fruits of her
works are virtues; for she teaches moderation and prudence, jus-
tice and fortitude, and nothing in life is more useful for men than
8 these. | Or again, if one yearns for copious learning, she knows
the things of old, and infers those yet to come. She understands
the turns of phrases and the solutions of riddles; signs and
wonders she knows in advance and the outcome of times and
9 ages. | So I determined to draw her into fellowship, knowing
that she would be my counselor while all was well, and my
10 comfort in care and grief. | For her sake I should have glory
among the masses, and esteem from the elders, though I be a
11 youth. | I should become keen in judgment, and should be a
12 marvel before rulers. | They would abide my silence and attend
my utterance; and as I spoke on further, they would place
13 their hands upon their mouths. | For her sake I should have im-
mortality and leave to those after me an everlasting memory. |
14 I should govern peoples, and nations would be my subjects; |
15 terrible princes, hearing of me, would be afraid. In the assembly
16 I should appear noble, and in war courageous. | Within my
dwelling, I should take my repose beside her; for association
with her involves no bitterness and living with her no grief,
but rather joy and gladness.

17 ***Solomon Seeks Wisdom in Prayer to God*** Thinking
thus within myself, and reflecting in my heart that there is
18 immortality in kinship with Wisdom, | and good pleasure in

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8, 3-18: There is a resemblance between this passage and the myth of Hercules, recounted by Xenophon. Scholars dispute about the dependency of the biblical account on the Greek account.

8, 4: *Instructress:* this term is borrowed from the pagan mystery religions. *Selector of his works:* in the creation of the world.

8, 7: *Moderation and prudence, justice and fortitude:* these are Wisdom's four virtues. The author uses what are now known in Catholic theology as the four cardinal virtues to express the general moral attitudes taught in the Wisdom books.

8, 8: *Solutions of riddles:* a popular characteristic of wisdom.

8, 12: *Place their hands upon their mouths:* a frequent biblical expression for respectful and admiring silence.

her friendship, and unfailing riches in the works of her hands,
and that in frequenting her society there is prudence, and fair
renown in sharing her discourses, I went about seeking to take
19 her for my own. | Now, I was a well-favored child, and I
20 came by a noble nature; | or rather, being noble, I attained an
21 unsullied body. | And knowing that I could not otherwise
possess her except God gave it—and this, too, was prudence, to
know whose is the gift—I went to the Lord and besought him,
and said with all my heart:

9

1 God of my fathers, Lord of mercy, you who have made all
2 things by your word | and in your wisdom have established
3 man to rule the creatures produced by you, | to govern the
world in holiness and justice, and to render judgment in in-
4 tegrity of heart: | give me Wisdom, the attendant at your
5 throne, and reject me not from among your children; | for I
am your servant, the son of your handmaid, a man weak and
short-lived and lacking in comprehension of judgment and of
6 laws. | Indeed, though one be perfect among the sons of men,
if Wisdom, who comes from you, be not with him, he shall be
7 held in no esteem. | You have chosen me king over your people
8 and magistrate for your sons and daughters. | You have bid me
build a temple on your holy mountain and an altar in the city
that is your dwelling place, a copy of the holy tabernacle which
9 you had established from of old. | Now with you is Wisdom,
who knows your works and was present when you made the
world; who understands what is pleasing in your eyes and what
10 is conformable with your commands. | Send her forth from
your holy heavens and from your glorious throne dispatch her
that she may be with me and work with me, that I may know
11 what is pleasing to you. | For she knows and understands all
things, and will guide me discreetly in my affairs and safeguard
12 me by her glory; | thus my deeds will be acceptable, and I shall
judge your people justly and be worthy of my father's throne. |
13 For what man knows God's counsel, or who can conceive what
14 the Lord intends? | For the deliberations of mortals are timid,
15 and unsure are our plans. | For the corruptible body burdens

8, 20: This text does not speak about original sin nor about the pre-existence of the soul, but about its pre-eminence.

9, 1-18: Parts of this prayer come from Solomon's prayer (3 Kgs 3, 6-9; 2 Par 1, 8-10), from characteristic ideas in sapiential literature, and from ideas of the author.

9, 13: See Rom 11, 34.

9, 15: Several words here are those of Plato, but not his thought,

the soul and the earthen shelter weighs down the mind that h
16 many concerns. | And scarce do we guess the things on eart
and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty; but wh
17 things are in heaven, who can search them out? | Or who ev
knew your counsel, except you had given Wisdom and se
18 your holy spirit from on high? | And thus were the paths
those on earth made straight, and men learned what was yo
pleasure, and were saved by Wisdom.

10

1 ***Wisdom Preserves Her Followers*** She preserved the firs
formed father of the world when he alone had been create
2 and she raised him up from his fall, | and gave him power
3 rule all things. | But when the unjust man withdrew from h
4 in his anger, he perished through his fratricidal wrath. | Whe
on his account the earth was flooded, Wisdom again saved
5 piloting the just man on frailest wood. | She, when the natio
were sunk in universal wickedness, knew the just man, ke
him blameless before God, and preserved him resolute again
6 pity for his child. | She saved the just man from among th
wicked who were being destroyed, when he fled as fire descend
7 upon Pentapolis— | where as a testimony to its wickedne
there yet remain a smoking desert, plants bearing fruit th
never ripens, and the tomb of a disbelieving soul, a standi
8 pillar of salt. | For those who forsook Wisdom first were here
of knowledge of the right, and then they left mankind a mem
rial of their folly—so that they could not even be hidden in the

namely, that the body is the prison of the soul, although the thoug
here approaches it (see Introduction to the Book of Wisdom).

9, 17: *Holy spirit:* see 7, 22-30 n.

10—19: This section is commonly called a midrashic history. T
"midrashic license" when dealing with the Exodus events resembl
the "poetic license" of moderns. The main purpose of the midrash
literary form here is to prove from "history" that the idolatro
Egyptian Hellenistic culture is inferior to the divinely wisdom guid
history of Israel.

10, 1-2: Allusions to Adam.

10, 3: See Cain in Gn 4, 8-13.

10, 4: *His account:* i.e., his descendants. *Flooded . . . just ma*
see Noe and the Flood in Gn 7—8.

10, 5: *Just man . . . his child:* Abraham and Isaac in Gn 22, 1 f

10, 6: *Just man:* Lot, Gn 19.

10, 7: *Plants bearing fruit that never ripens:* this may allude
"Sodom's apple," i.e., fruits that vanish when about to be plucke
Compare Dt 32, 32. *Pillar of salt:* Lot's wife, Gn 19, 26. In this hill
salt, erosions have cut needle figures some of which resemble huma
forms.

10, 8: See Gn 19, 4-11.

9 fall. | But Wisdom delivered from tribulations those who
10 served her. | She, when the just man fled from his brother's anger, guided him in direct ways, showed him the kingdom of God and gave him knowledge of holy things; she prospered him in his labors and made abundant the fruit of his works, |
11 stood by him against the greed of his defrauders, and enriched
12 him; | she preserved him from foes, and secured him against ambush, and she gave him the prize for his stern struggle that he might recognize that devotion to God is mightier than all
13 else. | She did not abandon the just man when he was sold, but
14 delivered him from sin. | She went down with him into the dungeon, and did not desert him in his bonds, until she brought him the scepter of royalty and authority over his oppressors, showed those who had defamed him false, and gave him eternal
15 glory. | The holy people and blameless race—it was she who
16 delivered them from the nation that oppressed them. | She entered the soul of the Lord's servant, and withstood fearsome
17 kings with signs and portents. | She gave the holy ones the recompense of their labors, conducted them by a wondrous road, and became a shelter for them by day and a starry flame
18 by night. | She took them across the Red Sea and brought them
19 through the deep waters— | but their enemies she overwhelmed,
20 and cast them up from the bottom of the depths. | Therefore the just despoiled the wicked; and they sang, O Lord, your holy
21 name and praised in unison your conquering hand— | because Wisdom opened the mouths of the dumb, and gave ready speech to infants.

11

1 She made their affairs prosper through the holy prophet.

III. SPECIAL PROVIDENCE OF GOD DURING THE EXODUS

Water Benefits the Israelites and Punishes the Egyptians

2 They journeyed through the uninhabited desert, and in soli-
3 tudes they pitched their tents. | They withstood enemies and

10, 10a: *Just man:* Jacob fleeing from Esau, Gn 27, 41-45.
10, 10b-11: Jacob's sojourn with Laban (Gn 29, 1—31, 16).
10, 12: *Foes:* Laban and Esau. *Struggle:* Gn 32, 25-31.
10, 13: Joseph, Gn 37, 26-28. *From sin:* see Gn 39, 7-10.
10, 14: See Gn 39, 20—41, 57.
10, 15-21: Moses and the Exodus.
11, 1: *She:* wisdom. *Prophet:* Moses.

4 took vengeance on their foes. | When they thirsted, they call
upon you, and water was given them from the sheer roc
5 assuagement for their thirst from the hard stone. | For by t
things through which their foes were punished they in the
6 need were benefited. | Instead of a spring, when the perenni
7 river was troubled with impure blood | as a rebuke to the decr
for the slaying of infants, you gave them abundant water in
8 unhoped-for way, | once you had shown by the thirst they th
9 had how you punished their adversaries. | For when they h
been tried, though only mildly chastised, they recognized ho
11 the wicked, condemned in anger, were being tormented. | Bo
10 those afar off and those close by were afflicted: | the latter y
tested, admonishing them as a father; the former as a stern kir
12 you probed and condemned. | For a twofold grief took hold
them and a groaning at the remembrance of the ones who h
13 departed. | For when they heard that the cause of their ow
torments was a benefit to these others, they recognized th
14 Lord. | Him who of old had been cast out in exposure th
indeed mockingly rejected; but in the end of events, they ma
veled at him, since their thirst proved unlike that of the ju

11, 4: *You:* the writer is still speaking of God's wisdom but
addresses God directly in this section. *Water . . . stone:* see Ex 17, 1-

11, 5: *Things:* i.e., water. Vv. 6-7 will illustrate that the water
the Nile punished the Egyptians and the miraculous water from t
rock benefited the Israelites.

11, 6-7: *Slaying of infants:* differently from Ex 7, 14-24, the auth
makes the turning of the Nile water into blood ("the perennial riv
. . . impure blood") a punishment for the decree of Ex 1, 15ff.

11, 8: *How you . . . adversaries:* the author interprets Ex 7, 24
mean that the Egyptians were suffering from thirst for a long time.

11, 9: *They . . . tried:* by thirsting in the desert, the Israelite
learned a lesson from the punishment given to the Egyptians, t
"wicked."

11, 10-13: The translators have conjectured that the original readin
was v. 11 and then v. 10.

11, 11-12: *Both those afar off . . . close by:* the Egyptians wh
were close to the Israelites suffered from the plagues, and the Egyptia
who were "afar off" from the departed Israelites suffered perhaps
the remembrance of these plagues and by the contrast of the Egyptian
lot with that of the Israelites who were accompanied by God's wonder
in the desert. The author poetically supposes that the Egyptians knew
of these wonders.

11, 10: *The latter:* the Israelites. *The former:* the Egyptians. Se
12, 22.

11, 13: *For when they:* the Egyptians. *The cause:* water; see 11, 5
They recognized the Lord: the Egyptians recognized the superiority
the God of the Israelites.

11, 14: *Him . . . exposure:* Pharao and his people at first rejecte
Moses' requests, who as a babe was exposed to death in the Nile. *Sinc
their thirst . . . the just:* see 11, 8-9 n.

15 ***God's Mercy Shown even in Punishment*** And in return
for their senseless, wicked thoughts, which misled them into
worshiping dumb serpents and worthless insects, you sent upon
16 them swarms of dumb creatures for vengeance; | that they
might recognize that a man is punished by the very things
17 through which he sins. | For not without means was your
almighty hand, that had fashioned the universe from formless
matter, to send upon them a drove of bears or fierce lions, |
18 or new-created, wrathful, unknown beasts to breathe forth
fiery breath, or pour out roaring smoke, or flash terrible sparks
19 from their eyes. | Not only could these attack and completely
destroy them; even their frightful appearance itself could slay. |
20 Even without these, they could have been killed at a single blast,
pursued by retribution and winnowed out by your mighty
spirit; but you have disposed all things by measure and number
21 and weight. | For with you great strength abides always; who
22 can resist the might of your arm? | Indeed, before you the
whole universe is as a grain from a balance, or a drop of
23 morning dew come down upon the earth. | But you have mercy
on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook the
24 sins of men that they may repent. | For you love all things
that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you
25 hated, you would not have fashioned. | And how could a
thing remain, unless you willed it; or be preserved, had it not
26 been called forth by you? | But you spare all things, because
12,1 they are yours, O Lord and lover of souls, | for your imper-
ishable spirit is in all things!

12

2 Therefore you rebuke offenders little by little, warn them,
and remind them of the sins they are committing, that they may
abandon their wickedness and believe in you, O Lord!

Punishment of the Chanaanites an Example of Mercy

3,4 For, truly, the ancient inhabitants of your holy land, | whom
you hated for deeds most odious—works of witchcraft and
5 impious sacrifices; | a cannibal feast of human flesh and of
blood, from the midst of . . . —these merciless murderers of

11, 15: Frogs of Ex 8, 1-2.

11, 16: The same idea reappears in 12, 23; 16, 1 (see 16, 1 n), and in many other biblical passages.

11, 17: *From formless matter:* the expression may come from Platonic philosophy, but the biblical author is not teaching the eternity of matter but alluding to organization from a chaotic mass. See Gn 1, 1.

12, 5: *A cannibal feast:* there is no proof that the Chanaanites

6 children, | and parents who took with their own hands defense-
less lives, you willed to destroy by the hands of our fathers, |
7 that the land that is dearest of all to you might receive a worthy
8 colony of God's children. | But even on these, as they were men,
you took pity, and sent wasps as forerunners of your army that
9 they might exterminate them by degrees. | Not that you could
not have had the wicked vanquished in battle by the just, or
wiped out at once by terrible beasts or by one decisive word; |
10 but condemning them bit by bit, you gave them space for
repentance. You were not unaware that their race was wicked
and their malice ingrained, and that their dispositions would
11 never change; | for they were a race accursed from the begin-
ning. Neither out of fear for anyone did you grant amnesty for
12 their sins. | For who can say to you, "What have you done?"
or who can oppose your decree? Or when peoples perish, who
can challenge you, their maker; or who can come into your
13 presence as vindicator of unjust men? | For neither is there any
god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show
14 you have not unjustly condemned; | nor can any king or prince
15 confront you on behalf of those you have punished. | But as
you are just, you govern all things justly; you regard it as
unworthy of your power to punish one who has incurred no
16 blame. | For your might is the source of justice; your mastery
17 over all things makes you spare them all. | For you show your
might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and
18 in those who know you, you rebuke temerity. | But though you
have might at your disposal, you judge with clemency, and
with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you
19 will, attends you. | And you taught your people, by these deeds,
that those who are just must be kind; and you gave your sons
good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for
20 their sins. | For these were enemies of your servants, doomed
to death; yet, while you punished them with such solicitude
and pleading, granting time and opportunity to abandon
21 wickedness, | with what exactitude you judged your sons, to
whose fathers you gave the sworn covenants of goodly promises!
22 | Us, therefore, you chastise, and our enemies with a thousand
blows you punish, that we may think earnestly of your good-

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practiced cannibalism. *Murderers of children:* allusion to child sacrifice among the Chanaanites.

12, 11: *A race accursed from the beginning:* see 3, 12. An allusion to the curse of Chanaan. See Gn 9, 20-27 n.

12, 17: *Your power is disbelieved:* the example of Pharao in Ex 8—12 is pertinent here.

ness when we judge, and, when being judged, may look for mercy.

23 ***Animals Punish the Egyptians*** Hence those unjust also,
who lived a life of folly, you tormented through their own
24 abominations. | For they went far astray in the paths of error,
taking for gods the worthless and disgusting among beasts,
25 deceived like senseless infants. | Therefore as though upon
unreasoning children, you sent your judgment on them as a
26 mockery; | but they who took no heed of punishment which
was but child's play were to experience a condemnation worthy
27 of God. | For in the things through which they suffered distress,
since they were tortured by the very things they deemed gods,
they saw and recognized the true God whom before they had
refused to know; with this, their final condemnation came upon
them.

IV. THE FOLLY AND SHAME OF IDOLATRY

13

1 ***Creatures Should Lead Men to God*** For all men were
by nature foolish who were in ignorance of God, and who from
the good things seen did not succeed in knowing him who is,
2 and from studying the works did not discern the artisan; | but
either fire, or wind, or the swift air, or the circuit of the stars,
or the mighty water, or the luminaries of heaven, the governors
3 of the world, they considered gods. | Now if out of joy in their
beauty they thought them gods, let them know how far more
excellent is the Lord than these; for the original source of beauty
4 fashioned them. | Or if they were struck by their might and
energy, let them from these things realize how much more
5 powerful is he who made them. | For from the greatness and
the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy,
6 is seen. | But yet, for these the blame is less; for they indeed
have gone astray perhaps, though they seek God and wish to
7 find him. | For they search busily among his works, but are
distracted by what they see, because the things seen are fair. |
8.9 But again, not even these are pardonable. | For if they so far
succeeded in knowledge that they could speculate about the
world, how did they not more quickly find its Lord?

12, 27: *Their final condemnation:* the death of the oldest sons and the defeat of the army at the Red Sea.

13, 5: Rom 1, 19-20, makes this a classic.

Wooden Idols Are a Perversion of God's Creation

10 But doomed are they, and in dead things are their hopes, who
termed gods the works of human hands: gold and silver, the
product of art, and likenesses of beasts, or useless stone, the
11 work of an ancient hand. | A carpenter may saw out a suitable
tree and skillfully scrape off all its bark, and deftly plying his
12 art, produce something fit for daily use, | and use up the refuse
from his handiwork in preparing his food, and have his fill; |
13 then the good-for-nothing refuse from these remnants, crooked
wood grown full of knots, he takes and carves to occupy his
spare time. This wood he models with listless skill, and patterns
14 it on the image of a man | or makes it resemble some worthless
beast. When he has daubed it with red and crimsoned its surface
15 with red stain, and daubed over every blemish in it, | he makes
a fitting shrine for it and puts it on the wall, fastening it with a
16 nail. | Thus lest it fall down he provides for it, knowing that it
cannot help itself; for, truly, it is an image and needs help. |
17 But when he prays about his goods or marriage or children, he
is not ashamed to address the thing without a soul. And for
18 vigor he invokes the powerless; | and for life he entreats the
dead; and for aid he beseeches the wholly incompetent, and
19 about travel, something that cannot even walk. | And for profit
in business and success with his hands he asks facility of a
thing with hands completely inert.

14

1 Again, one preparing for a voyage and about to traverse the
wild waves cries out to wood more unsound than the boat that
2 bears him. | For the urge for profits devised this latter, and
3 Wisdom the artificer constructed it, | but your providence, O
Father! guides it, for you have furnished even in the sea a road,
4 and through the waves a steady path, | showing that you can
save from any danger, so that even one without skill may
5 embark. | But you will that the products of your Wisdom be
not idle; therefore men trust their lives even to frailest wood,
6 and have been safe crossing the surge on a raft. | For of old,
when the proud giants were being destroyed, the hope of the
universe, who took refuge on a raft, left to the world a future
7 for his race, under the guidance of your hand. | For blest is the

13, 10ff: The sarcastic polemic against idolatry was also a commonplace for the Greek philosophers.

14, 6: *Proud giants:* see Gn 6, 1-4 n.

14, 7: *For blest is the wood through which justice is fulfilled:* several Fathers of the Church accommodated the wood of Noe's ark to the cross of Jesus.

8 wood through which justice is fulfilled; | but the handmade
idol is accursed, and its maker as well: he for having produced
it, and it, because though corruptible, it was termed a god. |
9 Equally odious to God are the evildoer and his evil deed; |
10 and the thing made shall be punished with its contriver. |
11 Therefore upon even the idols of the nations shall a visitation
come, since they have become abominable amid God's works,
snares for the souls of men and a trap for the feet of the
senseless.

12 ***The Folly of Idolatry Leads to Moral Disorders*** For
the source of wantonness is preoccupation with idols; and their
13 invention was a corruption of life. | For in the beginning they
14 were not, nor shall they continue forever; | for by the vanity
of men they came into the world, and therefore a sudden end is
15 planned for them. | For a father, afflicted with untimely mourn-
ing, made an image of the child so quickly taken from him, and
now honored as a god what was formerly a dead man and
16 handed down to his subjects mysteries and sacrifices. | Then, in
time, the impious practice gained strength and was observed as
law, and graven things were worshiped by princely decrees. |
17 Men who lived so far away that they could not honor him in
his presence copied the appearance of the distant king and
made a public image of him they wished to honor, out of zeal
18 to flatter him when absent, as though present. | And to pro-
mote this observance among those to whom it was strange, the
19 artisan's ambition provided a stimulus. | For he, mayhap in his
determination to please the ruler, labored over the likeness to
20 the best of his skill; | and the masses, drawn by the charm of
the workmanship, soon thought he should be worshiped who
21 shortly before was honored as a man. | And this became a snare
for mankind, that men enslaved to either grief or tyranny
conferred the incommunicable Name on stocks and stones. |
22 Then it was not enough for them to err in their knowledge of
God; but even though they live in a great war of ignorance, they
23 call such evils peace. | For while they celebrate either child-
24 slaying sacrifices or clandestine mysteries, or frenzied carousals
in unheard-of rites, | they no longer safeguard either lives or
pure wedlock; but each either waylays and kills his neighbor, or
25 aggrieves him by adultery. | And all is confusion—blood and

14, 12: Idolatry and impurity went hand in hand.

14, 13: *For in the beginning:* the authors of Genesis and Wisdom made monotheism precede polytheism.

14, 15: There were many such fables in classical literature, e.g., according to Lactantius, Cicero did the same for his daughter Tullia.

murder, theft and guile, corruption, faithlessness, turmoil, per-
26 jury, | disturbance of good men, neglect of gratitude, besmirch-
ing of souls, unnatural lust, disorder in marriage, adultery and
27 shamelessness. | For the worship of infamous idols is the reason
28 and source and extremity of all evil. | For they either go mad
with enjoyment, or prophesy lies, or live lawlessly or lightly
29 forswear themselves. | For as their trust is in soulless idols, they
30 expect no harm from their false oaths. | But on both counts
shall justice overtake them: because they thought ill of God and
devoted themselves to idols, and because they deliberately swore
31 false oaths, despising piety. | For not the might of those in-
voked but the retribution of sinners ever follows upon the
transgression of the wicked.

15

1 ***The Living God Contrasted with Dead Idols*** But you,
our God, are good and true, slow to anger, and governing all
2 with mercy. | For even if we sin, we are yours, and know your
might; but we will not sin, knowing that we belong to you.
3 For to know you well is complete justice, and to know your
4 might is the root of immortality. | For neither did the evil
creation of men's fancy deceive us, nor the fruitless labor of
5 painters, a design portrayed in varied colors, | the sight of
which arouses yearning in the senseless man, till he longs for
6 the inanimate form of a dead image. | Lovers of evil things,
and worthy of such hopes are they who make them and long
7 for them and worship them. | For truly the potter, laboriously
working the soft earth, molds for our service each several
article: both the vessels that serve for clean purposes and their
opposites, all alike; as to what shall be the use of each vessel of
8 either class the worker in clay is the judge. | And with mis-
spent toil he molds a meaningless god from the selfsame clay;
though he himself shortly before was made from the earth and
after a little, is to go whence he was taken, when the life that
9 was lent him is demanded back. | But his concern is not that
he is to die nor that his span of life is brief; rather, he vies with
goldsmiths and silversmiths and emulates molders of bronze,
10 and takes pride in modeling counterfeits. | Ashes his heart is!
more worthless than earth is his hope, and more ignoble than
11 clay his life; | because he knew not the one who fashioned him,

14, 26: See Rom 1, 24-32.

15, 2: *We will not sin:* a sincere desire.

15, 5: Arnobius tells the story of Pygmalion of Cyprus who passionately fell in love with an ivory statue. This same theme is carried over to G. B. Shaw's "Pygmalion."

and breathed into him a quickening soul, and infused a vital
12 spirit. | Instead, he esteemed our life a plaything, and our span
of life a holiday for gain; "For one must," says he, "make profit
13 every way, be it even out of evil." | For this man more than any
knows that he is sinning, when out of earthen stuff he creates
14 fragile vessels and idols alike. | But all quite senseless, and
worse than childish in mind, are the enemies of your people who
15 enslaved them. | For they esteemed all the idols of the nations
gods, which have no use of the eyes for vision, nor nostrils to
snuff the air, nor ears to hear, nor fingers on their hands for
16 feeling; even their feet are useless to walk with. | For a man
made them; one whose spirit has been lent him fashioned them.
17 For no man succeeds in fashioning a god like himself; | being
mortal, he makes a dead thing with his lawless hands. For he
is better than the things he worships; he at least lives, but never
they.

V. PROVIDENCE DURING THE EXODUS

Animals Punish the Egyptians but Sustain the Israelites

18 And besides, they worship the most loathsome beasts—for
19 compared as to folly, these are worse than the rest, | nor for
their looks are they good or desirable beasts, but they have fled
both the approval of God and his blessing.

16

1 Therefore they were fittingly punished by similar creatures
2 and were tormented by a swarm of insects. | As against this
punishment, you benefited your people with a novel dish, the
3 delight they craved, by providing quail for their food; | that
those others, when they desired food, since the creatures sent
to plague them were so loathsome, should be turned from even
the craving of necessities, while these, after a brief period of
4 privation, partook of a novel dish. | For upon those oppressors,
inexorable want had to come; but these needed only be shown

15, 12a: The metaphors come from Greek moralists.

15, 14: *The enemies:* the Egyptians about whom the author spoke in 12, 27.

16—19: The last four chapters form a parallel between the Egyptians and the Israelites (which began in 11, 4-14). The theme is: from the time of the Exodus, that which ruined the Egyptians saved the Israelites.

16, 1: This is one of the author's favorite ideas: "man is punished by the very thing through which he sins" (11, 16). See 12, 23 and 27.

16, 2: *Quail:* see Nm 11, 31-35 n.

5 how their enemies were being tormented. | For when the dire
venom of beasts came upon them and they were dying from the
bite of crooked serpents, your anger endured not to the end. |
6 But as a warning, for a short time they were terrorized, though
they had a sign of salvation, to remind them of the precept of
7 your Law. | For he who turned toward it was saved, not by
8 what he saw, but by you, the savior of all. | And by this also
you convinced our foes that you are he who delivers from all
9 evil. | For the bites of locusts and of flies slew them, and no
remedy was found to save their lives because they deserved to
10 be punished by such means; | but not even the fangs of poison-
ous reptiles overcame your sons, for your mercy brought the
11 antidote to heal them. | For as a reminder of your injunctions,
they were stung, and swiftly they were saved, lest they should
fall into deep forgetfulness and become unresponsive to your
12 beneficence. | For indeed, neither herb nor application cured
13 them, but your all-healing word, O Lord! | For you have do-
minion over life and death; you lead down to the gates of the
14 nether world, and lead back. | Man, however, slays in his
malice, but when the spirit has departed, it does not return, nor
can he bring back the soul once it is confined.

The Elements Punish the Egyptians but Serve the Israelites

15.16 But your hand none can escape. | For the wicked who refused
to know you were punished by the might of your arm, pursued
by unwonted rains and hailstorms and unremitting downpours,
17 and consumed by fire. | For against all expectation, in water
which quenches anything, the fire grew more active; for the
18 universe fights on behalf of the just. | For now the flame was
tempered so that the beasts might not be burnt up that were
sent upon the wicked, but that these might see and know they
19 were struck by the judgment of God; | and again, even in the
water, fire blazed beyond its strength so as to consume the

16, 5: See Nm 21, 6-9 n.

16, 7: *Savior of all:* another favorite idea of the author is universalism, i.e., Yahweh is the God of *all* men. See 1, 13-14; 11, 23-26. Many of the prophets stressed universalism.

16, 13b: This says in biblical imagery what v. 13a says directly.

16, 14: "Soul" here is not our modern concept, but it is synonymous with "spirit" meaning the "breath of life," as explained in Gn 2, 7 n.

16, 16-17: See the seventh plague in Ex 9, 23-25. *In water:* refers to "rains" in v. 16.

16, 18-19: Contrary to the Exodus account, the first plagues are described as continuing when the plague of the hail, the seventh plague, strikes over Egypt.

20 produce of the wicked land. | As against this, you nourished
your people with food of angels and furnished them bread from
heaven, ready to hand, untoiled-for, endowed with all delights
21 and conforming to every taste. | For this substance of yours
revealed your sweetness toward your children, and serving the
desire of him who received it, was blended to whatever flavor
22 each one wished. | Yet snow and ice withstood fire and were
not melted, that they might know that their enemies' fruits were
consumed by a fire that blazed in the hail and flashed lightning
23 in the rain. | But this fire, again, that the just might be nour-
24 ished, forgot even its proper strength; | for your creation, serv-
ing you, its maker, grows tense for punishment against the
wicked, but is relaxed in benefit for those who trust in you. |
25 Therefore at that very time, transformed in all sorts of ways,
it was serving your all-nourishing bounty according to what
26 they needed and desired; | that your sons whom you loved
might learn, O Lord, that it is not the various kinds of fruits
that nourish man, but it is your word that preserves those who
27 believe you! | For what was not destroyed by fire, when merely
28 warmed by a momentary sunbeam, melted; | so that men might
know that one must give thanks before the sunrise, and turn to
29 you at daybreak. | For the hope of the ingrate melts like a
wintry frost and runs off like useless water.

17

Darkness Afflicts the Egyptians, while the Israelites Have
1 ***Light*** For great are your judgments, and hardly to be
2 described; therefore the unruly souls were wrong. | For when
the lawless thought to enslave the holy nation, shackled with
darkness, fettered by the long night, they lay confined beneath
3 their own roofs as exiles from the eternal providence. | For
they who supposed their secret sins were hid under the dark
veil of oblivion were scattered in fearful trembling, terrified
4 by apparitions. | For not even their inner chambers kept them

16, 20: *Food of angels:* the manna of Ex 16, 4-36 n.

16, 20b: This has become the versicle and response sung at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Roman liturgy. Vv. 20b-21 embellish, according to midrashic style, the manna of Exodus.

16, 22-23: See 16, 19.

16, 26: See Mt 4, 4.

16, 27: See Ex 16, 21.

17, 1-21: *Unruly souls . . . the lawless* (vv. 1-2): the Egyptians.

17, 3-21: The midrash here reaches its apex of embellishments on the Exodus account of the ninth plague of darkness, Ex 10, 21-23. The amplifications come from Jewish legends, Greek "descents into hell," and the poetic reflections of the author.

fearless, for crashing sounds on all sides terrified them, and
5 mute phantoms with somber looks appeared. | No force; even
of fire, was able to give light, nor did the flaming brilliance of
6 the stars succeed in lighting up that gloomy night. | But only
intermittent, fearful fires flashed through upon them; and in their
terror they thought beholding these was worse than the times
7 when that sight was no longer to be seen. | And mockeries of
the magic art were in readiness, and a jeering reproof of their
8 vaunted shrewdness. | For they who undertook to banish fears
and terrors from the sick soul themselves sickened with a ridicu-
9 lous fear. | For even though no monstrous thing frightened
them, they shook at the passing of insects and the hissing of
10 reptiles, | and perished trembling, reluctant to face even the air
11 that they could nowhere escape. | For wickedness, of its nature
cowardly, testifies in its own condemnation, and because of a
12 distressed conscience, always magnifies misfortunes. | For fear
is nought but the surrender of the helps that come from reason;
13 | and the more one's expectation is of itself uncertain, the more
one makes of not knowing the cause that brings on torment. |
14 So they, during that night, powerless though it was, that had
come upon them from the recesses of a powerless nether world,
15 while all sleeping the same sleep, | were partly smitten by fear-
some apparitions and partly stricken by their soul's surrender;
16 for fear came upon them, sudden and unexpected. | Thus, then,
whoever was there fell into that unbarred prison and was kept
17 confined. | For whether one was a farmer, or a shepherd, or a
worker at tasks in the wasteland, taken unawares, he served
18 out the inescapable sentence; | for all were bound by the one
bond of darkness. And were it only the whistling wind, or the
melodious song of birds in the spreading branches, or the steady
19 sound of rushing water, | or the rude crash of overthrown
rocks, or the unseen gallop of bounding animals, or the roaring
cry of the fiercest beasts, or an echo resounding from the hollow
of the hills, these sounds, inspiring terror, paralyzed them. |
20 For the whole world shone with brilliant light and continued its
21 works without interruption; | over them alone was spread op-
pressive night, an image of the darkness that next should come
upon them; yet they were to themselves more burdensome than
the darkness.

18

1 But your holy ones had very great light; and those others,
who heard their voices but did not see their forms, since now

18, 1: *Your holy ones:* the Israelites. *Those others:* the Egyptians. *Did not see their forms:* because of the darkness.

they themselves had suffered, called them blest; | and because
they who formerly had been wronged did not harm them, they
thanked them, and pleaded with them, for the sake of the
difference between them. | By contrast, you furnished the flam-
ing pillar which was a guide on the unknown way, and the mild
sun for an honorable migration. | For those deserved to be
deprived of light and imprisoned by darkness, who had kept
your sons confined through whom the imperishable light of the
Law was to be given to the world.

Death of the Egyptian Firstborn; the Israelites Are Spared

When they determined to put to death the infants of the holy
ones, and when a single boy had been cast forth but saved, as a
reproof you carried off their multitude of sons and destroyed
them all at once in the mighty water. | That night was known
beforehand to our fathers, that, with sure knowledge of the
oaths in which they put their faith, they might have courage. |
Your people awaited the salvation of the just and the destruc-
tion of their foes. | For when you punished our adversaries, in
this you glorified us whom you had summoned. | For in secret
the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice and putting
into effect with one accord the divine institution, that your holy
ones should share alike the same good things and dangers,
having previously sung the praises of the fathers. | But the
discordant cry of their enemies responded, and the piteous wail
of mourning for children was borne to them. | And the slave
was smitten with the same retribution as his master; even the
plebeian suffered the same as the king. | And all together by a
single death had countless dead; for the living were not even
sufficient for the burial, since at a single instant their noblest
offspring were destroyed. | For though they disbelieved at every
turn on account of sorceries, at the destruction of the firstborn
they acknowledged that the people was God's son. | For when

18, 2: *And because they:* the Israelites. *They thanked them:* the Egyptians thanked the Israelites. *And pleaded with them:* to depart. *For the sake of the difference between them:* because of the different way God treated the Egyptians and the Israelites.

18, 3: *Flaming pillar:* Ex 13, 21f. *Mild sun:* see 10, 17.

18, 4: *To the world:* see universalism in 16, 7 n.

18, 5: *Of the holy ones:* of the Israelites. See Ex 1, 15ff. *When a single boy . . . saved:* Moses in Ex 2, 1ff. *As a reproof . . . water:* the last plague and the death of the firstborn (Ex 11), and the Egyptian disaster at the Red Sea.

18, 6: *That night . . . fathers:* see Ex 11, 4-7.

18, 13: *God's son:* Ex 4, 22. Israel is my son.

18, 14-15: See Ex 11, 4 and 12, 29. *Word:* the prophets and the

peaceful stillness compassed everything and the night in its
15 swift course was half spent, | your all-powerful word from
heaven's royal throne bounded, a fierce warrior, into the doomed
16 land, | bearing the sharp sword of your inexorable decree. And
as he alighted, he filled every place with death; he still reached
17 to heaven, while he stood upon the earth. | Then, forthwith,
visions in horrible dreams perturbed them and unexpected fears
18 assailed them; | and cast half-dead, one here, another there,
19 each was revealing the reason for his dying. | For the dreams
that disturbed them had proclaimed this beforehand, lest they
20 perish unaware of why they suffered ill. | But the trial of death
touched at one time even the just, and in the desert a plague
21 struck the multitude; yet not for long did the anger last. | For
the blameless man hastened to be their champion, bearing the
weapon of his special office, prayer and the propitiation of in-
cense; he withstood the wrath and put a stop to the calamity,
22 showing that he was your servant. | And he overcame the bitter-
ness not by bodily strength, not by force of arms; but by word
he overcame the smiter, recalling the sworn covenants with
23 their fathers. | For when corpses had already fallen one on
another in heaps, he stood in the midst and checked the anger,
24 and cut off the way to the living. | For on his full-length robe
was the whole world, and the glories of the fathers were carved
in four rows upon the stones, and your grandeur was on the
25 crown upon his head. | To these names the destroyer yielded,
and these he feared; for the mere trial of anger was enough.

19

1 But the wicked, merciless wrath assailed until the end. For he

psalmists used the word of Yahweh to mean the executor of divine judgments. This verse may come from Jb 4, 13-15; 1 Par 21, 15-27; and perhaps from Homer's "Iliad." The Roman liturgy accommodates this solemn text to the incarnation of the Word in the Introit of the Mass of the Sunday after Christmas.

18, 16: *He still reached to heaven...earth:* the "word" or "warrior" (v. 15) becomes an annihilating angel who operates on earth while belonging to heaven.

18, 17: *Perturbed them:* the firstborn.

18, 20: See Nm 17, 6-15.

18, 21: Aaron.

18, 22: *By word:* by prayer. *The smiter:* the annihilating angel as in 1 Par 21, 15-16.

18, 24: The world was symbolically represented on the robe together with the names ("glories") of the twelve sons of Jacob.

18, 25: *The destroyer:* see the "smiter" in v. 22 n.

19, 1: *Wrath:* of God. *He:* God. *They:* the Egyptians.

knew beforehand what they were yet to do: | that though they
themselves had agreed to the departure and had anxiously sent
them on their way, they would regret it and pursue them. |
For while they were still engaged in funeral rites and were
mourning at the burials of the dead, they adopted another sense-
less plan; and those whom they had sent away with entreaty,
they pursued as fugitives. | For a compulsion suited to this
ending drew them on, and made them forgetful of what had
befallen them, that they might fill out the torments of their
punishment, | and your people might experience a wondrous
journey while those others met an extraordinary death.

Conclusion For all creation, in its several kinds, was being
made over anew, serving its natural laws, that your children
might be preserved unharmed. | The cloud overshadowed their
camp; and out of what had before been water, dry land was
seen emerging: out of the Red Sea an unimpeded road, and a
grassy plain out of the mighty flood. | Over this crossed the
whole nation sheltered by your hand, after they beheld stu-
pendous wonders. | For they ranged about like horses, and
bounded about like lambs, praising you, O Lord! their deliverer.
| For they were still mindful of what had happened in their
sojourn: how instead of the young of animals the land brought
forth gnats, and instead of fishes the river swarmed with count-
less frogs. | And later they saw also a new kind of bird when,
prompted by desire, they asked for pleasant foods; | for to
appease them quail came to them from the sea. | And the
punishments came upon the sinners only after forewarnings
from the violence of the thunderbolts. For they justly suffered
for their own misdeeds, since indeed they treated their guests
with the more grievous hatred. | For those others did not receive
unfamiliar visitors, but these were enslaving beneficent guests. |

19, 2-5: See Ex 14, 5-9.
19, 7: *Cloud:* see Ex 14, 19-20. *Red Sea:* see Ex 14, 21-22.
19, 8: *Your hand:* see Wis 3, 1 n.
19, 9: *Deliverer:* see song of Moses in Ex 15.
19, 10: *Gnats:* see Ex 8, 12-15.
19, 12: See Wis 16, 2.
19, 13: *Thunderbolts:* not mentioned in Exodus, but they express God's anger.
19, 14: The Egyptians are even more guilty than the people of Sodom. *Those others:* the inhabitants of Sodom. The author supposes that the Sodomites refused hospitality to the *unfamiliar visitors:* the visiting angels. This is not exactly what Gn 19 says. *But these were enslaving beneficent guests:* the Egyptians against the hard-working Israelites.

15 And not that only; but what punishment was to be theirs since
16 they received strangers unwillingly! | Yet these, after welcoming them with festivities, oppressed with awful toils those who
17 now shared with them the same rights. | And they were struck with blindness, as those others had been at the portals of the just—when, surrounded by yawning darkness, each sought the
18 entrance of his own gate. | For the elements, in variable harmony among themselves, like strings of the harp, produce new melody, while the flow of music steadily persists. And this can
19 be perceived exactly from a review of what took place. | For land creatures were changed into water creatures, and those
20 that swam went over on to the land. | Fire in water maintained its own strength, and water forgot its quenching nature;
21 flames, by contrast, neither consumed the flesh of the perishable animals that went about in them, nor melted the icelike, quick
22 melting, ambrosial food. | For every way, O Lord! you magnified and glorified your people; unfailing, you stood by them in every time and circumstance.

19, 15: *Theirs . . . they:* the people of Sodom.

19, 16: *These:* the Egyptians. *Festivities:* see Gn 45, 17-20.

19, 17: *They . . . blindness:* a midrashic exaggeration of the plague of darkness. *Those others:* people of Sodom. *The just:* Lot. See Gn 19, 11.

19, 18: *The elements:* constituting the universe.

19, 19: *Land creatures . . . water creatures:* the Egyptian horses were drowned by the waves of the Red Sea. *Swam . . . land:* frogs of Ex 8, 2.

19, 20: See Wis 16, 17-19.

19, 21: *Flames . . . in them:* see Wis 16, 18. *Nor melted . . . food:* see Wis 16, 22.

19, 22: The conclusion was a veiled encouragement to the persecuted Jews of Alexandria.

THE BOOK OF SIRACH

INTRODUCTION

Sirach or Ben Sira composed the book in Hebrew about 190 B.C. His grandson translated the book into Greek after 130 B.C. and added the Foreword, but the latter was never accepted as inspired by the Church. Yet, since the Foreword was so ancient, it has been included in the Bible.

The Vulgate, the Latin Bible, calls this book Ecclesiasticus. It does not signify the name of the person, but it means a "church book" because it was used as a church manual in teaching morals to the early Christians. It can be compared to St. Francis de Sales' "Introduction to a Devout Life," since it was written to make the ordinary man strive for high ideals.

The Greek, not the Hebrew text, is accepted as inspired by the Church. The Hebrew text had been lost, and only within the last seventy-five years have two-thirds of it been recovered. Two fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls have contributed to the partial recovery of the Hebrew text. The Hebrew agrees with the Greek text in the main. Neither text is accepted as inspired by the Jews and the Protestants.

Chs. 1—43 are moral instructions on a variety of subjects dealing with daily life in general, in the family, etc. These instructions reflect the author's wide experience, traveling, and knowledge of the Old Testament. Chs. 44—50 chant the eulogy of the Fathers. Most of the book features wisdom essays of various verse length, interspersed with wisdom hymns in praise of the Creator.

Sirach's style shows the influence of Proverbs and Psalms. The book teaches a doctrine that helped to form the Jewish moral character for its combat against the inroads of Hellenistic culture to replace Jewish culture in later Machabean times. The doctrine, a digest of traditional teachings, underscored obedience to God and confidence in His alliance. Trials will be necessary to test the Jewish character.

Besides drawing heavily on previously written Old Testament books, not by direct quotations, but by allusions, Sirach has similarities with Egyptian wisdom writers, the "Wisdom of Ahikar," Greek authors, principally Theognis and Euripides. The last, incidentally, makes unflattering observations on false friends and women just as Sirach does. It is not proven that Sirach borrowed from these authors.

What was Sirach's sphere of influence? Of all the New Testament books, the one influenced most by Sirach is the Epistle of St. James. At least ten passages come from Sirach. Besides the Epistle shares his outlook. This sage was very popular in the worship of the synagogue and in the teaching of the Fathers of the Church. In the Roman liturgy, his is the most popular Old Testament book excepting the Psalter.

Main divisions of the Book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) are:

1. Moral Instructions on Various Topics, 1—43
2. The Eulogy of the Fathers, 44, 1—50, 24
3. Epilogue and Canticles, 50, 25—51, 30

Foreword Many important truths have been handed down to us through the Law, the Prophets, and the later authors; and for these the instruction and wisdom of Israel merit praise. Now, those who are familiar with these truths must not only understand them themselves but, as lovers of wisdom, be able, in speech and in writing, to help others less familiar. Such a one was my grandfather, Jesus, who, having devoted himself for a long time to the diligent study of the Law, the Prophets, and the rest of the books of our ancestors, and having developed a thorough familiarity with them, was moved to write something himself in the nature of instruction and wisdom, in order that those who love wisdom might, by acquainting themselves with what he too had written, make even greater progress in living in conformity with the Divine Law.

You therefore are now invited to read it in a spirit of attentive good will, with indulgence for any apparent failure on our part, despite earnest efforts, in the interpretation of particular passages. For words spoken originally in Hebrew are not as effective when they are translated into another language. That is true not only of this book but of the Law itself, the Prophets and the rest of the books, which differ no little when they are read in the original.

I arrived in Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of King Euergetes, and while there, I found a reproduction of our valuable teaching. I therefore considered myself in duty bound to devote some diligence and industry to the translation of this book. Many sleepless hours of close application have I devoted in the interval to finishing the book for publication, for the benefit of those living abroad who wish to acquire wisdom and are disposed to live their lives according to the standards of the Law.

1

1 ***Praise of Wisdom*** All wisdom comes from the Lord and
2 with him it remains forever. | The sand of the seashore, the drops of rain, the days of eternity: who can number these? |

Foreword: Modern Jews still follow the threefold division of the Old Testament as found in the Foreword: "the Law, the Prophets, and the rest of the books." *Thirty-eighth year . . . King Euergetes:* i.e., 132 B.C. *A reproduction . . . teaching:* this is most likely a reference to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament writings before Sirach's time.

1, 1-29: The entire chapter comprises variations on themes of wisdom.

1, 1: Wisdom is an attribute of God.

1, 2-3: All creation reflects God's wisdom.

3 Heaven's height, earth's breadth, the depths of the abyss: who
4 can explore these? | Before all things else wisdom was created;
5 and prudent understanding, from eternity. | To whom has
wisdom's root been revealed? Who knows her subtleties? |
6 There is but one, wise and truly awe-inspiring, seated upon his
7 throne: | it is the Lord; he created her, has seen her and taken
8 note of her. | He has poured her forth upon all his works, upon
every living thing according to his bounty; he has lavished her
upon his friends.

9 Fear of the Lord is glory and splendor, gladness and a festive
10 crown. | Fear of the Lord warms the heart, giving gladness and
11 joy and length of days. | He who fears the Lord will have a
happy end; even on the day of his death he will be blessed. |
12 The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord, which is formed
13 with the faithful in the womb. | With devoted men was she
created from of old, and with their children her beneficence
14 abides. | Fullness of wisdom is fear of the Lord; she inebriates
15 men with her fruits. | Her entire house she fills with choice
16 foods, her granaries with her harvest. | Wisdom's garland is
fear of the Lord, with blossoms of peace and perfect health. |
17 Knowledge and full understanding she showers down; she
18 heightens the glory of those who possess her. | The root of
wisdom is fear of the Lord; her branches are length of days.

19 One cannot justify unjust anger; anger plunges a man to his
20 downfall. | A patient man need stand firm but for a time, and
21 then contentment comes back to him. | For a while he holds
back his words, then the lips of many herald his wisdom. |
22 Among wisdom's treasures is the paragon of prudence; but fear
23 of the Lord is an abomination to the sinner. | If you desire
wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord will bestow her
24 upon you; | for fear of the Lord is wisdom and culture; loyal
25 humility is his delight. | Be not faithless to the fear of the
26 Lord, nor approach it with duplicity of heart. | Play not the
27 hypocrite before men; over your lips keep watch. | Exalt not
28 yourself lest you fall and bring upon you dishonor; | for then
the Lord will reveal your secrets and publicly cast you down, |

1, 4: The author personifies God's creation of the attribute "wisdom" (v. 7). *From eternity:* not absolute but relative eternity, i.e., before all other created things.

1, 8: For the same idea see 1, 2-3 n.

1, 9-18: A description of the rewards of one who lives religiously or "fears the Lord."

1, 12: See explanation of this verse in Prv 1, 7 n.

1, 28: *The Lord will reveal your secrets:* indirectly through one's hypocrisy (v. 26) and pride (v. 27). *And publicly cast you down:*

29 because you approached the fear of the Lord with your heart
full of guile.

2

1 ***Duties toward God*** My son, when you come to serve the
2 Lord, prepare yourself for trials. | Be sincere of heart and
3 steadfast, undisturbed in time of adversity. | Cling to him,
4 forsake him not; thus will your future be great. | Accept what-
5 ever befalls you, in crushing misfortune be patient; | for in fire
gold is tested, and worthy men in the crucible of humiliation. |
6 Trust God and he will help you; make straight your ways and
hope in him.
7 You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy, turn not away
8 lest you fall. | You who fear the Lord, trust him, and your
9 reward will not be lost. | You who fear the Lord, hope for good
10 things, for lasting joy and mercy. | Study the generations long
past and understand; has anyone hoped in the Lord and been
disappointed? Has anyone persevered in his fear and been for-
11 saken? has anyone called upon him and been rebuffed? | Com-
passionate and merciful is the Lord; he forgives sins, he saves
in time of trouble.
12 Woe to craven hearts and drooping hands, to the sinner who
13 treads a double path! | Woe to the faint of heart who trust
14 not, who therefore will have no shelter! | Woe to you who
have lost hope! what will you do at the visitation of the Lord? |
15 Those who fear the Lord disobey not his words; those who love
16 him keep his ways. | Those who fear the Lord seek to please
17 him, those who love him are filled with his law. | Those who
fear the Lord prepare their hearts and humble themselves before
18 him. | Let us fall into the hands of the Lord and not into the
hands of men, for equal to his majesty is the mercy that he
shows.

3

1 ***Duties toward Parents*** Children, pay heed to a father's
2 right; do so that you may live. | For the Lord sets a father in
honor over his children; a mother's authority he confirms over
3.4 her sons. | He who honors his father atones for sins; | he stores
5 up riches who reveres his mother. | He who honors his father
6 is gladdened by children, and when he prays he is heard. | He
who reveres his father will live a long life; and he obeys the

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you will be humiliated in the presence of the synagogue assembly.
2, 14: *Visitation:* at the last judgment.

7 Lord who brings comfort to his mother. | He who fears the
8 Lord honors his father, and serves his parents as rulers. | In
word and deed honor your father that his blessing may come
9 upon you; | for a father's blessing gives a family firm roots,
but a mother's curse uproots the growing plant.
10 Glory not in your father's shame, for his shame is no glory
11 to you! | His father's honor is a man's glory; disgrace for her
12 children, a mother's shame. | My son, take care of your father
13 when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives. | Even if his
mind fail, be considerate with him; revile him not in the fullness
14 of your strength. | For kindness to a father will not be for-
gotten, it will serve as a sin offering—it will take lasting root. |
15 In time of tribulation it will be recalled to your advantage, like
16 warmth upon frost it will melt away your sins. | A blasphemer
is he who despises his father; accursed of his Creator, he who
angers his mother.

17 ***Humility*** My son, conduct your affairs with humility, and
18 you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. | Humble yourself
the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with
19 God. | For great is the power of God; by the humble he is
20 glorified. | What is too sublime for you, seek not, into things
21 beyond your strength search not. | What is committed to you,
attend to; for what is hidden is not your concern.
22 With what is too much for you meddle not, when shown
23 things beyond human understanding. | Their own opinion has
misled many, and false reasoning unbalanced their judgment. |
24 Where the pupil of the eye is missing, there is no light, and
where there is no knowledge, there is no wisdom.
25 A stubborn man will fare badly in the end, and he who loves
26 danger will perish in it. | A stubborn man will be burdened
27 with sorrow; a sinner will heap sin upon sin. | For the affliction
of the proud man there is no cure; he is the offshoot of an evil
28 plant. | The mind of a sage appreciates proverbs, and an
attentive ear is the wise man's joy.

29 ***Alms for the Poor*** Water quenches a flaming fire, and
30 alms atone for sins. | He who does a kindness is remembered
afterward; when he falls, he finds a support.

3, 20-24: Sirach is probably warning against seeking knowledge in contemporary Greek philosophy rather than in the Mosaic Law. See Euripides' "Helena": "Nothing is positively known among men, but I have found that the word of the gods is true."

4
1 My son, rob not the poor man of his livelihood: force not
2 the eyes of the needy to turn away. | A hungry man grieve not,
3 a needy man anger not; | do not exasperate the downtrodden,
4 delay not to give to the needy. | A beggar in distress do not
5 reject; avert not your face from the poor. | From the needy
6 turn not your eyes, give no man reason to curse you; | for if in
the bitterness of his soul he curse you, his Creator will hear his
7 prayer. | Endear yourself to the assembly; before a ruler bow
8 your head. | Give a hearing to the poor man, and return his
9 greeting with courtesy; | deliver the oppressed from the hand
10 of the oppressor; let not justice be repugnant to you. | To the
fatherless be as a father, and help their mother as a husband
would; thus will you be like a son to the Most High, and he
will be more tender to you than a mother.

11 ***The Rewards of Wisdom*** Wisdom instructs her children
12 and admonishes those who seek her. | He who loves her loves
13 life; those who seek her out win her favor. | He who holds her
fast inherits glory; wherever he dwells, the Lord bestows bless-
14 ings. | Those who serve her serve the Holy One; those who
15 love her the Lord loves. | He who obeys her judges nations;
16 he who hearkens to her dwells in her inmost chambers. | If one
trusts her, he will possess her; his descendants too will inherit
17 her. | She walks with him as a stranger, and at first she puts
him to the test; fear and dread she brings upon him and tries
him with her discipline; with her precepts she puts him to the
18 proof, until his heart is fully with her. | Then she comes back to
19 bring him happiness and reveal her secrets to him. | But if he
fails her, she will abandon him and deliver him into the hands of
despoilers.

20 ***Sincerity and Justice*** Use your time well; guard yourself
21 from evil, and bring upon yourself no shame. | There is a sense
of shame laden with guilt, and a shame that merits honor and
22 respect. | Show no favoritism to your own discredit; revile no
23 one to your own downfall. | Refrain not from speaking at the
24 proper time, and hide not away your wisdom; | for it is through
speech that wisdom becomes known, and knowledge through
25 the tongue's rejoinder. | Never gainsay the truth, and struggle
26 not against the rushing stream. | Be not ashamed to acknowl-
edge your guilt, but of your ignorance rather be ashamed. |
27 Do not abase yourself before an impious man, nor refuse to do
28 so before rulers. | Even to the death fight for truth, and the
29 Lord your God will battle for you. | Be not surly in your

30 speech, nor lazy and slack in your deeds. | Be not a lion at
31 home, nor sly and suspicious at work. | Let not your hand be
open to receive and clenched when it is time to give.

5

1 ***Against Presumption*** Rely not on your wealth; say not: "I
2 have the power." | Rely not on your strength in following the
3 desires of your heart. | Say not: "Who can prevail against
4 me?" for the Lord will exact the punishment. | Say not: "I have
sinned, yet what has befallen me?" for the Lord bides his time. |
5 Of forgiveness be not overconfident, adding sin upon sin. |
6 Say not: "Great is his mercy; my many sins he will forgive." |
7 For mercy and anger alike are with him; upon the wicked
8 alights his wrath. | Delay not your conversion to the Lord,
9 put it not off from day to day; | for suddenly his wrath flames
10 forth; at the time of vengeance, you will be destroyed. | Rely
not upon deceitful wealth, for it will be no help on the day of
wrath.

11 ***Sincerity in Speech*** Winnow not in every wind, and start
12 not off in every direction. | Be consistent in your thoughts;
13 steadfast be your words. | Be swift to hear, but slow to answer.
14 | If you have the knowledge, answer your neighbor; if not, put
15 your hand over your mouth. | Honor and dishonor through
16 talking! A man's tongue can be his downfall. | Be not called a
17 detractor; use not your tongue for calumny; | for shame has
been created for the thief, and the reproach of his neighbor for
the double-tongued.

6

1 Say nothing harmful, small or great; be not a foe instead of
a friend; a bad name and disgrace will you acquire: "That for
the evil man with double tongue!"
2 Fall not into the grip of desire, lest, like fire, it consume your
3 strength; | your leaves it will eat, your fruits destroy, and you
4 will be left a dry tree, | for contumacious desire destroys its
owner and makes him the sport of his enemies.

4, 30: This verse can also be translated to contrast the showing of a lion's courage at home and of cowardice outside the home.

5, 4-6: Compare Voltaire's similar cynical remark: "God will forgive me; it is his business."

6, 1: *"That . . . double tongue":* this is what people will say about the person who has disgraced himself because of his deceitful tongue.

5 ***True Friendship*** A kind mouth multiplies friends, and
6 gracious lips prompt friendly greetings. | Let your acquaintances
7 be many, but one in a thousand your confidant. | When you
gain a friend, first test him, and be not too ready to trust him. |
8 For one sort of friend is a friend when it suits him, but he will
9 not be with you in time is distress. | Another is a friend who
becomes an enemy, and tells of the quarrel to your shame. |
10 Another is a friend, a boon companion, who will not be with you
11 when sorrow comes. | When things go well, he is your other
12 self, and lords it over your servants; | but if you are brought
13 low, he turns against you and avoids meeting you. | Keep away
from your enemies; be on your guard with your friends. |
14 A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; he who finds one finds
15 a treasure. | A faithful friend is beyond price, no sum can
16 balance his worth. | A faithful friend is a life-saving remedy,
17 such as he who fears God finds; | for he who fears God behaves
accordingly, and his friend will be like himself.

18 ***Blessings of Wisdom*** My son, from your youth embrace
19 discipline; thus will you find wisdom with graying hair. | As
though plowing and sowing, draw close to her; then await her
20 bountiful crops. | For in cultivating her you will labor but
21 little, and soon you will eat of her fruits. | How irksome she is
22 to the unruly! The fool cannot abide her. | She will be like a
burdensome stone to test him, and he will not delay in casting
23 her aside. | For discipline is like her name, she is not accessible
to many.

24 Listen, my son, and heed my advice; refuse not my counsel. |
25 Put your feet into her fetters, and your neck under her yoke
26 | Stoop your shoulders and carry her and be not irked at her
27 bonds. | With all your soul draw close to her; with all your
28 strength keep her ways. | Search her out, discover her; seek
her and you will find her. Then when you have her, do not let
29 her go; | thus will you afterward find rest in her, and she will
30 become your joy. | Her fetters will be your throne of majesty;
31 her bonds, your purple cord. | You will wear her as your robe
of glory, bear her as your splendid crown.

32 My son, if you wish, you can be taught; if you apply your-
33 self, you will be shrewd. | If you are willing to listen, you will
34 learn; if you give heed, you will be wise. | Frequent the com-
35 pany of the elders; whoever is wise, stay close to him. | Be
eager to hear every godly discourse; let no wise saying escape

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6, 5-17: See Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, Vol. I, No. 68, for his essay praising Sirach's ideas on friendship.

you. | If you see a man of prudence, seek him out; let your
feet wear away his doorstep! | Reflect on the precepts of the
Lord, let his commandments be your constant meditation; then
he will enlighten your mind, and the wisdom you desire he will
grant.

7

Conduct in Public Life Do no evil, and evil will not
overtake you; | avoid wickedness, and it will turn aside from
you. | Sow not in the furrows of injustice, lest you harvest it
sevenfold. | Seek not from the Lord authority, nor from the
king a place of honor. | Parade not your justice before the
Lord, and before the king flaunt not your wisdom. | Seek not
to become a judge if you have not strength to root out crime,
or you will show favor to the ruler and mar your integrity. | Be
guilty of no evil before the city's populace, nor disgrace your-
self before the assembly. | Do not plot to repeat a sin; not
even for one will you go unpunished. | Say not: "He will
appreciate my many gifts; the Most High will accept my
offerings." | Be not impatient in prayers, and neglect not the
giving of alms. | Laugh not at an embittered man; be mindful
of him who exalts and humbles. | Plot no mischief against
your brother, nor against your friend and companion. | Delight
not in telling lie after lie, for it never results in good. | Thrust
not yourself into the deliberations of princes, and repeat not
the words of your prayer. | Hate not laborious tasks, nor farm-
ing, which was ordained by the Most High. | Do not esteem
yourself better than your fellows; remember, his wrath will not
delay. | More and more, humble your pride; what awaits man
is worms.

Duties of Family Life, Religion and Charity Barter not
a friend for money, nor a dear brother for the gold of
Ophir. | Dismiss not a sensible wife; a gracious wife is more
precious than corals. | Mistreat not a servant who faithfully
serves, nor a laborer who devotes himself to his task. | Let a
wise servant be dear to you as your own self; refuse him not
his freedom. | If you have livestock, look after them; if they

7, 14b: Mt 6, 7 also advises against the uselessness of repetition in prayer.

7, 21: According to Ex 21, 2: "When you purchase a Hebrew slave, he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he shall be given his freedom without cost."

23 are dependable, keep them. | If you have sons, chastise them;
24 bend their necks from childhood. | If you have daughters, keep
25 them chaste, and be not indulgent to them. | Giving your
daughter in marriage ends a great task; but give her to a worthy
26 man. | If you have a wife, let her not seem odious to you; but
27 where there is ill-feeling, trust her not. | With your whole
heart honor your father; your mother's birthpangs forget not. |
28 Remember, of these parents you were born; what can you give
29 them for all they gave you? | With all your soul, fear God,
30 revere his priests. | With all your strength, love your Creator,
31 forsake not his ministers. | Honor God and respect the priest,
give him his portion as you have been commanded: first fruits
32 and contributions, due sacrifices and holy offerings. | To the
poor man also extend your hand, that your blessing may be
33 complete; | be generous to all the living, and withhold not your
34 kindness from the dead; | avoid not those who weep, but
35 mourn with those who mourn; | neglect not to visit the sick –
36 for these things you will be loved. | In whatever you do, re-
member your last days, and you will never sin.

8

1 ***Prudence in Dealing with other Men*** Contend not with
2 an influential man, lest you fall into his power. | Quarrel not
with a rich man, lest he pay out the price of your downfall;
for gold has dazzled many, and perverts the character of
3 princes. | Dispute not with a man of railing speech, heap no
4 wood upon his fire. | Be not too familiar with an unruly man,
5 lest he speak ill of your forebears. | Shame not a repentant
6 sinner; remember, we all are guilty. | Insult no man when he
7 is old, for some of us, too, will grow old. | Rejoice not when
8 a man dies; remember, we are all to die. | Spurn not the dis-
course of the wise, but acquaint yourself with their proverbs;
from them you will acquire the training to serve in the presence
9 of princes. | Reject not the tradition of old men which they
have learned from their fathers; from it you will obtain the
10 knowledge how to answer in time of need. | Kindle not the
11 coals of a sinner, lest you be consumed in his flaming fire. | Let
not the impious man intimidate you; it will set him in ambush
12 against you. | Lend not to one more powerful than yourself;
13 and whatever you lend, count it as lost. | Go not surety beyond
14 your means; think any pledge a debt you must pay. | Contend

7, 23: The present Hebrew text, which is probably not original here, reads: "Choose wives for them while they are young."
8, 10a: Do not arouse the passions of a sinner.

not at law with a judge, for he will settle it according to his
15 whim. | Travel not with a ruthless man, lest he weigh you
down with calamity; for he will go his own way straight, and
16 through his folly you will perish with him. | Provoke no
quarrel with a quick-tempered man, nor ride with him through
the desert; for bloodshed is nothing to him, and when there is
17 no one to help you, he will destroy you. | Take no counsel with
18 a fool, for he can keep nothing to himself. | Before a stranger
do nothing that should be kept secret, for you know not what it
will engender. | Open your heart to no man, and banish not your
happiness.

9

1 ***Advice concerning Women*** Be not jealous of the wife of
2 your bosom, lest you teach her to do evil against you. | Give no
3 woman power over you to trample upon your dignity. | Be
not intimate with a strange woman, lest you fall into her snares.
4 | With a singing girl be not familiar, lest you be caught in her
5 wiles. | Entertain no thoughts against a virgin, lest you be
6 enmeshed in damages for her. | Give not yourself to harlots,
7 lest you surrender your inheritance. | Gaze not about the lanes
8 of the city and wander not through its squares; | avert your
eyes from a comely woman; gaze not upon the beauty of
another's wife—through woman's beauty many perish, for lust
9 for it burns like fire. | With a married woman dine not, recline
not at table to drink by her side, lest your heart be drawn to
her and you go down in blood to the grave.

10 ***Choice of Friends*** Discard not an old friend, for the new
one cannot equal him. A new friend is like new wine which you
11 drink with pleasure only when it has aged. | Envy not a sinner's
12 fame, for you know not what disaster awaits him. | Rejoice not
at a proud man's success; remember he will not reach death
13 unpunished. | Keep far from the man who has power to kill,
and you will not be filled with the dread of death. But if you
approach him, offend him not, lest he take away your life;
know that you are stepping among snares and walking over a
14 net. | As best you can, take your neighbors' measure, and
15 associate with the wise. | With the learned be intimate; let
16 all your conservation be about the Law of the Lord. | Have
just men for your table companions; in the fear of God be your
glory.

17 ***Concerning Rulers*** Skilled artisans are esteemed for their
18 deftness; but the ruler of his people is the skilled sage. | Feared

in the city is the man of railing speech, and he who talk
rashly is hated.

10

1 A wise magistrate lends stability to his people, and th
2 government of a prudent man is well ordered. | As the people
judge, so are his ministers; as the head of a city, its inhabitant
3 | A wanton king destroys his people, but a city grows throug
4 the wisdom of its princes. | Sovereignty over the earth is in th
hand of God, who raises up on it the man of the hour;
5 sovereignty over every man is in the hand of God, who impart
his majesty to the ruler.

6 ***The Sin of Pride*** No matter the wrong, do no violence t
to your neighbor, and do not walk the path of arrogance.
7 Odious to the Lord and to men is arrogance, and the sin o
8 oppression they both hate. | Dominion is transferred from on
people to another because of the violence of the arrogant.
9 Why are dust and ashes proud? even during life man's bod
10 decays; | a slight illness—the doctor jests, a king today—
11 tomorrow he is dead. | When a man dies, he inherits corruption
12 worms and gnats and maggots. | The beginning of pride
man's stubbornness in withdrawing his heart from his Maker;
13 for pride is the reservoir of sin, a source which runs over wit
vice; because of it God sends unheard-of afflictions and bring
14 men to utter ruin. | The thrones of the arrogant God over
15 turns and establishes the lowly in their stead. | The roots c
16 the proud God plucks up, to plant the humble in their place:
he breaks down their stem to the level of the ground, then dig
17 their roots from the earth. | The traces of the proud Go
sweeps away and effaces the memory of them from the earth.
18 Insolence is not allotted to a man, nor stubborn anger to on
born of woman.

19 ***True Glory*** Whose offspring can be in honor? Those c
men. Which offspring are in honor? Those who fear God. Whos
offspring can be in disgrace? Those of men. Which offsprin
are in disgrace? Those who transgress the commandments.
20 Among brethren their leader is in honor; such, in God's sigh
21 are those who fear him. | Be it tenant or wayfarer, alien
22 pauper, his glory is the fear of God. | It is just not to despise

10, 9-10: The text is not clear. The general meaning is that deat
may come at any moment.

man who is wise but poor, nor proper to honor any sinner. | The prince, the ruler, the judge are in honor; but none is greater than he who fears God. | When free men serve a prudent slave, the wise man does not complain. | Flaunt not your wisdom in managing your affairs, and boast not in your time of need. | Better the worker who has plenty of everything than the boaster who is without bread.

My son, with humility have self-esteem; prize yourself as you deserve. | Who will acquit him who condemns himself? who will honor him who discredits himself? | The poor man is honored for his wisdom as the rich man is honored for his wealth; | honored in poverty, how much more so in wealth! Dishonored in wealth, in poverty how much the more!

11

The poor man's wisdom lifts his head high and sets him among princes. | Praise not a man for his looks; despise not a man for his appearance. | Least is the bee among winged things, but she reaps the choicest of all harvests. | Mock not the worn cloak and jibe at no man's bitter day: for strange are the works of the Lord, hidden from men his deeds. | The oppressed often rise to a throne, and some that none would consider wear a crown. | The exalted often fall into utter disgrace; the honored are given into enemy hands.

Moderation Before investigating, find no fault; examine first, then criticize. | Before hearing, answer not, and interrupt no one in the middle of his speech. | Dispute not about what is not your concern; in the strife of the arrogant take no part.

My son, why increase your cares, since he who is avid for wealth will not be blameless? Even if you run after it, you will never overtake it; however you seek it, you will not find it. | One may toil and struggle and drive, and fall short all the more. | Another goes his way a weakling and a failure, with little strength and great misery—yet the eyes of the Lord look favorably upon him; he raises him free of the vile dust, | lifts up his head and exalts him to the amazement of the many. | Good and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from the Lord. | Wisdom and understanding and knowledge of affairs, love and virtuous paths are from the Lord. | Error and darkness were formed with sinners from their birth, and evil grows old with evildoers. | The Lord's gift remains with the just; his favor brings continued success. | A man may become rich through a miser's life, and this is his allotted

19 reward: | when he says: "I have found rest, now I will feast o
my possessions," he does not know how long it will be till h
dies and leaves them to others.
20 My son, hold fast to your duty, busy yourself with it, gro
21 old while doing your task. | Admire not how sinners live, bu
trust in the Lord and wait for his light; for it is easy with th
22 Lord suddenly, in an instant, to make a poor man rich. | God
blessing is the lot of the just man, and in due time his hope
23 bear fruit. | Say not: "What do I need? What further pleasu
24 can be mine?" | Say not: "I am independent. What harm ca
25 come to me now?" | The day of prosperity makes one forg
adversity; the day of adversity makes one forget prosperity.
26 For it is easy with the Lord on the day of death to repay ma
27 according to his deeds. | A moment's affliction brings forgetfu
28 ness of past delights; when a man dies, his life is revealed. | Ca
no man happy before his death, for by how he ends, a man
known.

29 ***Care in Choosing Friends*** Bring not every man into you
30 house, for many are the snares of the crafty one; | though h
seem like a bird confined in a cage, yet like a spy he will pic
31 out the weak spots. | The talebearer turns good into evil; wit
32 a spark he sets many coals afire. | The evil man lies in wa
33 for blood, and plots against your choicest possessions. | Avo
a wicked man, for be breeds only evil, lest you incur a lastin
34 stain. | Lodge a stranger with you, and he will subvert you
course, and make a stranger of you to your own household

12

1 If you do good, know for whom you are doing it, and you
2 kindness will have its effect. | Do good to the just man an
3 reward will be yours, if not from him, from the Lord. | N
good comes to him who gives comfort to the wicked, nor is
4 an act of mercy that he does. | Give to the good man, refu
the sinner; refresh the downtrodden, give nothing to the pro
5 man. | No arms for combat should you give him, lest he u
6 them against yourself; | with twofold evil you will meet f

11, 19: Compare Lk 12, 16-21, the parable of the rich man.

11, 26-28: God had not yet revealed the reward of eternal joys f
those who led a good life. The admonition not to declare anyone happ
before death (v. 28) was a maxim in Sophocles' day (*Trachiniae*

12, 1-7: Compare Mt 5, 44ff for the high ideals of Christ: "Lo
your enemies. . . ."

every good deed you do for him. | The Most High himself
hates sinners, and upon the wicked he takes vengeance.
8 In our prosperity we cannot know our friends; in adversity an
9 enemy will not remain concealed. | When a man is success-
ful even his enemy is friendly; in adversity even his friend dis-
10 appears. | Never trust your enemy, for his wickedness is like
11 corrosion in bronze. | Even though he acts humbly and peaceably
toward you, take care to be on your guard against him. Rub
him as one polishes a brazen mirror, and you will find that
12 there is still corrosion. | Let him not stand near you, lest he
oust you and take your place. Let him not sit at your right hand,
lest he then demand your seat, and in the end you appreciate
my advice, when you groan with regret, as I warned you.
13 Who pities a snake charmer when he is bitten, or anyone
14 who goes near a wild beast? | So is it with the companion of
15 the proud man, who is involved in his sins: | while you stand
firm, he makes no bold move; but if you slip, he cannot hold
16 back. | With his lips an enemy speaks sweetly, but in his heart
he schemes to plunge you into the abyss. Though your enemy
has tears in his eyes, if given the chance, he will never have
17 enough of your blood. | If evil comes upon you, you will find
18 him at hand; feigning to help, he will trip you up, | then he
will nod his head and clap his hands and hiss repeatedly, and
show his true face.

13

1 ***Caution regarding Associates*** He who touches pitch
blackens his hand; he who associates with an impious man learns
2 his ways. | Bear no burden too heavy for you; go with no one
greater or wealthier than yourself. How can the earthen pot go
with the metal cauldron? When they knock together, the pot
3 will be smashed: | the rich man does wrong and boasts of it,
4 the poor man is wronged and begs forgiveness. | As long as the
rich man can use you he will enslave you, but when you are
5 exhausted, he will abandon you. | As long as you have any-
thing he will speak fair words to you, and with smiles he will
6 win your confidence; | when he needs something from you he
will cajole you, then without regret he will impoverish you. |
7 While it serves his purpose he will beguile you, then twice or

12, 7: It was too early in the history of revelation to distinguish between the sin and the sinner.

12, 11: ***Brazen mirror:*** the ancients used mirrors of polished bronze as mentioned in Ex 38, 8.

13, 2: This is similar to Aesop's fable of the pot and the kettle which also warns the poor about associating with the wealthy.

three times he will terrify you; when later he sees you he w
8 pass you by, and shake his head over you. | Guard again
9 being presumptuous; be not as those who lack sense. | Wh
invited by a man of influence, keep your distance; then he w
10 urge you all the more. | Be not bold with him lest you l
rebuffed, but keep not too far away lest you be forgotten.
11 Engage not freely in discussion with him, trust not his mar
words; for by prolonged talk he will test you, and thou
12 smiling he will probe you. | Mercilessly he will make of you
13 laughingstock, and will not refrain from injury or chains. | I
on your guard and take care never to accompany men
violence.
14 Every living thing loves its own kind, every man a man lil
15 himself. | Every being is drawn to its own kind; with his ow
16 kind every man associates. | Is a wolf ever allied with a lam
17 So it is with the sinner and the just. | Can there be peace betwe
the hyena and the dog? Or between the rich and the poor c
18 there be peace? | Lion's prey are the wild asses of the desert;
19 too the poor are feeding grounds for the rich. | A proud m
abhors lowliness; so does the rich man abhor the poor
20 When a rich man stumbles he is supported by a frien
21 when a poor man trips he is pushed down by a friend. Ma
are the supporters for a rich man when he speaks; thou
what he says is odious, it wins approval. When a po
man speaks they make sport of him; he speaks wisely and
22 attention is paid him. | A rich man speaks and all are silen
his wisdom they extol to the clouds. A poor man speaks a
they say: "Who is that?" If he slips they cast him down
23 Wealth is good when there is no sin; but poverty is evil by t
24 standards of the proud. | The heart of a man changes l
25 countenance, either for good or for evil. | The sign of a go
heart is a cheerful countenance; withdrawn and perplexed
the laborious schemer.

14

1 Happy the man whose mouth brings him no grief, who is n
2 stung by remorse for sin. | Happy the man whose conscien
does not reproach him, who has not lost hope.

3 ***The Use of Wealth*** Wealth ill becomes the mean ma
4 and to the miser, of what use is gold? | What he denies hi
self he collects for others, and in his possessions a stranger w
5 revel. | To whom will he be generous who is stingy with hi

13, 17: It is proverbial in Palestine to contrast the dogs that gua
the flocks at night with the hungry hyenas.

self and does not enjoy what is his own? | None is more stingy
than he who is stingy with himself; he punishes his own
miserliness. | If ever he is generous, it is by mistake; and
in the end he displays his greed. | In the miser's opinion his
share is too small; | he refuses his neighbor and brings ruin on
himself. | The miser's eye is rapacious for bread, but on his
own table he sets it stale.

My son, use freely whatever you have and enjoy it as best you
can; | remember that death does not tarry, nor have you been
told the grave's appointed time. | Before you die, be good to
your friend, and give him a share in what you possess. | Deprive
not yourself of present good things, let no choice portion escape
you. | Will you not leave your riches to others, and your
earnings to be divided by lot? | Give, take, and treat yourself
well, for in the nether world there are no joys to seek. | All
flesh grows old, like a garment; the age-old law is: All must die.
| As with the leaves that grow on a vigorous tree: one falls
off and another sprouts—so with the generations of flesh and
blood: one dies and another is born. | All man's works will
perish in decay, and his handiwork will follow after him.

The Search for Wisdom and Its Blessings Happy the
man who meditates on wisdom, and reflects on knowledge; |
who ponders her ways in his heart, and understands her paths;
| who pursues her like a scout, and lies in wait at her entry
way; | who peeps through her windows, and listens at her
doors; | who encamps near her house, and fastens his tent
pegs next to her walls; | who pitches his tent beside her, and
lives as her welcome neighbor; | who builds his nest in her
leafage, and lodges in her branches; | who takes shelter with
her from the heat, and dwells in her home.

15

He who fears the Lord will do this; he who is practiced in
the Law will come to wisdom. | Motherlike she will meet him,
like a young bride she will embrace him, | nourish him with the
bread of understanding, and give him the water of learning to
drink. | He will lean upon her and not fall, he will trust in
her and not be put to shame. | She will exalt him above his
fellows; in the assembly she will make him eloquent. | Joy and
gladness he will find, an everlasting name inherit. | Worthless
men will not attain to her, haughty men will not behold her. |
Far from the impious is she, not to be spoken of by liars. |
Unseemly is praise on a sinner's lips, for it is not accorded

10 to him by God. | But praise is offered by the wise mar
tongue; its rightful steward will proclaim it.

11 ***Man's Free Will*** Say not: "It was God's doing that I fe
12 away"; for what he hates he does not do. | Say not: "It w
he who set me astray"; for he has no need of wicked man.
13 Abominable wickedness the Lord hates, he does not let it befa
14 those who fear him. | When God, in the beginning, creat
15 man, he made him subject to his own free choice. | If yc
choose you can keep the commandments; it is loyalty to do h
16 will. | There are set before you fire and water; to whichev
17 you choose, stretch forth your hand. | Before man are life ar
18 death, whichever he chooses shall be given him. | Immense
the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power, and all-seeing.
19 The eyes of God see all he has made; he understands man
20 every deed. | No man does he command to sin, to none does h
give strength for lies.

16

1 ***God's Punishment of Sinners*** Desire not a brood of worth
2 less children, nor rejoice in wicked offspring. | Many thou
they be, exult not in them if they have not the fear of the Lord.
3 Count not on their length of life, have no hope in their futur
For one can be better than a thousand; rather die childless tha
4 have godless children! | Through one wise man can a city l
5 peopled; through a clan of rebels it becomes desolate. | Mar
such things has my eye seen, even more than these has my e
6 heard. | Against a sinful band fire is enkindled, upon a godle
7 people wrath flames out. | He forgave not the leaders of o
8 who rebelled long ago in their might; | he spared not th
9 neighbors of Lot whom he detested for their pride; | nor d
he spare the doomed people who were uprooted because o
10 their sin; | nor the six hundred thousand foot soldiers wh
11 perished for the impiety of their hearts. | And had there bee
but one stiffnecked man, it were a wonder had he gone un
punished. For mercy and anger alike are with him who remi
12 and forgives, though on the wicked alights his wrath. | Gre
as his mercy is his punishment; he judges men, each accordin

16, 6: An allusion to Core and his band. See Nm 16, 35 n.
16, 7: A probable allusion to the giants, "the mighty men of old" See Gn 6, 1-4 n.
16, 8: An allusion to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorra described in Gn 19, 24f.
16, 9: The Chanaanites. See, e.g., Dt 7, 1.
16, 10: The Israelites who criticized Moses (Nm 11, 20).

13 to his deeds. | A criminal does not escape with his plunder; a
14 just man's hope God does not leave unfulfilled. | Whoever does
good has his reward, which each receives according to his
15 deeds. | Say not: "I am hidden from God; in heaven who
remembers me? Among so many people I cannot be known;
16 what am I in the world of spirits? | Behold, the heavens, the
heaven of heavens, the earth and the abyss tremble at his
17 visitation; | the roots of the mountains, the earth's foundations,
18 at his mere glance, quiver and quake. | Of me, therefore, he
will take no thought; with my ways who will concern himself?
19 | If I sin, no eye will see me; if all in secret I am disloyal, who
20 is to know? | Who tells him of just deeds and what could I
21 expect for doing my duty?" | Such are the thoughts of senseless
men, which only the foolish knave will think.

22 ***Divine Wisdom Seen in Creation*** Hearken to me, my
23 son, take my advice, apply your mind to my words, | while I
propose measured wisdom, and impart accurate knowledge. |
24 When at the first God created his works and, as he made them,
25 assigned their tasks, | he ordered for all time what they were to
do and their domains from generation to generation. They were
not to hunger, nor grow weary, nor ever cease from their tasks.
26 | Not one should ever crowd its neighbor, nor should they ever
27 disobey his word. | Then the Lord looked upon the earth, and
28 filled it with his blessings. | Its surface he covered with all
manner of life which must return into it again.

17

1 The Lord from the earth created man, and in his own image
2 he made him. | Limited days of life he gives him and makes
3 him return to earth again. | He endows man with a strength of
4 his own, and with power over all things else on earth. | He
puts the fear of him in all flesh, and gives him rule over beasts
5 and birds. | He forms men's tongues and eyes and ears, and
6 imparts to them an understanding heart. | With wisdom and
7 knowledge he fills them; good and evil he shows them. | He
looks with favor upon their hearts, and shows them his glorious
8 works, | that they may describe the wonders of his deeds and
9 praise his holy name. | He has set before them knowledge, a
10 law of life as their inheritance; | an everlasting covenant he has
made with them, his Commandments he has revealed to them. |
11 His majestic glory their eyes beheld, his glorious voice their ears
12 heard. | He says to them, "Avoid all evil"; each of them he
13 gives precepts about his fellow men. | Their ways are ever

14 known to him, they cannot be hidden from his eyes. | Ov
every nation he places a ruler, but the Lord's own portion
15 Israel. | All their actions are clear as the sun to him, his ey
16 are ever upon their ways. | Their wickedness cannot be hidd
17 from him; all of their sins are before the Lord. | A man's goc
ness God cherishes like a signet ring, a man's virtue, like t
18 apple of his eye. | Later he will rise up and repay them, a
requite each one of them as they deserve.

19 ***Appeal for a Return to God*** But to the penitent he pr
vides a way back, he encourages those who are losing hope
20 Return to the Lord and give up sin, pray to him and make yo
21 offenses few. | Turn again to the Most High and away fr
22 sin, hate intensely what he loathes; | who in the nether wor
can glorify the Most High in place of the living who oft
23 their praise? | No more can the dead give praise than the
who have never lived; they glorify the Lord who are alive a
24 well. | How great the mercy of the Lord, his forgiveness
25 those who return to him! | The like cannot be found in m
26 for not immortal is any son of man. | Is anything brighter th
the sun? Yet it can be eclipsed. How obscure then the thoug
27 of flesh and blood! | God watches over the hosts of high
heaven, while all men are dust and ashes.

18

1 ***The Divine Power and Mercy*** The Eternal is the jud
2 of all things without exception; the Lord alone is just. | Wh
has he made equal to describing his works, and who can prc
3 his mighty deeds? | Who can measure his majestic power,
4 exhaust the tale of his mercies? | One cannot lessen, r
5 increase, nor penetrate the wonders of the Lord. | When a m
ends he is only beginning, and when he stops he is still l
6 wildered. | What is man, of what worth is he? the good, t
7 evil in him, what are these? | The sum of a man's days is gr
8 if it reaches a hundred years: | like a drop of sea water, l
a grain of sand, so are these few years among the days of et
9 nity. | That is why the Lord is patient with men and show

17, 14: *A ruler:* a civil ruler or an angel as a guardian of a nati
See Dt 32, 8, where "sons of God" mean angels.

17, 17: *Signet ring:* a seal used to write one's name (described
Gn 38, 18 n). This may mean that God cherishes man's goodness
His own signature.

17, 26: The general idea is that no one can understand all of Go
ways.

17. 27: *Hosts:* the stars.

upon them his mercy. | He sees and understands that their death
is grievous, and so he forgives them all the more. | Man may be
merciful to his fellow man, but the Lord's mercy reaches all
flesh, | reproving, admonishing, teaching, as a shepherd guides
his flock; | merciful to those who accept his guidance, who are
diligent in his precepts.

The Necessity of Prudence My son, to your charity add
no reproach, nor spoil any gift by harsh words. | Like dew that
abates a burning wind, so does a word improve a gift. | Some-
times the word means more than the gift; both are offered by a
kindly man. | Only a fool upbraids before giving; a grudging
gift wears out the expectant eyes. | Be informed before speak-
ing; before sickness prepare the cure. | Before you are judged,
seek merit for yourself, and at the time of visitation you will
have a ransom. | Before you have fallen, humble yourself;
when you have sinned, show repentance. | Delay not to forsake
sins, neglect it not till you are in distress. | Let nothing prevent
the prompt payment of your vows; wait not to fulfill them when
you are dying. | Before making a vow have the means to fulfill
it; be not one who tries the Lord. | Think of wrath and the day
of death, the time of vengeance when he will hide his face. |
Remember the time of hunger in the time of plenty, poverty and
want in the day of wealth. | Between morning and evening the
weather changes; before the Lord all things are fleeting. | A
wise man is circumspect in all things; when sin is rife he keeps
himself from wrongdoing.

Any learned man should make wisdom known, and he who
attains to her should declare her praise; | those trained in her
words must show their wisdom, dispensing sound proverbs like
life-giving waters.

Self-Control Go not after your lusts, but keep your desires
in check. | If you satisfy your lustful appetites they will make
you the sport of your enemies. | Have no joy in the pleasures of
a moment which bring on poverty redoubled; | become not a
glutton and a winebibber with nothing in your purse.

19

He who does so grows no richer; he who wastes the little he
has will be stripped bare. | Wine and women make the mind

18, 19: *At the time of visitation:* at judgment day.
18, 21-22: In the Old Testament a vow mentioned in general usually meant an offering of a bloody sacrifice.

4 giddy, and the companion of harlots becomes reckless. | He w
lightly trusts in them has no sense, and he who strays af
3 them sins against his own life. | Rottenness and worms w
possess him, for contumacious desire destroys its owner.

5 ***The Proper Use of Speech*** He who gloats over evil w
meet with evil, and he who repeats an evil report has no sen
6.7 | Never repeat gossip, and you will not be reviled. | Tell no
8 ing to friend or foe; if you have a fault, reveal it not, | for
who hears it will hold it against you, and in time become yc
9 enemy. | Let anything you hear die within you; be assured
10 will not make you burst. | When a fool hears something, he
11 in labor, like a woman giving birth to a child. | Like an arr
lodged in a man's thigh is gossip in the breast of a foo.
12 Admonish your friend—he may not have done it; and if he d
13 that he may not do it again. | Admonish your neighbor—
may not have said it; and if he did, that he may not say
14 again. | Admonish your friend—often it may be slander; ev
15 story you must not believe. | Then, too, a man can slip and r
16 mean it; who has not sinned with his tongue? | Admonish yc
neighbor before you break with him; thus will you fulfill t
law of the Most High.

17 ***How to Recognize True Wisdom*** All wisdom is fear
18 the Lord; perfect wisdom is the fulfillment of the Law. | T
knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom, nor is there pruder
19 in the counsel of sinners. | There is a shrewdness that
20 detestable, while the simple man may be free from sin. | Th
are those with little understanding who fear God, and th
21 of great intelligence who violate the Law. | There is a shrew
ness keen but dishonest, which by duplicity wins a judgment
22 There is the wicked man who is bowed in grief, but is full
23 guile within; | he bows his head and feigns not to hear, b
24 when not observed, he will take advantage of you: | ev
though his lack of strength keeps him from sinning, when
25 finds the opportunity, he will do harm. | One can tell a m
by his appearance; a wise man is known as such when first m
26 | A man's attire, his hearty laughter and his gait, proclaim hi
for what he is.

20

1 ***Conduct of the Wise and the Foolish*** An admoniti
can be inopportune, and a man may be wise to hold his peace.
2 It is much better to admonish than to lose one's temper, for o
3 who admits his fault will be kept from disgrace. | Like

eunuch lusting for intimacy with a maiden is he who does right
4 under compulsion. | One man is silent and is thought wise,
5 another is talkative and is disliked. | One man is silent because
6 he has nothing to say; another is silent, biding his time. | A
wise man is silent till the right time comes, but a boasting fool
7 ignores the proper time. | He who talks too much is detested;
he who pretends to authority is hated.
8 Some misfortunes bring success; some things gained are a
9 man's loss. | Some gifts do one no good, and some must be paid
10 back double. | Humiliation can follow fame, while from ob-
11 scurity a man can lift up his head. | A man may buy much for
12 little, but pay for it seven times over. | A wise man makes
himself popular by a few words, but fools pour forth their
13 blandishments in vain. | A gift from a rogue will do you no
14 good, for in his eyes his one gift is equal to seven. | He gives
little and criticizes often, and like a crier he shouts aloud. He
lends today, he asks it back tomorrow; hateful indeed is such a
15 man. | A fool has no friends, nor thanks for his generosity; |
16 those who eat his bread have an evil tongue. How many times
they laugh him to scorn!
17 A fall to the ground is less sudden than a slip of the tongue;
that is why the downfall of the wicked comes so quickly. |
18 Insipid food is the untimely tale; the unruly are always ready
19 to offer it. | A proverb when spoken by a fool is unwelcome,
20 for he does not utter it at the proper time. | A man through
want may be unable to sin, yet in this tranquillity he cannot
21 rest. | One may lose his life through shame, and perish through
22 a fool's intimidation. | A man makes a promise to a friend out
23 of shame, and has him for his enemy needlessly. | A lie is a
foul blot in a man, yet it is constantly on the lips of the unruly. |
24 Better a thief than an inveterate liar, yet both will suffer dis-
25 grace; | a liar's way leads to dishonor, his shame remains ever
with him.
26 A wise man advances himself by his words, a prudent man
27 pleases the great. | He who works his land has abundant crops,
28 he who pleases the great is pardoned his faults. | Favors and
gifts blind the eyes; like a muzzle over the mouth they silence
29 reproof. | Hidden wisdom and unseen treasure—of what value
30 is either? | Better the man who hides his folly than the one
who hides his wisdom.

20, 17: An alternate translation is: "A fall to the ground is better than a slip of the tongue." The same expression is found in Zeno and in the "Wisdom of Ahikar."

21

1 ***Sin Must Be Avoided*** My son, if you have sinned, do so
2 no more, and for your past sins pray to be forgiven. | Flee from
sin as from a serpent that will bite you if you go near it; its
3 teeth are lion's teeth, destroying the souls of men. | Every
offense is a two-edged sword; when it cuts, there can be no
4 healing. | Violence and arrogance wipe out wealth; so too a
5 proud man's home is destroyed | Prayer from a poor man's lips
6 is heard at once, and justice is quickly granted him. | He who
hates correction walks the sinner's path, but he who fears the
7 Lord repents in his heart. | Widely known is the boastful
8 speaker, but the wise man knows his own faults. | He who
builds his house with another's money is collecting stones for
9 his funeral mound. | A band of criminals is like a bundle of
10 tow; they will end in a flaming fire. | The path of sinners is
smooth stones that end in the depths of the nether world.

11 ***The Wise and the Foolish Differ*** He who keeps the
Law controls his impulses; he who is perfect in fear of the
12 Lord has wisdom. | He can never be taught who is not shrewd,
13 but one form of shrewdness is thoroughly bitter. | A wise man's
knowledge wells up in a flood, and his counsel, like a living
14 spring; | a fool's mind is like a broken jar—no knowledge at all
15 can it hold. | When an intelligent man hears words of wisdom,
he approves them and adds to them; the wanton hears them
16 with scorn and casts them behind his back. | A fool's chatter is
like a load on a journey, but there is charm to be found upon the
17 lips of the wise. | The views of a prudent man are sought in
18 an assembly, and his words are considered with care. | Like a
house in ruins is wisdom to a fool; the stupid man knows it only
19 as inscrutable words. | Like fetters on the legs is learning to a
20 fool, like a manacle on his right hand. | A fool raises his voice
in laughter, but a prudent man at the most smiles gently. |
21 Like a chain of gold is learning to a wise man, like a bracelet on
his right arm.

22 The fool steps boldly into a house, while the well-bred man
23 remains outside; | a boor peeps through the doorway of a house,
24 but a cultured man keeps his glance cast down. | It is rude for
one to listen at a door; a cultured man would be overwhelmed
25 by the disgrace of it. | The lips of the impious talk of what is
not their concern, but the words of the prudent are carefully
26 weighed. | Fools' thoughts are in their mouths, wise men's
27 words are in their hearts. | When a godless man curses his

21, 27: This may mean if a man curses one who led him into sin, he implicitly curses himself for having yielded to the sin.

28 adversary, he really curses himself. | A slanderer besmirches
himself, and is hated by his neighbors.

22

1 ***On Laziness and Foolishness*** The sluggard is like a stone
2 in the mud; everyone hisses at his disgrace. | The sluggard is
like a lump of dung; whoever touches him wipes his hands. |
3 An unruly child is a disgrace to its father; if it be a daughter,
4 she brings him to poverty. | A thoughtful daughter becomes a
treasure to her husband, a shameless one is her father's grief. |
5 A hussy shames her father and her husband; by both she is
6 despised. | Like a song in time of mourning is inopportune talk,
7 but lashes and discipline are at all times wisdom. | Teaching
a fool is like gluing a broken pot, or like disturbing a man in the
8 depths of sleep; | he talks with a slumberer who talks with a
fool, for when it is over, he will say, "What was that?" |
9 Weep over the dead man, for his light has gone out; weep over
10 the fool, for sense has left him. | Weep but a little over the
dead man, for he is at rest; but worse than death is the life of
11 a fool. | Seven days of mourning for the dead, but for the
wicked fool a whole lifetime.

12 Speak but seldom with the stupid man, be not the companion
13 of a brute; | beware of him lest you have trouble and be
spattered when he shakes himself; turn away from him and
you will find rest and not be wearied by his lack of sense. |
14 What is heavier than lead, and what is its name but "Fool"?
15 | Sand and salt and an iron mass are easier to bear than a
stupid man.

16 Masonry bonded with wooden beams is not loosened by an
earthquake; neither is a resolve constructed with careful delib-
17 eration shaken in a moment of fear. | A resolve that is backed
by prudent understanding is like the polished surface of a
18 smooth wall. | Small stones lying on an open height will not
remain when the wind blows; neither can a timid resolve based
on foolish plans withstand fear of any kind.

19 ***The Preservation of Friendship*** One who jabs the eye
20 brings tears: he who pierces the heart bares its feelings. | He
who throws stones at birds drives them away, and he who
21 insults a friend breaks up the friendship. | Should you draw a
22 sword against a friend, despair not, it can be undone. | Should
you speak sharply to a friend, fear not, you can be reconciled.
But a contemptuous insult, a confidence broken, or a treacherous
attack will drive away any friend.

23 Make fast friends with a man while he is poor; thus will you

enjoy his prosperity with him. In time of trouble remain true
24 to him, so as to share in his inheritance when it comes. | Before
flames burst forth an oven smokes; so does abuse come before
25 bloodshed. | From a friend in need of support no one need hide
26 in shame; | but from him who brings harm to his friend all
will stand aloof who hear of it.

27 ***Prayer*** Who will set a guard over my mouth, and upon my
lips an effective seal, that I may not fall through them, that my
tongue may not destroy me?

23

1 Lord, Father and Master of my life, permit me not to fall
2 by them! | Who will apply the lash to my thoughts, to my
mind the rod of discipline, that my failings may not be spared
3 nor the sins of my heart overlooked; | lest my failings increase
and my sins be multiplied; lest I succumb to my foes, and my
4 enemy rejoice over me? | Lord, Father and God of my life,
5 abandon me not into their control! | A brazen look allow me
6 not; ward off passion from my heart, | let not the lustful
cravings of the flesh master me, surrender me not to shameless
desires.

7 ***The Proper Use of the Tongue*** Give heed, my children
to the instruction that I pronounce, for he who keeps it will not
8 be enslaved. | Through his lips is the sinner ensnared; the
9 railer and the arrogant man fall thereby. | Let not your mouth
form the habit of swearing, or becoming too familiar with the
10 Holy Name. | Just as a slave that is constantly under scrutiny
will not be without welts, so one who swears continually by the
11 Holy Name will not remain free from sin. | A man who often
swears heaps up obligations; the scourge will never be far
from his house. If he swears in error, he incurs guilt; if he
neglects his obligation, his sin is doubly great. If he swears
without reason he cannot be found just, and all his house will
12 suffer affliction. | There are words which merit death; may they
never be heard among Jacob's heirs. For all such words are
13 foreign to the devout, who do not wallow in sin. | Let not
your mouth become used to coarse talk, for in it lies sinful
14 matter. | Keep your father and mother in mind when you sit
among the mighty, lest in their presence you commit a blunder
and disgrace your upbringing, by wishing you had never been
15 born or cursing the day of your birth. | A man who has the
habit of abusive language will never mature in character as
long as he lives.

16 ***Sins of the Flesh*** Two types of men multiply sins, a third
draws down wrath; for burning passion is a blazing fire, not to
be quenched till it burns itself out: a man given to sins of the
17 flesh, who never stops until the fire breaks forth; | the rake
to whom all bread is sweet and who is never through till he
18 dies; | and the man who dishonors his marriage bed and says
to himself, "Who can see me? Darkness surrounds me, walls
hide me; no one sees me; why should I fear to sin?" Of the Most
19 High he is not mindful, | fearing only the eyes of men; he does
not understand that the eyes of the Lord, ten thousand times
brighter than the sun, observe every step a man takes and peer
20 into hidden corners. | He who knows all things before they
21 exist still knows them all after they are made. | Such a man
will be punished in the streets of the city; when he least expects
it, he will be apprehended.
22 So also with the woman who is unfaithful to her husband
23 and offers as heir her son by a stranger. | First, she has dis-
obeyed the law of the Most High; secondly, she has wronged
her husband; thirdly, in her wanton adultery she has borne
24 children by another man. | Such a woman will be dragged
before the assembly, and her punishment will extend to her
25 children; | her children will not take root; her branches will not
26 bring forth fruit. | She will leave an accursed memory; her
27 disgrace will never be blotted out. | Thus all who dwell on the
earth shall know, and all who inhabit the world shall under-
stand, that nothing is better than the fear of the Lord, nothing
more salutary than to obey his commandments.

24

1 ***Praise of Wisdom*** Wisdom sings her own praises, before
2 her own people she proclaims her glory; | in the assembly of the

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24, 1-31: This is the most famous chapter in the book, both for its doctrine and poetic beauty. Wisdom poetically personified, is simultaneously depicted as intimately united with God and yet as a distinct quality of God. Wisdom here is not described as the Second or Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. In all the New Testament, the prologue of St. John's Gospel (Jn 1, 1-18) is the passage most influenced by this wisdom passage. Parts of ch. 24 are accommodated to the Blessed Virgin. Vv. 14-16 form the Epistle to the common of her feasts and to the Feast of the Presentation; vv. 23-31 form the Epistle of five other Marian feasts.

Verses 1-21 are often compared with the other classical passages of wisdom personified, but especially with Prv 8, 1-36. Personified wisdom praises herself before Israel (v. 1) and before the court of heaven (v. 2).

The following verses (3-6), in which Wisdom is described as accompanying God at creation, are influenced by Prv 8, 22-31. See Prv 8, 22-31 n. God then commanded Wisdom to dwell in Israel (vv. 7-12),

Most High she opens her mouth, in the presence of his host
3 she declares her worth: | "From the mouth of the Most High
4 I came forth, and mistlike covered the earth. | In the highest
5 heavens did I dwell, my throne on a pillar of cloud. | The vault
of heaven I compassed alone, through the deep abyss I wan-
6 dered. | Over waves of the sea, over all the land, over every
7 people and nation I held sway. | Among all these I sought
a resting place; in whose inheritance should I abide?
8 "Then the Creator of all gave me his command, and he who
formed me chose the spot for my tent, saying, 'In Jacob make
9 your dwelling, in Israel your inheritance.' | Before all ages
in the beginning, he created me, and through all ages I shall
10 not cease to be. | In the holy Tent I ministered before him, and
11 in Sion I fixed my abode. | Thus in the chosen city he has given
12 me rest, in Jerusalem is my domain. | I have struck root among
the glorious people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage.
13 "Like a cedar on Lebanon I am raised aloft, like a cypress on
14 Mount Hermon, | like a palm tree in En-gaddi, like a rosebush
in Jericho, like a fair olive tree in the field, like a plane tree
15 growing beside the water. | Like cinnamon, or fragrant balm
or precious myrrh, I give forth perfume; like galbanum and
onycha and sweet spices, like the odor of incense in the Holy
16 Place. | I spread out my branches like a terebinth, my branches
17 so bright and so graceful. | I bud forth delights like the vine;
18 my blossoms become fruit fair and rich. | Come to me, all you
19 that yearn for me, and be filled with my fruits; | you will
remember me as sweeter than honey, better to have than the
20 honeycomb. | He who eats of me will hunger still, he who
21 drinks of me will thirst for more; | he who obeys me will not
be put to shame, he who serves me will never fail."
22 All this is true of the book of the Most High's covenant, the
Law which Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the
23 community of Jacob. | It overflows, like the Phison, with
24 wisdom—like the Tigris in the days of the new fruits. | It runs

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i.e., to make His people wise. Wisdom's beneficial influence is symbolized by graceful trees (vv. 13-21), e.g., the "cedar" symbolizes strength; "cypress," majesty; "palm tree," beauty; and "olive tree," a healing quality.

24, 22-31: Wisdom ends her speech in v. 21. The author speaks to the end of the chapter. He identifies wisdom with the Mosaic Law especially when he says, "all this" (v. 22), which refers to wisdom in the preceding verses. He proceeds to compare wisdom with the Mosaic Law (vv. 23-25). It is more rewarding now to compare Christ's words (Mt 11, 28-30) with the above verses 18-21. Under the figure of a rivulet developing into a sea, the author describes how he shared his wisdom with others (vv. 28-31).

over, like the Euphrates, with understanding, like the Jordan at
25 harvest time. | It sparkles like the Nile with knowledge, like the
26 Gihon at vintage time. | The first man never finished comprehending wisdom, nor will the last succeed in fathoming her. |
27 For deeper than the sea are her thoughts; her counsels, than the great abyss.
28 Now I, like a rivulet from her stream, channeling the waters
29 into a garden, | said to myself, "I will water my plants, my flower bed I will drench"; and suddenly this rivulet of mine
30 became a river, then this stream of mine, a sea. | Thus do I send my teachings forth shining like the dawn, to become
31 known afar off. | Thus do I pour out instruction like prophecy and bestow it on generations to come.

25

1 ***Those Who Are Worthy of Praise*** With three things I am delighted, for they are pleasing to the Lord and to men: harmony among brethren, friendship among neighbors, and
2 the mutual love of husband and wife. | Three kinds of men I hate; their manner of life I loathe indeed: a proud pauper, a rich dissembler, and an old man lecherous in his dotage.
3 What you have not saved in your youth, how will you
4 acquire in your old age? | How becoming to the gray-haired is judgment, and a knowledge of counsel to those on in years! |
5 How becoming to the aged is wisdom, understanding and
6 prudence to the venerable! | The crown of old men is wide experience; their glory, the fear of the Lord.
7 There are nine who come to my mind as blessed, a tenth whom my tongue proclaims: the man who finds joy in his children, and he who lives to see his enemies' downfall. |
8 Happy is he who dwells with a sensible wife, and he who plows not like a donkey yoked with an ox. Happy is he who sins not
9 with his tongue, and he who serves not his inferior. | Happy is he who finds a friend and he who speaks to attentive ears. |
10 He who finds wisdom is great indeed, but not greater than he
11 who fears the Lord. | Fear of the Lord surpasses all else, its possessor is beyond compare.

12 ***Wicked and Virtuous Women*** Worst of all wounds is that of the heart, worst of all evils is that of a woman. |
13 Worst of all sufferings is that from one's foes, worst of all
14 vengeance is that of one's enemies: | no poison worse than that
15 of a serpent, no venom greater than that of a woman. | With a dragon or a lion I would rather dwell than live with an evil
16 woman. | Wickedness changes a woman's looks, and makes

her sullen as a female bear. | When her husband sits among his
neighbors, a bitter sigh escapes him unawares.
There is scarce any evil like that in a woman; may she fall
to the lot of the sinner! | Like a sandy hill to aged feet is a
railing wife to a quiet man. | Stumble not through woman's
beauty, nor be greedy for her wealth; | the man is a slave, in
disgrace and shame, when a wife supports her husband. |
Depressed mind, saddened face, broken heart—this from an
evil wife. Feeble hands and quaking knees—from a wife who
brings no happiness to her husband. | In woman was sin's
beginning, and because of her we all die. | Allow water no
outlet, and be not indulgent to an erring wife. | If she walks
not by your side, cut her away from you.

26

Happy the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his
days; | a worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and
full is his life. | A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon
him who fears the Lord; | be he rich or poor, his heart is
content, and a smile is ever on his face.
There are three things at which my heart quakes, a fourth
before which I quail: though false charges in public, trial before
all the people, and lying testimony are harder to bear than
death, | a jealous wife is heartache and mourning and a scourg-
ing tongue like the other three. | A bad wife is a chafing yoke;
he who marries her seizes a scorpion. | A drunken wife arouses
great anger, for she does not hide her shame. | By her eyelids
and her haughty stare an unchaste wife can be recognized.
Keep a strict watch over an unruly wife, lest, finding an
opportunity, she make use of it; | follow close if her eyes are
bold, and be not surprised if she betrays you: | as a thirsty
traveler with eager mouth drinks from any water that he finds,
so she sits down before every tent and opens her quiver for
every arrow.
A gracious wife delights her husband, her thoughtfulness puts
flesh on his bones; | a gift from the Lord is her governed
speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth. | Choicest
of blessings is a modest wife, priceless her chaste person. | Like
the sun rising in the Lord's heavens, the beauty of a virtuous
wife is the radiance of her home. | Like the light which shines

25, 18b: This Hebrew expression, referring to an unfaithful wife, is similar to our: "to the devil with her."

26, 17-18: *Holy lampstand . . . golden columns:* they stood in the temple.

above the holy lampstand, are her beauty of face and graceful
18 figure. | Golden columns on silver bases are her shapely limbs
and steady feet.

19 ***Dangers to Integrity and Friendship*** These two bring
grief to my heart, and the third arouses my horror: a wealthy
man reduced to want; illustrious men held in contempt; and the
man who passes from justice to sin, for whom the Lord makes
ready the sword.
20 A merchant can hardly remain upright, nor a shopkeeper free
from sin;

27

1 For the sake of profit many sin, and the struggle for wealth
2 blinds the eyes. | Like a peg driven between fitted stones, be-
3 tween buying and selling sin is wedged in. | Unless you earn-
estly hold fast to the fear of the Lord, suddenly your house will
be thrown down.
4 When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear; so do a man's
5 faults when he speaks. | As the test of what the potter molds is
in the furnace, so in his conversation is the test of a man. |
6 The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does a man's
7 speech disclose the bent of his mind. | Praise no man before he
8 speaks, for it is then that men are tested. | If you strive after
justice you will attain it, and put it on like a splendid robe. |
9 Birds nest with their own kind, and fidelity comes to those who
10 live by it. | As a lion crouches in wait for prey, so do sins for
11 evildoers. | Ever wise are the discourses of the devout, but the
12 godless man, like the moon, is inconstant. | Limit the time you
spend among fools, but frequent the company of thoughtful
13 men. | The conversation of the wicked is offensive, their laugh-
14 ter is wanton guilt. | Their oath-filled talk makes the hair
15 stand on end, their brawls make one stop one's ears. | Wran-
gling among the haughty ends in bloodshed, their cursing is
painful to hear.
16 He who betrays a secret cannot be trusted, he will never find
17 an intimate friend. | Cherish your friend, keep faith with him;
18 but if you betray his confidence, follow him not; | for as an
enemy might kill a man, you have killed your neighbor's friend-
19 ship. | Like a bird released from the hand, you have let your
20 friend go and cannot recapture him; | follow him not, for he
21 is far away, he has fled like a gazelle from the trap. | A wound
can be bound up, and an insult forgiven, but he who betrays
secrets does hopeless damage.

22 ***Malice, Anger and Vengeance*** He who has shifty eyes
23 plots mischief and no one can ward him off; | in your presence
he uses honeyed talk, and admires your every word, but later
24 he changes his tone and twists your words to your ruin. | There
is nothing that I hate so much, and the Lord hates him as well. |
25 As a stone falls back on him who throws it up, so a blow struck
26 in treachery injures more than one. | As he who digs a pit falls
27 into it, and he who lays a snare is caught in it, | whoever does
harm will be involved in it without knowing how it came upon
him.
28 Mockery and abuse will be the lot of the proud, and vengeance
29 lies in wait for them like a lion. | The trap seizes those who
rejoice in pitfalls, and pain will consume them before they die. |
30 wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them
tight.

28

1 The vengeful will suffer the Lord's vengeance, for he remem
2 bers their sins in detail. | Forgive your neighbor's injustice,
then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.
3 Should a man nourish anger against his fellows and expec
4 healing from the Lord? | Should a man refuse mercy to his
5 fellows, yet seek pardon for his own sins? | If he who is bu
6 flesh cherishes wrath, who will forgive his sins? | Remember
your last days, set enmity aside; remember death and decay
7 and cease from sin! | Think of the commandments, hate no
your neighbor; of the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults
8 Avoid strife and your sins will be fewer, for a quarrelsom
9 man kindles disputes, | commits the sin of disrupting friend
10 ship and sows discord among those at peace. | The more wood
the greater the fire, the more underlying it, the fiercer the fight
the greater a man's strength, the sterner his anger, the greate
11 his power, the greater his wrath. | Pitch and resin make fire
flare up, and insistent quarrels provoke bloodshed.

12 ***The Evil Tongue*** If you blow upon a spark, it quicken
into flame, if you spit on it, it dies out; yet both you do with
13 your mouth! | Cursed be the gossiper and the double-tongued
14 for they destroy the peace of many. | A meddlesome tongu
subverts many, and makes them refugees among the peoples
it destroys walled cities, and overthrows powerful dynasties.
15 A meddlesome tongue can drive virtuous women from thei
16 homes and rob them of the fruit of their toil; | whoever heed
it has no rest, nor can he dwell in peace.
17 A blow from a whip raises a welt, but a blow from th

18 tongue smashes bones; | many have fallen by the edge of the
19 sword, but not as many as by the tongue. | Happy he who is
sheltered from it, and has not endured its wrath; who has not
20 borne its yoke nor been fettered with its chains; | for its yoke
21 is a yoke of iron and its chains are chains of bronze! | Dire is
the death it inflicts, besides which even the nether world is a
22 gain; | it will not take hold among the just nor scorch them in
23 its flame, | but those who forsake the Lord will fall victims to
it, as it burns among them unquenchably! It will hurl itself
against them like a lion; like a panther, it will tear them to
24 pieces. | As you hedge round your vineyard with thorns, set
25 barred doors over your mouth; | as you seal up your silver
26 and gold, so balance and weigh your words. | Take care not to
slip by your tongue and fall victim to your foe waiting in
ambush.

29

1 ***Loans, Alms and Surety*** He does a kindness who lends to
his neighbor, and he fulfills the precepts who holds out a
2 helping hand. | Lend to your neighbor in his hour of need,
3 and pay back your neighbor when a loan falls due; | keep your
promise, be honest with him, and you will always come by
4 what you need. | Many a man who asks for a loan adds to the
5 burdens of those who help him; | when he borrows, he kisses
the lender's hand and speaks with respect of his creditor's
wealth; but when payment is due he disappoints him and says
6 he is helpless to meet the claim. | If the lender is able to
recover barely half, he considers this an achievement; if not,
he is cheated of his wealth and acquires an enemy at no extra
charge; with curses and insults the borrower pays him back,
7 with abuse instead of honor. | Many refuse to lend, not out of
meanness, but from fear of being cheated.
8 To a poor man, however, be generous; keep him not waiting
9 for your alms; | because of the precept, help the needy, and in
their want, do not send them away empty-handed.
10 Spend your money for your brother and friend, and hide it
11 not under a stone to perish; | dispose of your treasure as the
Most High commands, for that will profit you more than the
12 gold. | Store up almsgiving in your treasure house, and it will
13 save you from every evil; | better than a stout shield and a
sturdy spear it will fight for you against the foe.
14 A good man goes surety for his neighbor, and only the
15 shameless would play him false; | forget not the kindness of
16 your backer, for he offers his very life for you. | The wicked
turn a pledge on their behalf into misfortune, and the ingrate

17 abandons his protector; | going surety has ruined many pros
18 perous men and tossed them about like waves of the sea, | ha
exiled men of prominence and sent them wandering throug
19 foreign lands. | The sinner through surety comes to grief, an
20 he who undertakes too much falls into lawsuits. | Go surety
for your neighbor according to your means, but take care le
you fall thereby.

21 ***Frugality and Its Rewards*** Life's prime needs are wate
22 bread, and clothing, a house, too, for decent privacy. | Bett
a poor man's fare under the shadow of one's own roof tha
23 sumptuous banquets among strangers. | Be it little or much, b
content with what you have, and pay no heed to him wh
24 would disparage your home; | a miserable life it is to go fro
house to house, for as a guest you dare not open your mouth.
25 The visitor has no thanks for filling the cups; besides, you wi
26 hear these bitter words: | "Come here, stranger, set the tabl
27 give me to eat the food you have! | Away, stranger, for on
28 more worthy; for my brother's visit I need the room!" | Painfu
things to a sensitive man are abuse at home and insults from h
creditors.

30

1 ***The Training of Children*** He who loves his son cha
tises him often, that he may be his joy when he grows up.
2 He who disciplines his son will benefit from him, and boast c
3 him among his intimates. | He who educates his son makes h
enemy jealous, and shows his delight in him among his friends.
4 At the father's death, he will seem not dead, since he leaves afte
5 him one like himself, | whom he looks upon through life wit
6 joy, and even in death, without regret: | the avenger he leave
against his foes, and the one to repay his friends with kindnes
7 He who spoils his son will have wounds to bandage, and wi
8 quake inwardly at every outcry. | A colt untamed turns ou
9 stubborn; a son left to himself grows up unruly. | Pamper you
child and he will be a terror for you, indulge him and he wi
10 bring you grief. | Share not in his frivolity lest you share in h
11 sorrow, when finally your teeth are clenched in remorse. | Giv
him not his own way in his youth, and close not your eyes t
12 his follies. | Bend him to the yoke when he is young, thras
his sides while he is still small, lest he become stubborn, disobe
13 you, and leave you disconsolate. | Discipline your son, mak
heavy his yoke, lest his folly humiliate you.

14 ***Health of Soul and Body*** Better a poor man strong an

robust, than a rich man with wasted frame. | More precious than gold is health and well-being, contentment of spirit than coral. | No treasure greater than a healthy body; no happiness, than a joyful heart! | Preferable is death to a bitter life, unending sleep to constant illness. | Dainties set before one who cannot eat are like the offerings placed before a tomb. | What good is an offering to an idol that can neither taste nor smell? | So it is with the afflicted man who groans at the good things his eyes behold!

Do not give in to sadness, torment not yourself with brooding; | gladness of heart is the very life of man, cheerfulness prolongs his days. | Distract yourself, renew your courage, drive resentment far away from you; for worry has brought death to many, nor is there aught to be gained from resentment. | Envy and anger shorten one's life, worry brings on premature old age. | One who is cheerful and gay while at table benefits from his food.

The Proper Attitude toward Riches Keeping watch over riches wastes the flesh, and the care of wealth drives away rest. | Concern for one's livelihood banishes slumber; more than a serious illness it disturbs repose. | The rich man labors to pile up wealth, and his only rest is wanton pleasure; | the poor man toils for a meager subsistence, and if ever he rests, he finds himself in want. | The lover of gold will not be free from sin, for he who pursues wealth is led astray by it. | Many have been ensnared by gold, though destruction lay before their eyes; | it is a stumbling block to those who are avid for it, a snare for every fool.

Happy the rich man found without fault, who turns not aside after gain! | Who is he, that we may praise him? he, of all his kindred, has done wonders, | for he has been tested by gold and come off safe, and this remains his glory; he could have sinned but did not, could have done evil but would not, | so that his possessions are secure, and the assembly recounts his praises.

31, 2: The Hebrew adds a verse that seems out of place here: "A thful comrade drives away reproach, and the friend who keeps secrets as dear as life."

31, 5: *The lover of gold:* compare Vergil's saying: "the accursed nger for gold."

31, 8-11: Apparently, a rich man who was also pious was rare in rach's time. V. 11 may allude to an ancient custom of writing the mes of benefactors on the walls of synagogues. This passage is accomodated to the Epistle of the Mass of Confessors who are not bishops.

12 ***Table Etiquette*** If you are dining with a great man, brin
not a greedy gullet to his table, nor cry out, "How much foo
13 is here!" | Remember that gluttony is evil. No creature i
greedier than the eye: therefore it weeps for any cause.
15 Recognize that your neighbor feels as you do, and keep in min
14 your own dislikes: | toward what he eyes, do not put out
16 hand; nor reach when he does for the same dish. | Behave a
table like a favored guest, and be not greedy, lest you be de
17 spised. | Be the first to stop, as befits good manners; gorge no
18 yourself, lest you give offense. | If there are many with you a
19 table, be not the first to reach out your hand. | Does not a littl
suffice for a well-bred man? When he lies down, it is withou
20 discomfort. | Distress and anguish and loss of sleep, and rest
less tossing for the glutton! Moderate eating ensures soun
21 slumber and a clear mind next day on rising. | If perforce yo
have eaten too much, once you have emptied your stomach, yo
will have relief.

22 Listen to me, my son, and scorn me not; later you will fin
my advice good. In whatever you do, be moderate, and no sick
23 ness will befall you. | On a man generous with food, blessing
are invoked, and this testimony to his goodness is lasting;
24 he who is miserly with food is denounced in public, and thi
25 testimony to his stinginess is lasting. | Let not wine-drinking b
the proof of your strength, for wine has been the ruin of many.
26 As the furnace probes the work of the smith, so does wine th
27 hearts of the insolent. | Wine is very life to man if taken i
moderation. Does he really live who lacks the wine which wa
28 created for his joy? | Joy of heart, good cheer and merrimen
29 are wine drunk freely at the proper time. | Headache, bitter
30 ness and disgrace is wine drunk amid anger and strife. | Mor
and more wine is a snare for the fool; it lessens his strength an
31 multiplies his wounds. | Rebuke not your neighbor when win
is served, nor put him to shame while he is merry; use no hars
words with him and distress him not in the presence of other

32

1 If you are chosen to preside at dinner, be not puffed up, bu
with the guests be as one of themselves; take care of them firs
2 before you sit down; | when you have fulfilled your duty, the
take your place, to share in their joy and win praise for you
3 hospitality. | Being older, you may talk; that is only your righ
4 but temper your wisdom, not to disturb the singing. | Whe
wine is present, do not pour out discourse, and flaunt not you
5 wisdom at the wrong time. | Like a seal of carnelian in a settin
6 of gold is a concert when wine is served. | Like a gold mountin

with an emerald seal is string music with delicious wine. |
7 Young man, speak only when necessary, when they have asked
8 you more than once; | be brief, but say much in those few
9 words, be like the wise man, taciturn. | When among your
elders be not forward, and with officials be not too insistent. |
10 Like the lightning that flashes before a storm is the esteem that
11 shines on modesty. | When it is time to leave, tarry not; be off
12 for home! There take your ease, | and there enjoy doing as you
13 wish, but without sin or words of pride. | Above all, give praise
to your Creator, who showers his favors upon you.

14 ***The Providence of God*** He who would find God must
15 accept discipline; he who seeks him obtains his request. | He
who studies the Law masters it, but the hypocrite finds it a
16 trap. | His judgment is sound who fears the Lord; out of
17 obscurity he draws forth a clear plan. | The sinner turns aside
18 reproof and distorts the law to suit his purpose. | The thought-
ful man will not neglect direction; the proud and insolent man
19 is deterred by nothing. | Do nothing without counsel, and then
20 you need have no regrets. | Go not on a way that is set with
21 snares, and let not the same thing trip you twice. | Be not too
22 sure even of smooth roads, be careful on all your paths. |
23 Whatever you do, be on your guard, for in this way you will
24 keep the commandments. | He who keeps the Law preserves
himself; and he who trusts in the Lord shall not be put to
shame.

33

1 No evil can harm the man who fears the Lord; through trials,
2 again and again he is safe. | He who hates the Law is without
3 wisdom, and is tossed about like a boat in a storm. | The pru-
dent man trusts in the word of the Lord, and the Law is de-
4 pendable for him as a divine oracle. | Prepare your words and
you will be listened to; draw upon your training, and then give
your answer.

5 Like the wheel of a cart is the mind of a fool; his thoughts
6 revolve in circles. | A fickle friend is like the stallion that neighs,
7 no matter who the rider. | Why is one day more important than
8 another, when it is the sun that lights up every day? | It is due
to the Lord's wisdom that they differ; it is through him the sea-
9 sons and feasts come and go. | Some he dignifies and sanctifies,
10 and others he lists as ordinary days. | So too, all men are of
11 clay, for from earth man was formed; | yet with his great
knowledge the Lord makes men unlike; in different paths he has

12 them walk. | Some he blesses and makes great, some he sancti
fies and draws to himself. Others he curses and brings low, an
13 expels them from their place. | Like clay in the hands of
potter, to be molded according to his pleasure, so are men in th
hands of their Creator, to be assigned by him their function.
14 As evil contrasts with good, and death with life, so are sinner
15 in contrast with the just; | see now all the works of the Mos
High: they come in pairs, the one the opposite of the other.
16 Now I am the last to keep vigil, like a gleaner after th
17 vintage; | since by the Lord's blessing I have made progres
18 till like a vintager I have filled my winepress, | I would inforr
you that not for myself only have I toiled, but for every seeke
after wisdom.

19 ***Property and Servants*** Listen to me, O leaders of the mul
20 titude; O rulers of the assembly, give ear! | Let neither son nc
wife, neither brother nor friend, have power over you as lon
21 as you live. | While breath of life is still in you, let no ma
have dominion over you. Give not to another your wealth, les
22 then you have to plead with him; | far better that your childre
plead with you than that you should look to their generosity.
23 Keep control over all your affairs; let no one tarnish you
24 glory. | When your few days reach their limit, at the time c
death distribute your inheritance.–
25 Fodder and whip and loads for an ass; the yoke and harnes
27 and the rod of his master. | Food, correction and work for
26 slave; and for a wicked slave, punishment in the stocks. | Mak
a slave work and he will look for his rest; let his hands be idl
28 and he will seek to be free. | Force him to work that he be nc
29 idle, for idleness is an apt teacher of mischief. | Put him t
work, for that is what befits him; if he becomes unruly, loa
30 him with chains. | But never lord it over any human being, an
31 do nothing unjust. | If you have but one slave, treat him lik
32 yourself, for you have acquired him with your life's blood; | i
you have but one slave, deal with him as a brother, for you nee
33 him as you need your life: | if you mistreat him and he run
away, in what direction will you look for him?

33, 12: Sirach contrasts the Chosen People (v. 12a) with the pagan (v. 12b) and may be alluding to the curse of Ham (see Gn 9, 20-27 n). Underneath this characteristic oriental exaggeration, Sirach may b prodding fellow Jews of his day who wanted to ape the ways of th Greeks and lose their Jewish identity.

33, 16-18: Sirach is the most recent wisdom writer.

34

1 ***Trust in the Lord and Not in Dreams*** Empty and false
are the hopes of the senseless, and fools are borne aloft by
2 dreams. | Like a man who catches at shadows or chases the
3 wind, is the one who believes in dreams. | What is seen in
dreams is to reality what the reflection of a face is to the face
4 itself. | Can the unclean produce the clean? can the liar ever
5 speak the truth? | Divination, omens and dreams all are un-
6 real; what you already expect, the mind depicts. | Unless it be
a vision specially sent by the Most High, fix not your heart on
7 it; | for dreams have led many astray, and those who believed
8 in them have perished. | The Law is fulfilled without fail, and
perfect wisdom is found in the mouth of the faithful man.

9 A man with training gains wide knowledge; a man of ex-
10 perience speaks sense. | One never put to the proof knows little,
11 whereas with travel a man adds to his resourcefulness. | I have
seen much in my travels, learned more than ever I could say. |
12 Often I was in danger of death, but by these attainments I was
saved.

13 Lively is the courage of those who fear the Lord, for they put
14 their hope in their savior; | he who fears the Lord is never
15 alarmed, never afraid; for the Lord is his hope. | Happy the
soul that fears the Lord! In whom does he trust, and who is his
16 support? | The eyes of the Lord are upon those who love him;
he is their mighty shield and strong support, a shelter from the
heat, a shade from the noonday sun, a guard against stumbling,
17 a help against falling. | He buoys up the spirits, brings a sparkle
to the eyes, gives health and life and blessing.

18 ***True Worship of God*** Tainted his gifts who offers in
sacrifice ill-gotten goods! Mock presents from the lawless win
19 not God's favor. | The Most High approves not the gifts of the
godless, nor for their many sacrifices does he forgive their sins. |
20 Like the man who slays a son in his father's presence is he who
21 offers sacrifice from the possessions of the poor. | The bread of
charity is life itself for the needy; he who withholds it is a man
22 of blood. | He slays his neighbor who deprives him of his living;
he sheds blood who denies the laborer his wages.

23 If one man builds up and another tears down, what do they
24 gain but trouble? | If one man prays and another curses, whose
25 voice will the Lord hear? | If a man again touches a corpse after
26 he has bathed, what did he gain by the purification? | So with
a man who fasts for his sins, but then goes and commits them
again: who will hear his prayer, and what has he gained by his
mortification?

35

1 To keep the Law is a great oblation, and he who observes th
2 commandments sacrifices a peace offering. | In works of charit
one offers fine flour, and when he gives alms he presents h
3 sacrifice of praise. | To refrain from evil pleases the Lord, an
4 to avoid injustice is an atonement. | Appear not before th
Lord empty-handed, for all that you offer is in fulfillment of th
5 precepts. | The just man's offering enriches the altar and rise
6 as a sweet odor before the Most High. | The just man's sacrific
7 is most pleasing, nor will it ever be forgotten. | In generou
spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts.
8 With each contribution show a cheerful countenance, and pa
9 your tithes in a spirit of joy. | Give to the Most High as he ha
given to you, generously, according to your means.
10 For the Lord is one who always repays, and he will give bacl
11 to you sevenfold. | But offer no bribes, these he does not accept
12 Trust not in sacrifice of the fruits of extortion, | for he is a Go
13 of justice, who knows no favorites. | Though not unduly partia
14 toward the weak, yet he hears the cry of the oppressed. | He i
not deaf to the wail of the orphan, nor to the widow when sh
pours out her complaint;
15 Do not the tears that stream down her cheek cry out agains
16 him that causes them to fall? | He who serves God willingly i
17 heard; his petition reaches the heavens. | The prayer of th
lowly pierces the clouds; it does not rest till it reaches its goal,
18 nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds, judges justly
and affirms the right.
19 God indeed will not delay, and like a warrior, will not be stil
20 till he breaks the backs of the merciless and wreaks vengeance
21 upon the proud; | till he destroys the haughty root and branch
22 and smashes the scepter of the wicked; | till he requites man
kind according to its deeds, and repays men according to their
23 thoughts; | till he defends the cause of his people, and gladden
24 them by his mercy. | Welcome is his mercy in time of distress as
rain clouds in time of drought.

36

1 ***A Prayer for God's People*** Come to our aid, O God of
2 the universe, and put all the nations in dread of you! | Raise
your hand against the heathen, that they may realize your

35, 19-24: This is the author's hope, which is a far cry from Christ's deeper law of charity not yet revealed.

36, 1-17: This has been called "Prayer for the Deliverance and Restoration of Israel." It shares some similarities with the prayer called "The Eighteen Blessings" still used in synagogues. Notice the stress put

power. | As you have used us to show them your holiness, so
now use them to show us your glory. | Thus they will know, as
we know, that there is no God but you.
Give new signs and work new wonders; show forth the
splendor of your right hand and arm; | rouse your anger, pour
out wrath, humble the enemy, scatter the foe. | Hasten the day,
bring on the time; | crush the heads of the hostile rulers. |
Let raging fire consume the fugitive, and your people's oppres-
sors meet destruction.
Gather all the tribes of Jacob, that they may inherit the land
as of old, | show mercy to the people called by your name;
Israel, whom you named your first-born. | Take pity on your
holy city, Jerusalem, your dwelling place. | Fill Sion with your
majesty, your temple with your glory.
Give evidence of your deeds of old; fulfill the prophecies
spoken in your name, | reward those who have hoped in you,
and let your prophets be proved true. | Hear the prayer of your
servants, for you are ever gracious to your people; | thus it will
be known to the very ends of the earth that you are the eternal
God.

Choice of Associates The throat can swallow any food,
yet some foods are more agreeable than others; | as the palate
tests meat by its savor, so does a keen mind insincere words. |
A deceitful character causes grief, but an experienced man can
turn the tables on him. | Though any man may be accepted as
a husband, yet one girl will be more suitable than another: |
a woman's beauty makes her husband's face light up, for it sur-
passes all else that charms the eye; | and if, besides, her speech
is kindly, his lot is beyond that of mortal men. | A wife is her
husband's richest treasure, a helpmate, a steadying column. |
A vineyard with no hedge will be overrun; a man with no wife
becomes a homeless wanderer. | Who will trust an armed band
that shifts from city to city? | Or a man who has no nest, but
lodges where night overtakes him?

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n God's glory which His powerful justice will bring. At first
lush the tone of revenge is loud but it is softened if we recall that,
o the Jews, the destruction of God's enemies was a sign of the Messia's
oming.

36, 3: As you punished us, now punish them.

36, 7: *Hasten the day:* of the Messia. This Messianic hope is very
are in Sirach's book.

36, 10: Another sign of Messianic times was the return of all the
ews to their homeland from abroad. This hope is still echoed in the
ewish paschal rite with the ritual wish: "Next year back to Jerusalem."

37
1 Every friend declares his friendship, but there are friends
2 who are friends in name only. | Is it not a sorrow unto death
3 when your bosom companion becomes your enemy? | "Alas,
my companion! Why were you created to blanket the earth with
4 deceit?" | A false friend will share your joys, but in time of
5 trouble he stands afar off. | A true friend will fight with you
against the foe, against your enemies he will be your shield-
6 bearer. | Forget not your comrade during the battle, and neglect
him not when you distribute your spoils.
7 Every counselor points out a way, but some counsel ways of
8 their own; | be on the alert when one proffers advice, find out
first of all what he wants. For he may be thinking of himself
9 alone; why should the profit fall to him? | He may tell you how
good your way will be, and then stand by to watch your mis-
10 fortune. | Seek no advice from one who regards you with hos-
tility; from those who envy you, keep your intentions hidden. |
11 Speak not to a woman about her rival, nor to a coward about
war, to a merchant about business, to a buyer about value, to a
miser about generosity, to a cruel man about mercy, to a lazy
man about work, to a seasonal laborer about the harvest, to an
idle slave about a great task: pay no attention to any advice they
12 give. | Instead, associate with a religious man, who you are sure
keeps the commandments; who is like-minded with yourself
13 and will feel for you if you fall. | Then, too, heed your own
heart's counsel; for what have you that you can depend on
14 more? | A man's conscience can tell him his situation better
15 than seven watchmen in a lofty tower. | Most important of all,
pray to God to set your feet in the path of truth.

16 ***Wisdom and Temperance*** A word is the source of every
17 deed; a thought, of every act. | The root of all conduct is the
18 mind; four branches it shoots forth: | good and evil, death and
19 life, their absolute mistress is the tongue. | A man may be wise
20 and benefit many, yet be of no use to himself. | Though a man
may be wise, if his words are rejected he will be deprived of all
21 enjoyment. | When a man is wise to his own advantage, the
22 fruits of his knowledge are seen in his own person; | when a
man is wise to his people's advantage, the fruits of his knowl-
23 edge are enduring: | limited are the days of one man's life, but
24 the life of Israel is days without number. | One wise for himself
25 has full enjoyment, and all who see him praise him; | one wise
for his people wins a heritage of glory, and his name endures
forever.

26 My son, while you are well, govern your appetite so that you
27 allow it not what is bad for you; | for not every food is good
28 for everyone, nor is everything suited to every taste. | Be not
drawn after every enjoyment, neither become a glutton for
29 choice foods, | for sickness comes with overeating, and gluttony
30 brings on biliousness. | Through lack of self-control many have
died, but the abstemious man prolongs his life.

38

1 ***Sickness and Death*** Hold the physician in honor, for he is
essential to you, and God it was who established his profession.
2 | From God the doctor has his wisdom, and the king provides
3 for his sustenance. | His knowledge makes the doctor distin-
4 guished, and gives him access to those in authority. | God makes
the earth yield healing herbs which the prudent man should not
5 neglect; | was not the water sweetened by a twig that men
6 might learn his power? | He endows men with the knowledge
7 to glory in his mighty works, | through which the doctor eases
8 pain and the druggist prepares his medicines; | thus God's cre-
ative work continues without cease in its efficacy on the surface
of the earth.

9 My son, when you are ill, delay not, but pray to God, who
10 will heal you: | flee wickedness; let your hands be just, cleanse
11 your heart of every sin; | offer your sweet-smelling oblation and
12 petition, a rich offering according to your means. | Then give
the doctor his place lest he leave; for you need him too. |
13.14 There are times that give him an advantage, | and he too
beseeches God that his diagnosis may be correct and his treat-
15 ment bring about a cure. | He who is a sinner toward his Maker
will be defiant toward the doctor.

16 My son, shed tears for one who is dead with wailing and bitter
lament; as is only proper, prepare the body, absent not yourself
17 from his burial: | weeping bitterly, mourning fully, pay your
18 tribute of sorrow, as he deserves, | one or two days, to prevent
19 gossip; then compose yourself after your grief, | for grief can
bring on an extremity and heartache destroy one's health. |
20 Turn not your thoughts to him again; cease to recall him; think
21 rather of the end. | Recall him not, for there is no hope of his
22 return; it will not help him, but will do you harm. | Remember
that his fate will aso be yours; for him it was yesterday, for
23 you today. | With the departed dead, let memory fade; rally
your courage, once the soul has left.

38, 5: A reference to the episode in Ex 15, 25.

24 ***Vocations of the Craftsman and the Scribe*** The scribe's
profession increases his wisdom; whoever is free from toil can
25 become a wise man. | How can he become learned who guides
the plow, who thrills in wielding the goad like a lance, who
guides the ox and urges on the bullock, and whose every con-
26 cern is for cattle? | His care is for plowing furrows, and he
keeps a watch on the beasts in the stalls.
27 So with every engraver and designer who, laboring night and
day, fashions carved seals, and whose concern is to vary the
pattern. His care is to produce a vivid impression, and he keeps
watch till he finishes his design.
28 So with the smith standing near his anvil, forging crude iron.
The heat from the fire sears his flesh, yet he toils away in the
furnace heat. The clang of the hammer deafens his ears, his
eyes are fixed on the tool he is shaping. His care is to finish his
work, and he keeps watch till he perfects it in detail.
29 So with the potter sitting at his labor, revolving the wheel
with his feet. He is always concerned for his products, and turns
30 them out in quantity. | With his hands he molds the clay, and
with his feet softens it. His care is for proper coloring, and he
keeps watch on the fire of his kiln.
31 All these men are skilled with their hands, each one an expert
32 at his own task; | without them no city could be lived in, and
33 wherever they stay, they need not hunger. | They do not occupy
the judge's bench, nor are they prominent in the assembly; they
set forth no decisions or judgments, nor are they found among
34 the rulers; | yet they maintain God's ancient handiwork, and
their concern is for exercise of their skill.

39

1 How different the man who devotes himself to the study of
the Law of the Most High! He explores the wisdom of the men
2 of old and occupies himself with the prophecies; | he treasures
the discourses of famous men, and goes to the heart of involved
3 sayings; | he studies obscure parables, and is busied with the
4 hidden meanings of the sages. | He is in attendance on the
5 great, and has entrance to the ruler. | He travels among the
peoples of foreign lands to learn what is good and evil among
6 men. | His care is to seek the Lord, his Maker, to petition the

38, 24—39, 11: Orientalists often compare this section of the superiority of the scribe to "The Satire on the Trades," an instruction of Khety to his son. The Egyptian classic may date originally from 2150-1750 B.C. It is not known if Sirach borrowed from this Egyptian work.

39, 6-14: This section is most appropriately accommodated in the Epistle of the Mass for Doctors of the Church.

Most High, to open his lips in prayer, to ask pardon for his sins.
Then, if it pleases the Lord Almighty, he will be filled with the
spirit of understanding; he will pour forth his words of wisdom
7 and in prayer give thanks to the Lord, | who will direct his
knowledge and his counsel, as he meditates upon his mysteries.
8 | He will show the wisdom of what he has learned and glory
9 in the Law of the Lord's covenant. | Many will praise his under-
standing; his fame can never be effaced; unfading will be his
10 memory, through all generations his name will live; | peoples
will speak of his wisdom, and in assembly sing his praises. |
11 While he lives he is one out of a thousand, and when he dies his
renown will not cease.

12 ***Praise of God the Creator*** Once more I will set forth my
13 theme to shine like the moon in its fullness! | Listen, my faith-
ful children: open up your petals, like roses planted near run-
14 ning waters; | send up the sweet odor of incense, break forth in
blossoms like the lily. Send up the sweet odor of your hymn of
15 praise; bless the Lord for all he has done! | Proclaim the great-
ness of his name, loudly sing his praises, with music on the harp
and all stringed instruments; sing out with joy as you proclaim:
16 The works of God are all of them good; in its own time every
17 need is supplied. | At his word the waters become still as in a
18 flask; he had but to speak and the reservoirs were made. | He
has but to command and his will is done; nothing can limit his
19 achievement. | The works of all mankind are present to him;
20 not a thing escapes his eye. | His gaze spans all the ages; to him
21 there is nothing unexpected. | No cause then to say: What is
the purpose of this? Everything is chosen to satisfy a need. |
22 His blessing overflows like the Nile; like the Euphrates it
23 enriches the surface of the earth. | Again, his wrath expels
24 the nations and turns fertile land into a salt marsh. | For the
25 virtuous his paths are level, to the haughty they are steep; | good
things for the good he provided from the beginning, but for
26 the wicked good things and bad. | Chief of all needs for human
life are water and fire, iron and salt, the heart of the wheat,
27 milk and honey, the blood of the grape, and oil, and cloth; | for
the good all these are good, but for the wicked they turn out
28 evil. | There are storm winds created to punish, which in their
fury can dislodge mountains; when destruction must be, they
hurl all their force and appease the anger of their Maker. |
29 In his treasury also, kept for the proper time, are fire and hail,
30 famine, disease, | ravenous beasts, scorpions, vipers, and the
31 avenging sword to exterminate the wicked; | in doing his bid-

39, 17: A reference to creation (Gn 1, 6-10).

ding they rejoice, in their assignments they disobey not h
32 command. | So from the first I took my stand, and wrote dow
33 as my theme: | the works of God are all of them good; ever
34 need when it comes he fills. | No cause then to say: "This i
not as good as that"; for each shows its worth at the prope
35 time. | So now with full joy of heart proclaim and bless th
name of the Holy One.

40

1 ***Joys and Miseries of Life*** A great anxiety has God a
lotted, and a heavy yoke, to the sons of men; from the day on
leaves his mother's womb to the day he returns to the mother o
2 all the living, | his thoughts, the fear in his heart, and hi
3 troubled forebodings till the day he dies— | whether he sits on
4 lofty throne or grovels in dust and ashes, | whether he bears
5 splendid crown or is wrapped in the coarsest of cloaks— | ar
of wrath and envy, trouble and dread, terror of death, fury an
strife. Even when he lies on his bed to rest, his cares at nigh
disturb his sleep.
6 So short is his rest it seems like none, till in his dreams h
struggles as he did by day, terrified by what his mind's ey
7 sees, like a fugitive being pursued; | as he reaches safety, h
8 wakes up astonished that there was nothing to fear. | So it
with all flesh, with man and with beast, but for sinners seve
9 times more. | Plague and bloodshed, wrath and the swor
10 plunder and ruin, famine and death: | for the wicked, thes
were created evil, and it is they who bring on destruction.
11 All that is of earth returns to earth, and what is from abov
12 returns above, | from strand to strand, in an unending strean
13 like a mighty torrent fed by thunderstorms; | there is joy whe
a child first lifts his hands, yet all too soon comes his final en
14 | The offshoot of violence will not flourish, for the root of th
15 godless is on sheer rock; | or they are like reeds on the river
16 bank, uprooted before all other plants; | thus all bribes an
injustices will be effaced, but the divine mercy endures forever
17 Wealth or wages can make life sweet, but better than either
18 is finding a treasure. | A child or a city will preserve one'
19 name, but better than either, attaining wisdom. | Sheepfold
and orchards bring flourishing repute, but better than either,
20 devoted wife; | wine and music delight the soul, but better tha

40, 1: *The mother of all the living:* the earth.
40, 11b: Some scholars translate: "And that which comes fron
water returns to the sea."

either, conjugal love. | The flute and the harp offer sweet
melody, but better than either, a voice that is true. | Charm and
beauty delight the eye, but better than either, the flowers of the
field. | A friend, a neighbor, are timely guides, but better than
either, a prudent wife. | A brother, a helper, for times of stress;
but better than either, charity that rescues. | Gold and silver
make one's way secure, but better than either, sound judgment.
| Wealth and vigor build up confidence, but better than either,
fear of God. Fear of the Lord leaves nothing wanting; he who
has it need seek no other treasure: | the fear of God is a para-
dise of blessings; its canopy, all that is glorious.
My son, live not the life of a beggar, better to die than to beg;
| when one has to look to another's table, his life is not really a
life. His neighbor's delicacies bring revulsion of spirit to one
who understands inward feelings: | in the mouth of the shame-
less man begging is sweet, but within him it burns like fire.

41

O death! how bitter the thought of you for the man at peace
amid his possessions, for the man unruffled and always success-
ful, who still can enjoy life's pleasures. | O death! how wel-
come your sentence to the weak man of failing strength, tottering
and always rebuffed, cynical and despairing. | Fear not death's
decree; remember it embraces those before you, and those after.
| Thus God has appointed for all flesh; why then should you
reject the will of the Most High? Whether one has lived a
thousand years, a hundred, or ten, in the nether world he has
no claim on life.
A reprobate line are the children of sinners, and witless off-
spring are in the homes of the wicked. | Their heritage is lost
to sinners' children, and want abides with their descendants. |
Children curse their wicked father, for they suffer disgrace
through him. | Woe to you, O sinful men, who forsake the law
of the Most High. | If you have children, they will be accursed,
and death will overtake you as a sudden calamity. | Whatever
is of nought returns to nought, so too the godless from void to
void. | Man's body is a fleeting thing, but a virtuous name will
never be annihilated. | Have a care for your name, for it will
stand by you better than precious treasures in the thousands; |
the boon of life is for limited days, but a good name, for days
without number.

True and False Shame My children, heed my instruction
about shame; judge of disgrace only according to my rules,
for it is not always well to be ashamed, nor is it always the

15 proper thing to blush: | before father and mother be ashame
of immorality, before master and mistress, of falsehood;
16 before prince and ruler, of flattery; before the public assembl
17 of crime; | before friend and companion, of disloyalty, and c
18 breaking an oath or agreement. | Be ashamed of hostilit
toward the people where you settle, and of conflict with hi
19 who pitches his tent beside you; | of refusing to give whe
20 asked, of defrauding another of his appointed share; | of failin
21 to return a greeting, and of rebuffing a friend; | of lustin
22 after another's wife, and of trifling with his maid; | of usin
harsh words with friends, and of accompanying your gifts wi
23 insults; | of repeating what you hear, and of betraying secre
24 — | these are the things that you should rightly avoid as shamu
ful if you would be looked upon by everyone with favor.

42

1 But of these things be not ashamed, lest you sin throug
2 human respect: | of the law of the Most High and his precept
3 or of the sentence to be passed upon the sinful; | of sharing th
expenses of a business or a journey, or of dividing an inheritanc
4 or property; | of accuracy of scales and balances, or of teste
5 measures and weights; | of acquiring much or little, or c
income from business or trade; of constant training of children
6 or of scourging a disloyal servant; | of a seal to keep an errin
wife at home, or of a lock placed where there are many hands;
7 of numbering every deposit, or of recording all that is given c
8 received; | of chastisement for the silly and the foolish, or c
the aged claiming their just due from the young. Thus you wi
9 be truly cautious and recognized by all men as discreet.

9 ***A Father's Care for His Daughter*** A daughter is a trea
ure that keeps her father wakeful, and worry over her drive
away rest: lest she pass her prime unmarried, or when she
10 married, lest she be repudiated; | while unmarried, lest she b
seduced, or, as a wife, lest she proved unfaithful; lest sh
conceive in her father's home, or be sterile in that of her hu
11 band. | Keep a close watch on your daughter, lest she mak
you the sport of your enemies, a byword in the city, a reproac
among the people, an object of derision in public gathering
See that there is no lattice in her room, no place that overlook
12 the approaches to the house. | Let her not parade her charm
13 before men, or spend her time with married women; | for ju
as moths come from garments, so harm to women comes fro
14 women: | better a man's harshness than a woman's indulgenc
whose shameless daughter is a source of disgrace.

15 *The Works of God in Nature* Now will I recall God's
works; what I have seen, I will describe. At God's word were
his works brought into being; they do his will as he has ordained
16 for them. | As the rising sun is clear to all, so the glory of the
17 Lord shines upon all his works; | yet even God's holy ones must
fail in recounting the wonders of the Lord, though God has
given these, his hosts, the strength to stand firm before his
18 glory. | He plumbs the depths and penetrates the heart; their
innermost being he understands. The Lord possesses all knowl-
19 edge, and sees from of old the things that are to come: | he
makes known the past and the future, and reveals the deepest
20 secrets. | No understanding does he lack; no single thing
21 escapes him. | Perennial is his almighty wisdom; he is from all
22 eternity one and the same, | with nothing added, nothing taken
23 away; no need of a counselor for him! | How beautiful are all
24 his works! yet all that we see is but a flash. | God lives and
remains forever, and to meet each need all things obey him. |
25 All of them differ, one from another, yet none of them has he
made in vain, for each in turn, as it comes, is good; can one ever
see enough of their splendor?

43

1 The clear vault of the sky shines forth like heaven itself, a
2 vision of glory. | The sun, resplendent at its rising: what a
3 wonderful work of the Lord it is! | At noon it scorches the
4 surface of the earth, and who can bear its fiery heat? | Like a
blazing furnace for melting metal, the sun in its course sets
the mountains aflame; by its fiery darts the land is consumed;
5 the eyes are dazzled by its light. | Great indeed is the Lord who
6 made it, at whose orders it urges on its steeds. | The moon, too,
that marks the changing times, governing the seasons, their
7 lasting sign, | by which we know the feast days and fixed dates,
8 this light-giver which wanes in its course: | month by month it
9 renews itself, how wondrous in this change! | The beauty, the
glory of the heavens are the stars, that rise to adorn the heights
10 of God, | at whose command they keep their place and never
relax in their vigils. A weapon against the flood waters stored
11 on high, lighting up the firmament by its brilliance, | behold
the rainbow! Then bless its Maker, for majestic indeed is its
12 splendor; | it vaults the heavens with its glory, this bow bent by
the hands of God.

13 His power marks out the path for the lightning, and speeds
14 the arrows of his judgment to their goal. | Then the storehouse
of the storm clouds is opened, and like vultures the clouds
15 hurry forth. | In his majesty he gives the storm its power and

16 scatters the hailstones. | The thunder of his voice makes the
17 earth writhe; at sight of him the mountains quake. | His
awesome presence drives on the south wind, the angry north
18 wind, the hurricane and the storm. | He sprinkles the snow
like fluttering birds; it comes to settle like swarms of locusts.
19 Its shining whiteness blinds the eyes, the mind is baffled by it
20 steady fall. | He scatters frost like so much salt, its crystal
21 sparkle like sapphires. | Cold northern blasts he sends that
turn the ponds to ice. He freezes over every body of water, and
22 clothes each pool with a coat of mail. | When the mountain
growth is scorched with heat, and the flowering plains a
23 though by flames, | the dripping clouds restore them all, and
24 the scattered dew enriches the parched land. | His is the plan
25 that calms the deep, and plants the islands in the sea. | Those
who go down to the sea tell part of its story, and when we hear
26 them we are thunderstruck; | in it are his creatures, stupendous
amazing, all kinds of life, and the monsters of the deep.
27 For him each messenger succeeds, and at his bidding accom-
plishes his will.

28 More than this we need not add; let the last word be, he is all.
29 in all! | Let us praise him the more, since we cannot fathom
30 him, for greater is he than all his works; | awful indeed is the
31 Lord's majesty, and wonderful is his power. | Lift up your
voices to glorify the Lord, though he is still beyond your power
32 to praise; | extol him with renewed strength, and weary not
though you cannot reach the end: great is the glory which the
Most High has measured out, and his grandeur is from remote
33 time! | For who can see him and describe him? or who can
34 praise him as he is? | Beyond these, many things lie hid; only
35 a few of his works have we seen. | It is the Lord who has made
all things, and to those who fear him he gives wisdom.

44

1 ***Praise of Israel's Great Ancestors*** Now will I praise those
2 godly men, our ancestors, each in his own time: | rulers of
the earth by their authority, men of renown for their might

44—50: These famous chapters have been entitled the "Eulogy of the Fathers," or "Sacred History by Ben Sira." The purpose of the sage to encourage his contemporaries by the example of the Fathers, the equivalent of our saints, through what resembled our notion of "spiritual reading."

Sirach teaches that the "resistance movement" against the attempts of Hellenistic culture to absorb Jewish culture is not the work of a few "men of piety," as they were technically called, but of many such men in their past history. The sage's pedagogical method of appealing to

or counselors in their wisdom, or seers of all things in prophecy;
| resolute governors of peoples, or judges with discretion;
authors skilled in composition, or poets with collected proverbs;
| composers of melodious psalms, or discoursers on lyric themes;
| stalwart men, solidly established and at peace in their own
estates— | all these were glorious in their time, each illustrious
in his day. | Some of them have left behind a name that is
remembered to their praise; | but of others there is no memory,
for it perished when they perished, and they are as though they
had never lived, they and their children after them. | Yet these
also were godly men whose virtues have not been forgotten; |
their wealth remains in their families, their heritage with their
descendants; | through God's covenant with them their family
endures, | and their hopes are never shattered.
All these are buried in peace, but their name lives on and on. |
At gatherings their wisdom is retold, and the assembly sings their
praises.

The Early Patriarchs Henoch walked with the Lord and
was taken up, that succeeding generations might learn by his
example. | Noe, found just and perfect, renewed the race in
the time of devastation. Because of his worth there were sur-
vivors, and with a sign to him the deluge ended; | a lasting
agreement was made with him, that never should all flesh be
destroyed. | Abraham, father of many peoples, kept his glory
without stain: | he observed the precepts of the Most High, and
entered into an agreement with him; in his own flesh he incised
the ordinance, and when tested he was found loyal. | For this
reason, God promised him with an oath that in his descendants
the nations would be blessed, that he would make him numerous
as the grains of dust, and exalt his posterity like the stars; that
he would give them an inheritance from sea to sea, and from the
River to the ends of the earth. | And for Isaac he renewed the
same promise because of Abraham, his father. The covenant with
all his forebears was confirmed, and the blessing rested upon the
head of Jacob. | God acknowledged him as the first-born, and
gave him his inheritance. He fixed the boundaries for his tribes,
and their division into twelve.

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gallery of illustrious historical portraits from Henoch to Simon, the high priest of Sirach's day (50, 1-21), enjoys its classical counterpart in Cicero's *Pro Archia*.

44, 16—45, 20: The Epistle in the Mass of a Confessor-Bishop is a cento, or mosaic, of texts from this section. Epistles of other Masses are also formed from this passage.

45

1 ***Praise of Moses, Aaron and Phinees*** From him was to
spring the man who won the favor of all: dear to God and men
2 Moses, whose memory is held in benediction. | God's honor
devolved upon him, and the Lord strengthened him with fear
3 ful powers; | God wrought swift miracles at his words and
sustained him in the king's presence. He gave him the Com-
mandments for his people, and revealed to him his glory.
4 For his trustworthiness and meekness God selected him from
5 all mankind; | he permitted him to hear his voice, and led him
into the cloud, where, face to face, he gave him the Command-
ments, the law of life and understanding, that he might teach
his precepts to Jacob, his judgments and decrees to Israel.
6 He raised up also, like Moses in holiness, his brother Aaron
7 of the tribe of Levi. | He made him perpetual in his office when
he bestowed on him the priesthood of his people; he established
8 him in honor and crowned him with lofty majesty; | he clothed
him with splendid apparel, and adorned him with the glorious
vestments: breeches and tunic and robe with pomegranates
9 around the hem, | and a rustle of bells round about, through
whose pleasing sound at each step he would be heard within the
sanctuary, and the children of his race would be remembered;
10 the sacred vestments of gold, of violet, and of crimson, wrought
with embroidery; the breastpiece for decision, the ephod and
11 cincture | with scarlet yarn, the work of the weaver; precious
stones with seal engravings in golden settings, the work of the
jeweler, to commemorate in incised letters each of the tribes
12 of Israel; | on his turban the diadem of gold, its plate wrought
with the insignia of holiness, majestic, glorious, renowned for
13 splendor, a delight to the eyes, beauty supreme. | Before him
no one was adorned with these, nor may they ever be worn by
any except his sons and them alone, generation after generation
14 for all time. | His cereal offering is wholly burnt with the
15 established sacrifice twice each day; | for Moses ordained him
and anointed him with the holy oil, in a lasting covenant with
him and with his family, as permanent as the heavens, that he
should serve God in his priesthood and bless his people in his
16 name. | He chose him from all mankind to offer holocausts and
choice offerings, to burn sacrifices of sweet odor for a memorial
17 and to atone for the people of Israel. | He gave to him his laws
and authority to prescribe and to judge: to teach the precepts
18 to his people, and the ritual of the descendants of Israel. | Men
of other families were inflamed against him, were jealous of him
in the desert, the followers of Dathan and Abiram, and the
19 band of Core in their defiance. | But the Lord saw this and

became angry, he destroyed them in his burning wrath. He brought down upon them a miracle, and consumed them with
20 his flaming fire. | Then he increased the glory of Aaron and bestowed upon him his inheritance: the sacred offerings he
21 allotted to him, with the showbread as his portion; | the oblations of the Lord are his food, a gift to him and his descendants.
22 | But he holds no land among the people nor shares with them their heritage; for the Lord himself is his portion, his inheritance in the midst of Israel.

23 Phinees too, the son of Eleazar, was the courageous third of his line when, zealous for the God of all, he met the crisis of his people and, at the prompting of his noble heart, atoned for the
24 children of Israel. | Therefore on him again God conferred the right, in a covenant of friendship, to provide for the sanctuary, so that he and his descendants should possess the high priesthood
25 forever. | For even his covenant with David, the son of Jesse of the tribe of Juda, was an individual heritage through one son alone; but the heritage of Aaron is for all his descendants.

26 And now bless the Lord who has crowned you with glory! May he grant you wisdom of heart to govern his people in justice, lest their welfare should ever be forgotten, or your authority, throughout all time.

46

1 ***Josue, Caleb and the Judges*** Valiant leader was Josue, son of Nun, assistant to Moses in the prophetic office, formed to be, as his name implies, the great savior of God's chosen ones, to punish the enemy and to win the inheritance for Israel. |
2 What glory was his when he raised his arm, to brandish his
3 javelin against the city! | And who could withstand him when
4 he fought the battles of the Lord? | Did he not by his power
5 stop the sun, so that one day became two? | He called upon the Most High God when his enemies beset him on all sides, and God Most High gave answer to him in hailstones of tremendous
6 power, | which he rained down upon the hostile army till on the slope he destroyed the foe; | that all the doomed nations might know that the Lord was watching over his people's
7 battles. And because he was a devoted follower of God | and in Moses' lifetime showed himself loyal, he and Caleb, son of Jephonne, when they opposed the rebel assembly, averted God's anger from the people and suppressed the wicked complaint—
8 | because of this, they were the only two spared from the six hundred thousand infantry, to lead the people into their inher-
9 itance, the land flowing with milk and honey. | And the strength he gave to Caleb remained with him even in his old age till he

won his way onto the summits of the land; his family too
10 received an inheritance, | that all the people of Jacob might
know how good it is to be a devoted follower of the Lord.
11 The Judges, too, each one of them, whose hearts were not
deceived, who did not abandon God: may their memory be ever
12 blessed, | their bones return to life from their resting place, and
13 their names receive fresh luster in their children! | Beloved of
his people, dear to his Maker, dedicated from his mother's
womb, consecrated to the Lord as a prophet, was Samuel, the
judge and priest. At God's word he established the kingdom and
14 anointed princes to rule the people. | By the law of the Lord
he judged the nation when he visited the encampments of Jacob.
15 | As a trustworthy prophet he was sought out and his words
16 proved him true as a seer. | He too, called upon God, and
17 offered him a suckling lamb; | then the Lord thundered forth
from heaven, and the tremendous roar of his voice was heard. |
18 He brought low the rulers of the enemy and destroyed all the
19 lords of the Philistines. | When Samuel approached the end of
his life, he testified before the Lord and his anointed prince,
"No bribe or secret gift have I taken from any man!" and no
20 one dared gainsay him. | Even when he lay buried, his guidance
was sought; he made known to the king his fate, and from the
grave he raised his voice as a prophet, to put an end to wicked-
ness.

47

1 ***Nathan, David and Solomon*** After him came Nathan
2 who served in the presence of David. | Like the choice fat of the
3 sacred offerings, so was David in Israel. | He made sport of
lions as though they were kids, and of bears, like lambs of the
4 flock. | As a youth he slew the giant and wiped out the people's
disgrace, when his hand let fly the slingstone that crushed the
5 pride of Goliath. | Since he called upon the Most High God,
who gave strength to his right arm to defeat the skilled warrior
6 and raise up the might of his people, | therefore the women
sang his praises and ascribed to him tens of thousands. When he
7 assumed the royal crown, he battled | and subdued the enemy
on every side. He destroyed the hostile Philistines and shattered
8 their power till our own day. | With his every deed he offered
thanks to God Most High, in words of praise. With his whole
being he loved his Maker and daily had his praises sung; |
9 he added beauty to the feasts and solemnized the seasons of each
year with string music before the altar, providing sweet melody
10 for the psalms | so that when the Holy Name was praised,
11 before daybreak the sanctuary would resound. | The Lord for-

gave him his sins and exalted his strength forever; he conferred
on him the rights of royalty and established his throne in Israel.
12 Because of his merits he had as his successor a wise son, who
13 lived in security: | Solomon reigned during an era of peace, for
God made tranquil all his borders. He built a house to the name
14 of God, and established a lasting sanctuary. | How wise you
were when you were young, overflowing with instruction, like
15 the Nile in flood! | Your understanding covered the whole
16 earth, and, like a sea, filled it with knowledge. | Your fame
reached distant coasts, and their peoples came to hear you; |
17 with song and story and riddle, and with your answers, you
18 astounded the nations. | You were called by that glorious name
which was conferred upon Israel. Gold you gathered like so
19 much iron, you heaped up silver as though it were lead; | but
you abandoned yourself to women and gave them dominion
20 over your body. | You brought dishonor upon your reputation,
shame upon your marriage, wrath upon your descendants, and
21 groaning upon your domain; | thus two governments came into
22 being, when in Ephraim kingship was usurped. | But God does
not withdraw his mercy, nor permit even one of his promises to
fail. He does not uproot the posterity of his chosen one, nor
destroy the offspring of his friend. So he gave to Jacob a
23 remnant, to David a root from his own family. | Solomon
finally slept with his fathers, and left behind him one of his
sons, expansive in folly, limited in sense, Roboam, who by his
policy made the people rebel; until one arose who should not be
remembered, the sinner who led Israel into sin, who brought
24 ruin to Ephraim | and caused them to be exiled from their land.

Elias and Eliseus Their sinfulness grew more and more. |
25 and they lent themselves to every evil,

48

1 Till like a fire there appeared the prophet whose words were
2 as a flaming furnace. | Their staff of bread he shattered, in his
3 zeal he reduced them to straits; | by God's word he shut up the
4 heavens and three times brought down fire. | How awesome
5 are you, Elias! Whose glory is equal to yours? | You brought a
dead man back to life from the nether world, by the will of the
6 Lord. | You sent kings down to destruction, and nobles, from
7 their beds of sickness. | You heard threats at Sinai, at Horeb
8 avenging judgments. | You anointed kings who should inflict
9 vengeance, and a prophet as your successor. | You were taken
10 aloft in a whirlwind, in a chariot with fiery horses. | You are
destined, it is written, in time to come to put an end to wrath

before the day of the Lord, to turn back the hearts of fathers
toward their sons, and to re-establish the tribes of Jacob. |
11.12 Blessed is he who shall have seen you before he dies, | O
Elias, enveloped in the whirlwind!

Then Eliseus, filled with a twofold portion of his spirit,
wrought many marvels by his mere word. During his lifetime he
feared no one, nor was any man able to intimidate his will |
13 Nothing was beyond his power; beneath him flesh was brought
14 back into life. | In life he performed wonders, and after death,
15 marvelous deeds. | Despite all this the people did not repent,
nor did they give up their sins, until they were rooted out of
their land and scattered all over the earth. But Juda remained,
16 a tiny people, with its rulers from the house of David. | Some
of these did what was right, but others were extremely sinful.

17 ***Ezechias and Isaias*** Ezechias fortified his city and had
water brought into it; with iron tools he cut through the rock
18 and he built reservoirs for water. | During his reign Sennacherib
led an invasion, and sent his adjutant; he shook his fist at Sion
19 and blasphemed God in his pride. | The people's hearts melted
within them, and they were in anguish like that of childbirth. |
20 But they called upon the Most High God and lifted up their
hands to him; he heard the prayer they uttered, and saved them
21 through Isaias. | God struck the camp of the Assyrians and
22 routed them with a plague. | For Ezechias did what was right
and held fast to the paths of David, as ordered by the illustrious
23 prophet Isaias, who saw the truth in visions. | In his lifetime
24 he turned back the sun and prolonged the life of the king. | By
his powerful spirit he looked into the future and consoled the
25 mourners of Sion; | he foretold what should be till the end of
time, hidden things yet to be fulfilled.

49

1 ***Josias and the Prophets*** The name Josias is like blended
incense, made lasting by a skilled perfumer. Precious is his
memory, like honey to the taste, like music at a banquet. |
2 For he grieved over our betrayals and destroyed the abominable
3 idols. | He turned to God with his whole heart, and, though
4 times were evil, he practiced virtue. | Except for David, Ezechias
and Josias, they all were wicked; they abandoned the Law of
the Most High, these kings of Juda, right to the very end. |
5 So he gave over their power to others, their glory to a foolish
6 foreign nation | who burned the holy city and left its streets
7 desolate, as Jeremias had foretold; | for they had treated him
badly who even in the womb had been made a prophet, to root

out, pull down, and destroy, and then to build and to plant. |
8 Ezechiel beheld the vision and described the different creatures
9 of the chariot; | he also referred to Job, who always persevered
10 in the right path. | Then, too, the Twelve Prophets—may their bones return to life from their resting place!—gave new strength to Jacob and saved him by their faith and hope.

11 ***The Heroes after the Exile*** How can we fittingly praise Zorobabel, who was like a signet ring on God's right hand, |
12 and Josue, Josedec's son? In their time they built the house of God; they erected the holy temple, destined for everlasting
13 glory. | Extolled be the memory of Nehemias! He rebuilt our ruined walls, restored our shattered defenses, and set up gates and bars.

14 ***The Earliest Patriarchs*** Few on earth have been made the
15 equal of Henoch, for he was taken up bodily. | Was ever a man born like Joseph? Even his dead body was provided for. |
16 Glorious, too, were Sem and Seth and Enos; but beyond that of any living being was the splendor of Adam.

50

1 ***Simon, Son of Jochanan*** The greatest among his brethren, the glory of his people, was Simon the priest, son of Jochanan, in whose time the house of God was renovated, in whose days
2 the temple was reinforced. | In his time also the wall was built
3 with powerful turrets for the temple precincts; | in his time the reservoir was dug, the pool with a vastness like the sea's. |
4 He protected his people against brigands and strengthened his
5 city against the enemy. | How splendid he was as he appeared
6 from the Tent, as he came from within the veil! | Like a star shining among the clouds, like the full moon at the holyday
7 season; | like the sun shining upon the temple, like the rainbow
8 appearing in the cloudy sky; | like the blossoms on the branches in springtime, like a lily on the banks of a stream; like the trees
9 of Lebanon in summer, | like the fire of incense at the sacrifice;
10 like a vessel of beaten gold, studded with precious stones; | like a luxuriant olive tree thick with fruit, like a cypress standing
11 against the clouds; | vested in his magnificent robes, and wearing his garments of splendor, as he ascended the glorious altar and lent majesty to the court of the sanctuary.
12 When he received the sundered victims from the priests while he stood before the sacrificial wood, his brethren ringed him about like a garland, like a stand of cedars on Lebanon; |
13 all the sons of Aaron in their dignity clustered around him like

poplars, with the offerings to the Lord in their hands, in the
14 presence of the whole assembly of Israel. | Once he had com-
pleted the services at the altar with the arranging of the sacrifices
15 for the Most High, | and had stretched forth his hand for the
cup, to offer blood of the grape, and poured it out at the foot
of the altar, a sweet-smelling odor to the Most High God, |
16 the sons of Aaron would sound a blast, the priests, on their
trumpets of beaten metal; a blast to resound mightily as a
17 reminder before the Most High. | Then all the people with one
accord would quickly fall prostrate to the ground in adoration
before the Most High, before the Holy One of Israel.
18 Then hymns would re-echo, and over the throng sweet strains
19 of praise resound. | All the people of the land would shout for
joy, praying to the Merciful One, as the high priest completed
the services at the altar by presenting to God the sacrifice due;
20 | then coming down he would raise his hands over all the con-
gregation of Israel. The blessing of the Lord would be upon his
21 lips, the name of the Lord would be his glory. | Then again
the people would lie prostrate to receive from him the blessing
of the Most High.
22 And now, bless the God of all, who has done wondrous
things on earth; who fosters men's growth from their mother's
23 womb, and fashions them according to his will! | May he grant
24 you joy of heart and may peace abide among you; | may his
goodness toward us endure in Israel as long as the heavens are
above.

25 ***Epilogue and Canticles*** My whole being loathes two na-
26 tions, the third is not even a people: | those who live in Seir
and Philistia, and the degenerate folk who dwell in Sichem.
27 Wise instruction, appropriate proverbs, I have written in this
book, I, Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach, as they gushed
28 forth from my heart's understanding. | Happy the man who
meditates upon these things, wise the man who takes them to
29 heart! | If he puts them into practice, he can cope with any-
thing, for the fear of the Lord is his lamp.

51

1 I give you thanks, O God of my father; I praise you, O God
my savior! I will make known your name, refuge of my life; |

50, 26: *Seir:* Edom.
50, 26: The Samaritans who are the "third" nation in v. 25.
51, 1-12: A canticle of praise and thanksgiving to God. Vv. 1-8 and v. 12 form the Epistle of four Masses.

you have been my helper against my adversaries. You have
saved me from death, and kept back my body from the pit, from
the clutches of the nether world you have snatched my feet; |
you have delivered me, in your great mercy from the scourge
of a slanderous tongue, and from lips that went over to false-
hood; from the snare of those who watched for my downfall,
and from the power of those who sought my life; from many a
danger you have saved me, | from flames that hemmed me in
on every side; from the midst of unremitting fire, | from the
deep belly of the nether world; from deceiving lips and painters
of lies, | from the arrows of dishonest tongues. I was at the
point of death, my soul was nearing the depths of the nether
world; | I turned every way, but there was no one to help me,
I looked for one to sustain me, but could find no one. | But
then I remembered the mercies of the Lord, his kindness through
ages past; for he saves those who take refuge in him, and
rescues them from every evil. | So I raised my voice from the
very earth, from the gates of the nether world, my cry. | I called
out: O Lord, you are my father, you are my champion and my
savior; do not abandon me in time of trouble, in the midst of
storms and dangers. | I will ever praise your name and be con-
stant in my prayers to you. Thereupon the Lord heard my voice,
he listened to my appeal; | he saved me from evil of every kind
and preserved me in time of trouble. For this reason I thank him
and I praise him; I bless the name of the Lord.

When I was young and innocent, I sought wisdom before all
else. | In prayer I begged for her, and from my youth I followed
after her. | She was rich, like ripening grapes; in her was my
heart's joy. My feet were steadfast in her path; thus I attained
to her at last. For a short time I paid heed, [and I acquired
great instruction; | as in this way I have made progress, I shall
return thanks to him who gives me wisdom. | When I had
considered how I might make her mine, I strove to do well, lest
I should be rebuffed; | my soul was troubled over her, and I
scrutinized my conduct; I stretched forth my hands toward
heaven and bewailed the sins of which I was not aware. | I fixed
on her my soul's desires, and with its cleansing, I discovered
her. At first acquaintance with her, I gained understanding, such
that I shall never forsake her. | My whole being was stirred
with the sight of her; therefore I have made her my prized
Virgin-Martyr.

51, 13-30: An alphabetic poem on wisdom. The initial letters of the consecutive verses are arranged according to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Vv. 13-17 form the Epistle of the Mass of a Virgin-Martyr.

possession. | The Lord has granted me the request I made of him, and my tongue will declare his praises.

Come to me, you who need instruction, and take your place in my school; | how long will you be deprived of what you need, how long will your souls remain so sorely parched? | I open my mouth and speak of her: gain, at no cost, wisdom for yourselves. | Submit yourselves to her yoke, let your souls bear her weight; for she is close to those who seek her, and he who is in earnest finds her. | See for yourselves! I labored but a little for her sake, and found great rest. | Listen, children, to my teaching! you will win silver and gold through me. | If you make my lessons your joy, you need feel no shame when you hear my song! | Do your work in due season, and in his own time God will give you your reward.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS

Although Abraham, Moses, and David were known as prophets, the first primitive band of prophets dates from the eleventh century B.C. (see 1 Sm 10, 5 n). These "sons (disciples) of the prophets" hardly differed externally from similar contemporaneous Chanaanite groups. Yet God used them to champion and keep His religion alive against Chanaanite and Philistine contamination.

Samuel, a few prophets after him, and Nathan (2 Sm 7), were mainly counselors of the kings. The next commanding prophetic figures were Elias and Eliseus with their "school" of disciples in the ninth century. These men were not only royal counselors but also wonder-workers.

The classical age of literary prophets dawns in the eighth century with Amos, Osee, Isaia, Michea, and ends with Malachia in the fifth century B.C. The prophets before this time were oral prophets. There were other classical or canonical prophets besides those whose works appear in the Bible.

Even among the Israelites the classical prophets were distinguished from the professional prophets (whom the scholars call "false prophets") because the latter became tools of the state by preaching what pleased their clients; the former proclaimed what God told them to, whether it was pleasing or displeasing. Other distinguishing features of the true prophets were their holy lives and their claim that God called them. In the eyes of the people, however, it was not always clear who were the true and who were the false prophets.

The preaching of the classical prophets formed a religious movement that revived the teaching of a personal God. True dedication to Him included a life lived according to the strict morals of the Mosaic Law. This life meant that Yahweh would not be satisfied with lavish liturgical ceremonies in the temple. The external cult suited the mentality of the surrounding pagans toward their gods. The "jealous" Yahweh wanted His temple worship subordinated to a daily holy life. Morally, Yahwism meant war against injustice, greed, and sexual aberrations. Spiritually, Yahwism meant a covenant love expressed through obligations of the people to keep the Sinai Covenant lest they incur the penalty of divine retribution. The prophets' repeated condemnations, threats of imminent disaster, and promises of a better future were the vehicles used to impress upon the people God's retribution. Intimately connected with this retribution were the prophetic key doctrines of the Day of the Lord (see Am 5, 18-20 n), the Remnant (Am 5, 15 n), and Messianism. The same truths of the prophetic religious movement

were also taught by the Deuteronomic school, the Book of Deuteronomy, as explained in the Introduction to the Book of Josue, and by numerous psalms.

The activity of the prophets included politics. Moderns separate religion and politics. The peoples of the ancient Near East did not. When the prophets spoke on political issues, neither they nor their audience felt that boundaries were being crossed. The prophets objected to political alliances with foreign nations. Such alliances brought with them a certain amount of foreign religious practices and customs. These elements threatened the purity of Yahweh's religion. But if we consider the advice of the prophets Isaia and Jeremia on Juda's neutrality from the viewpoint of raw international politics, it is difficult to prove them unrealistic.

After these few words on the history and activity of the prophets it is not hard to grasp the true notion of a prophet. A popular misconception is that prophets were predictors of the future. The prophets seldom predicted. They were interested in their principal duty, namely, in preaching Yahweh and speaking in His name, in spite of the deaf ear of an obstinate people. The second duty of the prophets was to intercede for the people. In other words, the prophets were mainly extraordinary, inspired preachers on particularly important problems in critical moments of their nation. In this they differed from the priests of a hereditary caste who taught the daily lessons on the Mosaic Law and its ordinary application.

The actual writing of a prophetic book was usually styled after an accustomed pattern. Some prophets seem to have written very little. Others wrote some prophecies, but all the prophets delivered their speeches, ordinarily in public. After an era of oral transmission of a prophet's speeches, his followers would compile and edit them, first in small collections, then in larger ones. The disciple editors would not compose a stenographic account but a substantial account of the original prophecies. The arrangement of the prophecies was hardly chronological or logical. Its nucleus was frequently a common topic. There was never a conscious attempt to write a biography, but biographical fragments were scattered throughout the prophetic book. Moreover, all the prophetic books contain some writing from later writers. Perhaps "anthology" is the happiest term to describe the final composition of a prophetic book for, among other reasons, there were many speeches of the prophets that never found their way into the Bible. The anthology contained: first, the speeches ("oracles," "prophecies," "the Word of God") generally in poetry; second, autobiographical fragments; third, accounts about the prophet by his followers. It is easier now to appreciate the difficult task of the scholar who scrutinizes each oracle to date it and to infer its historical occasion, in order to

attempt an outline of the prophet's life and preaching career, of his doctrinal development, and to try tracing the influence he derived from previous prophets besides the influence he himself had on subsequent prophets.

In what manner did God communicate His message to the prophet? This is an obscure and debated phenomenon. Yet, some points may be stated:

1. There was a real supernatural contact or communication between God and the prophet after which the prophet assimilated and lived the message that he was to preach.

2. The prophet was aware that his message did not originate from himself but from God.

In these two points the prophets resemble the Christian mystics. However, the prophetic awareness concerned only the truths which the prophets learned directly from God. These truths alone were "revealed," namely, their vocation, their prediction of future events (see Is 10, 27b-32 n; Ez 26, 14 n), and especially the "oracles," direct, brief messages from God. But most of the time they preached without any consciousness of being inspired. Often the preaching comprised sermons elaborating upon the "oracle." Their teaching was mostly concerned with the Mosaic Law already known, but they reapplied it to the critical needs of their day.

3. It seems safe to say that generally God did not communicate His message through extraordinary mystical experiences and visions as we read about in the mystics. Even prophetic ecstasy was relatively rare. God operated through an interior inspiration of the prophet without exterior manifestations.

4. In the famous "inaugural" visions of the prophets, e.g., Is 6, 1-13, Ez 1, 1ff, each prophet received a call from God to become His prophet. From the authoritative point of view, the prophets stressed the inaugural vision because these visions were the credentials by which the prophets expected the people to obey them as the official national "conscience." Doctrinally, these visions were important because the prophets received from them a fundamental message that was to color all their future messages and all their decisions. These visions altered their way of thinking and attuned it to God's messages. The idea of God's holiness so saturated Isaia at his inaugural vision that all his preaching was permeated by it. Yet it is difficult to distinguish between literary and true visions. But does it really matter if we are certain of the message itself and of its coming from God?

5. Many of the "symbolic actions" of the prophets are also explained by modern scholars as being interior inspirations. These prophecies-in-action were vivid pedagogical devices, eminently suited to the concrete Israelite mind. An example is found in Jer

19, 1-11: "Thus says the Lord: Go, buy a potter's earthen flask . . . and you shall break the flask in the sight of the men . . . and say to them: Thus says the Lord of hosts: Thus will I smash this people and this city, as one smashes a clay pot so that it cannot be repaired."

Does Jeremia really mean to be understood precisely as his inspired account reads? Or is the account intentionally presented as a dramatization? (The golden rule is: what has been inspired was what the author meant. What did he mean?) A modern trend would understand that Jeremia often saw the breaking of flasks as other Jerusalem citizens did. But God one day gave the prophet the interior inspiration to make the connection between the broken flasks and the imminent collapse of the city. What is also important is: Jeremia was aware that this inspiration came from God. Other examples of symbolic actions are Osee's marriage (see Os 1, 2-9 n); and "the loincloth" (see Jer 13, 1-11 n).

What made these prophets unique in the ancient world? What made them different from their counterparts in Egypt and Mesopotamia? It was not their literary or oratorical techniques nor their occasional ecstatic moments, but the monotheistic ethical nature of their message which originated in inspiration and, at times, in revelations from God.

THE PROPHETS: THEIR TIMES AND TEACHING

Prophet	Historical Background	Message or Contribution
Amos	Amos preached under Jeroboam II (783-743?). It was a time of prosperity for the northern kingdom. His warnings did not prevent the fall of Samaria in 722-21.	The "prophet of justice" teaches that the wealthy must treat the poor with the dignity becoming every human being, just as Yahweh treated everyone in giving the Mosaic Law with its "covenant love."
Osee	Osee preached from 750-725 and therefore more closely to the fall of Samaria than Amos.	The "prophet of love" of God for man is the title best suited to express his message.
Isaia (chs. 1—39)	The great political events during his preaching career were the Syro-Ephraimite war of about 734, and Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701.	The greatest Messianic prophet and perhaps the greatest of all the prophets! Some favorite themes are the Remnant, and the **one holy** God.
Michea	A contemporary of Isaia in the second half of the eighth century.	Michea preaches on social problems like Amos, but he is more famous for his Messianic thought. See 5, 1-3.
Sophonia	The prophet's preaching afforded a picture of the syncretistic background to the religious reform of king Josia in 622.	Sophonia was a reformer. Besides, he is probably the initiator of the poor folk spirituality. See 2, 3 n.

Nahum	The prophet preached the funeral oration over the fall of Ninive in 612.	Nahum is the prophet of "Yahweh, the Lord of History." Assyria's collapse is to him a sign of God's vengeance and a hope for a peaceful future.
Jeremia	Jeremia preached during the religious reform of king Josia till the fall of Jerusalem in 587 and afterward. He prepared the people for the acceptance of the exile.	The "prophet of an interior religion" is the title to best illustrate his message, for the new covenant is to stress intimacy with God. See 31, 33.
Habacuc	Habacuc, in 605-597, composed his prophecy. The first siege of Jerusalem with the first deportation of its inhabitants by Nabuchodonosor took place in 598.	The "prophet of the problem of evil among nations." His answer is FAITH.
Ezechiel	Ezechiel preached in Babylonia to the exiles from 592 until after the fall of Jerusalem in 587.	The "Father of Judaism" is known for his directives on the temple and the liturgy. He developed the doctrine of personal responsibility.
Second Isaia (chs. 40—66)	The followers of Isaia consoled the people as the exile drew to a close.	The prophet deepens the doctrine of only one God by stressing God as "the Creator" and by showing God's power through the fulfillment of past prophecies.
Aggai and Zacharia (chs. 1—8)	Darius III, in 522, gave permission for the reconstruction of the temple at Jerusalem.	These two prophets (520-518) encourage the returned exiles to rebuild the temple, for its reconstruction would be the prelude to the Messianic era. Therefore, a true conversion of heart must accompany this work.

Abdia	The fall of Jerusalem in 587 formed the background of Abdia's writing, regardless of its date.	Behind the patriotic cry of "vengeance against Edom" lies the deeper message of faith in a just God who punishes the evil of all nations.
Malachia	The fervor of rebuilding the temple in 515 had become an enthusiasm of the past.	The prophet's message (about 450) is a reprimand because of the religious indifference, and in particular the improper procedures of offering sacrifices.
Jona	This fifth century prophet opposed the "ghetto" mentality of his age.	The prophet advocates universalism (God wants to save all men not only the Jews) as opposed to particularism.
Joel	The prophet (400-350) preached on the occasion of a locust plague.	Joel is known for his contribution of the penitential DAY OF THE LORD, of which Peter spoke at Pentecost.
Second Zacharia (chs. 9—14)	The unknown prophet preached perhaps at the beginning of the Greek domination, about 325.	The prophet is known for his Messianic contributions. See 9, 9-10; 12, 10-11.
Daniel	The unknown prophet wrote in 167-164 to encourage his fellow Jews against the Hellenizing persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Syria.	The author is known for his "son of man" Messianism. See 7, 13-18.

THE BOOK OF ISAIA

INTRODUCTION

Isaia was born probably between 770 and 760 B.C. in Jerusalem of aristocratic parents. He was married and had two sons. Beginning with the reception of his office as prophet (6, 1) about 740, he preached under three kings (1, 1). This would be from 740, the year king Ozia died, to 687, the year of king Ezechia's death. Isaia appeared on the scene after Amos and Osee, but contemporaneously with Micheа

Isaia lived in the very middle of a politically troublesome time. He was king Achaz' adviser, but he was not heeded at the court. During his lifetime Jerusalem was threatened in 734 by the Syro-Ephraimite alliance (see 7, 1-2 n), and in 701 by Sennacherib. Isaia was a true prophet, and his preaching stabilized the morale of the people during these crises. It is difficult to be certain of his activities after 701. Scholars find no evidence for the story that he died, his body rent asunder, as a martyr under king Manasse.

Isaia came into a socially and morally decaying kingdom where the rich and the poor were too distinctly divided and the law courts were corrupt. Religiously, external sacrifice rather than social justice ruled the people.

Isaia's themes of predilection are monotheism, the doctrine of the remnant, Messianism, God's holiness, and social justice. The prophet taught, like Amos and Osee, that the people should practice justice because they were brothers in the covenant with God. But Isaia was less threatening and more positive insofar as he hopefully looked to the future when social justice would be better observed. Moreover, Isaia's social justice was motivated by God's holiness.

The prophet writes in classical Hebrew. He is original and is considered the greatest Messianic prophet. His writings are a collection without logical order, of speeches given at different times. This disorder is perplexing to Westerners but not to Semites. The speeches were most likely handed down orally, except for a few that Isaia may have written in an abridged form soon after delivery. An editor after the sixth century brought the speeches into the form as we have it today in the Hebrew Bible.

In all the above we spoke of Isaia as the recognized author of chs 1—39. For the authorship of the rest of the Book of Isaia see Is 40—66 n.

Main divisions of the Book of Isaia are:

A. The Book of Judgment
   1. Indictment of Israel and Juda, 1—5
   2. Emmanuel Prophecies, 6—12
   3. Oracles against the Pagan Nations, 13—23
   4. Apocalypse of Isaia, 24—27
   5. The Lord Alone, Israel's and Juda's Salvation, 28—33
   6. The Lord, Sion's Avenger, 34—35
   7. Historical Appendix, 36—39

B. The Book of Consolation
1. The Lord's Glory in Israel's Liberation, 40—48
2. Expiation of Sin; Spiritual Liberation of Israel, 49—55
3. Return of the First Captives, 56—66

A. THE BOOK OF JUDGMENT

I. INDICTMENT OF ISRAEL AND JUDA

1

1 ***Israel's Sinfulness*** The vision which Isaia, son of Amos, had concerning Juda and Jerusalem in the days of Ozia, Joatham, Achaz and Ezechia, kings of Juda.

2 Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth, for the Lord speaks:
Sons have I raised and reared, but they have disowned me! |
3 An ox knows its owner, and an ass, its master's manger; but
4 Israel does not know, my people has not understood. | Ah! sinful nation, people laden with wickedness, evil race, corrupt children! They have forsaken the Lord, spurned the Holy One
5 of Israel, apostatized. | Where would you yet be struck, you that rebel again and again? The whole head is sick, the whole
6 heart faint. | From the sole of the foot to the head there is no sound spot: wound and welt and gaping gash, not drained, or
7 bandaged, or eased with salve. | Your country is waste, your cities burnt with fire; your land before your eyes strangers
8 devour [a waste, like Sodom overthrown]— | and daughter Sion is left like a hut in a vineyard, like a shed in a melon patch, like a city blockaded.

1—5: Scholars attribute these chapters to Isaia himself except for random words. The speeches are not arranged according to the chronological order of their delivery. They date from Isaia's early ministry. The unity of the collection seems to be more according to subject matter, namely: condemnation, threats, promises to Juda and Jerusalem.

1, 1: An editorial introduction. *Vision:* see Introduction to the Prophetical Books. *Isaia:* means "Yahweh is (or will give) salvation." *Amos:* not the minor prophet. *In the days of Ozia . . . king of Juda:* this is the usual vague biblical way of giving a person's date of birth and death.

1, 1-20: Yahweh reproves the people for their infidelity toward Him.

1, 3: Origen was the first to accommodate this verse to Christ's birth. *Israel:* the whole chosen people.

1, 4: *Holy One of Israel:* Isaia's favorite title of God, used twenty-nine times. Outside of this book it is used only six times.

1, 5-6: These verses are accommodated to Christ's passion.

1, 8: *Daughter Sion:* in the Bible, cities are often called daughters. Here Jerusalem is meant. *Hut . . . shed:* these shelters for workmen and watchmen are common in Palestine.

9 Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a scanty remnant, we
10 had become as Sodom, we should be like Gomorra. | Hear the
word of the Lord, princes of Sodom! Listen to the instruction
11 of our God, people of Gomorra! | What care I for the number
of your sacrifices? says the Lord. I have had enough of whole-
burnt rams and fat of fatlings; in the blood of calves, lambs and
goats I find no pleasure.
12 When you come in to visit me, who asks these things of you?
13 | Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offer-
ings; your incense is loathsome to me. New moon and sabbath,
calling of assemblies, octaves with wickedness: these I cannot
14 bear. | Your new moons and festivals I detest; they weigh me
15 down, I tire of the load. | When you spread out your hands, I
close my eyes to you; though you pray the more, I will not listen.
16 Your hands are full of blood! | Wash yourselves clean! Put
away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; |
17 learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged,
hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.
18 Come now, let us set things right, says the Lord: though your
sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; though
19 they be crimson red, they may become white as wool. | If you
are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land;
20 | but if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you: for
the mouth of the Lord has spoken!
21 How has she turned adulteress, the faithful city, so upright!
22 Justice used to lodge within her, but now, murderers. | Your
23 silver is turned to dross, your wine is mixed with water. | Your
princes are rebels and comrades of thieves; each one of them
loves a bribe and looks for gifts. The fatherless they defend not,
24 and the widow's plea does not reach them. | Now, therefore,
says the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: Ah!
I will take vengeance on my foes and fully repay my enemies!
25 | I will turn my hand against you, and refine your dross in the
26 furnace, removing all your alloy. | I will restore your judges as

1, 9: *Lord of hosts:* this title first meant Lord of Israel's armies, later, Lord of the angels and stars, then, master of the universe. *Remnant:* see Am 5, 15 n.

1, 10: Isaia likens the people to the inhabitants of the two classical evil cities (see Gn 19).

1, 13: *New moon . . . octaves:* feasts.

1, 15: *Spread out your hands:* a gesture of prayer.

1, 17: The prophets often attack not liturgy and sacrifices themselves, but their substitution for the practice of justice and charity.

1, 21-31: The portrait of Jerusalem turning "adulteress" (v. 21), is a common biblical figure of the people's infidelity to God and worship of idols.

at first, and your counselors as in the beginning; after that you
27 shall be called city of justice, faithful city. | Sion shall be
redeemed by judgment, and her repentant ones by justice. |
28 Rebels and sinners alike shall be crushed, those who desert the
29 Lord shall be consumed. | You shall be ashamed of the tere-
binths which you prized, and blush for the groves which you
30 chose. | You shall become like a tree with falling leaves, like
31 a garden that has no water. | The strong man shall turn to
tow, and his work shall become a spark; both shall burn
together, and there shall be none to quench the flames.

2

1 ***Sion, the Messianic Capital*** This is what Isaia, son of
Amos, saw concerning Juda and Jerusalem.
2 In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be
established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills.
3 All nations shall stream toward it; | many peoples shall come
and say: "Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house
of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and
we may walk in his paths." For from Sion shall go forth instruc-
4 tion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. | He shall judge
between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They
shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into
pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against
5 another, nor shall they train for war again. | O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

6 ***The Lord's Judgment against Idols*** You have abandoned
your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled
with fortunetellers and soothsayers, like the Philistines; they
7 covenant with strangers. | Their land is full of silver and gold,
and there is no end to their treasures; their land is full of horses,
8 and there is no end to their chariots. | Their land is full of idols;
they worship the works of their hands, that which their fingers
9 have made. | But man is abased, each one brought low. [Do not

1, 27-31: The prophet imagines a purified Jerusalem of the future.
1, 29: *Terebinths . . . groves:* favorite places of idolatrous worship.
2, 1: An editor added this verse.
2, 2-4: The sense is: all the Gentile nations will be converted to the true religion of God with its capital at Jerusalem (vv. 2-3). It will be a time of universal peace (v. 4). A growing opinion claims that both Isaia and Michea (see Mi 4, 1-3) borrowed this passage from the temple liturgy rather than that one prophet borrowed it from the other.
2, 6-22: Isaia continues the trend initiated by Amos that the "Day of the Lord" ("on that day," vv. 11, 17, 20) will be one of punishment. See Am 5, 18-20 n.

10 pardon them!] | Get behind the rocks, hide in the dust, from
11 the terror of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty! | The
haughty eyes of man will be lowered, the arrogance of men will
be abased, and the Lord alone will be exalted, on that day. |
12 For the Lord of hosts will have his day against all that is proud
and arrogant, all that is high, and it will be brought low; |
13 yes, against all the cedars of Lebanon and all the oaks of Basan,
14 | against all the lofty mountains and all the high hills, |
15.16 against every lofty tower and every fortified wall, | against all
17 the ships of Tharsis and all stately vessels. | Human pride will
be abased, the arrogance of men brought low, and the Lord alone
18 will be exalted, on that day. | The idols will perish forever.
19 Men will go into caves in the rocks and into holes in the
earth, from the terror of the Lord and the splendor of his
20 majesty, when he arises to overawe the earth. | On that day
men will throw to the moles and the bats the idols of silver and
21 gold which they made for worship. | They go into caverns in
the rocks and into crevices in the cliffs, from the terror of the
Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he arises to overawe
22 the earth. | As for you, let man alone, in whose nostrils is but
a breath; for what is he worth?

3

1 ***Judgment of Juda and Jerusalem*** The Lord, the Lord of
hosts, shall take away from Jerusalem and from Juda support
2 and prop [all supplies of bread and water]: | hero and warrior,
3 judge and prophet, fortuneteller and elder, | the captain of
fifty and the nobleman, counselor, skilled magician, and expert
4 charmer. | I will make striplings their princes; the fickle shall
5 govern them. | And the people shall oppress one another, yes,
every man his neighbor. The child shall be bold toward the
6 elder, and the base toward the honorable. | When a man seizes
his brother in his father's house, saying, "You have clothes! Be
7 our ruler, and take in hand this ruin!"— | then shall he answer
in that day: "I will not undertake to cure this, when in my own
house there is no bread or clothing! You shall not make me
ruler of the people."
8 Jerusalem is crumbling, Juda is falling; for their speech and
their deeds are before the Lord, a provocation in the sight of his
9 majesty. | Their very look bears witness against them; their sin

2, 13-16: Allusions to storms are part of the literary embellishment of "the Day of Yahweh."

3, 1-26: It is difficult to pinpoint the background of this tirade against the soft ways of society.

3, 1-12: The incapable will be asked to rule in those desperate days.

like Sodom they vaunt, they hide it not. Woe to them! they deal
10 out evil to themselves. | Happy the just, for it will be well with
11 them, the fruit of their works they will eat. | Woe to the wicked
man! All goes ill, with the work of his hands he will be repaid. |
12 My people—a babe in arms will be their tyrant, and women
will rule them! O my people, your leaders mislead, they destroy
the paths you should follow.
13.14 The Lord rises to accuse, standing to try his people. | The
Lord enters into judgment with his people's elders and princes:
It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the loot wrested from
15 the poor is in your houses. | What do you mean by crushing my
people, and grinding down the poor when they look to you?
16 says the Lord, the God of hosts. | The Lord said: Because the
daughters of Sion are haughty, and walk with necks outstretched
ogling and mincing as they go, their anklets tinkling with every
17 step, | the Lord shall cover the scalps of Sion's daughters with
scabs, and the Lord shall bare their heads.
18 On that day the Lord will do away with the finery of the
19 anklets, sunbursts, and crescents; the pendants, bracelets, and
20 veils; the headdresses, bangles, cinctures, perfume boxes, and
21.22 amulets; the signet rings, and the nose rings; | the court
23 dresses, wraps, cloaks, and purses; the mirrors, linen tunics,
turbans, and shawls.
24 Instead of perfume there will be stench, instead of the girdle,
a rope; and for the coiffure, baldness; for the rich gown, a
25 sackcloth skirt. Then, instead of beauty: | your men will fall by
26 the sword, and your champions, in war; | her gates will lament
and mourn, as the city sits desolate on the ground.

4

1 Seven women will take hold of one man on that day, saying:
"We will eat our own food and wear our own clothing; only
let your name be given us, put an end to our disgrace!"

2 ***The Messianic Branch*** On that day, the branch of the Lord
will be luster and glory, and the fruit of the earth will be honor
3 and splendor for the survivors of Israel. | He who remains in

4, 1: War will decimate the male population. *Disgrace:* of childlessness.

4, 2-6: The remnant will enjoy prosperity (2) and be divinely protected (vv. 4-6) similar to the people in the Sinai desert (Ex 13, 21).

4, 2: *The branch of the Lord:* this expression is better interpreted as a parallel of "the fruit of the earth" rather than a synonym for the Messia.

4, 3: *Holy:* the remnant of the faithful will be consecrated to God.

Sion and he that is left in Jerusalem will be called holy: every
4 one marked down for life in Jerusalem. | When the Lord washes
away the filth of the daughters of Sion, and purges Jerusalem's
5 blood from her midst with a blast of searing judgment, | then
will the Lord create, over the whole site of Mount Sion and over
her place of assembly, a smoking cloud by day and a light of
6 flaming fire by night. | For over all, his glory will be shelter and
protection: shade from the parching heat of day, refuge and
cover from storm and rain.

5

1 ***The Vineyard Song*** Let me now sing of my friend, my
friend's song concerning his vineyard. My friend has a vineyard
2 on a fertile hillside; | he spaded it, cleared it of stones, and
planted the choicest vines; within it he built a watchtower, and
hewed out a wine press. Then he looked for the crop of grapes,
but what it yielded was wild grapes.
3 Now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Juda, judge be-
4 tween me and my vineyard: | What more was there to do for
my vineyard that I had not done? Why, when I looked for the
5 crop of grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? | Now, I will let
you know what I mean to do to my vineyard: take away its
hedge, give it to grazing, break through its wall, let it be tram-
6 pled! | Yes, I will make it a ruin: it shall not be pruned or hoed,
but overgrown with thorns and briers; I will command the
7 clouds not to send rain upon it. | The vineyard of the Lord of
hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Juda are his cherished
plant; he looked for judgment, but see, bloodshed! for justice,
but hark, the outcry!

8 ***Doom of the Unjust*** Woe to you who join house to house,
who connect field with field, till no room remains, and you are
9 left to dwell alone in the midst of the land! | In my hearing the
Lord of hosts has sworn: Many houses shall be in ruins, large
10 ones and fine, with no one to live in them. | Ten acres of vine-
yard shall yield but one bath, and a homor of seed shall yield

5, 1-7: This parable begins as a ballad (v. 1) but unlocks the meaning only at the end (v. 7). The theme is also found in other prophets and in the first three Gospels.

5, 1: *My friend:* he is "the Lord of hosts" in v. 7. *Vineyard:* this is "the house of Israel" in v. 7.

5, 8-25: Isaia's threats ("woes") because of different sins.

5, 10: For explanation on rearrangement of verses see Za 4, 4ff n. *Ten acres of vineyard:* the amount of land which a yoke of oxen can plow in ten days. *Bath:* about ten gallons.

17 but an epha. | Lambs shall graze there at pasture, and kids
shall eat in the ruins of the rich.
11 Woe to those who demand strong drink as soon as they rise
in the morning, and linger into the night while wine inflames
12 them! | With harp and lyre, timbrel and flute, they feast on
wine; but what the Lord does, they regard not, the work of his
13 hands they see not. | Therefore my people go into exile, because
they do not understand; their nobles die of hunger, and their
14 masses are parched with thirst. | Therefore the nether world
enlarges its throat and opens its maw without limit; down go
their nobility and their masses, their throngs and their revelry. |
15 Men shall be abased, each one brought low, and the eyes of the
16 haughty lowered, | but the Lord of hosts shall be exalted by his
judgment, and God the Holy shall be shown holy by his justice.
18 Woe to those who tug at guilt with cords of perversity, and
19 at sin as if with cart ropes! | To those who say, "Let him make
haste and speed his work, that we may see it; on with the plan of
the Holy One of Israel! let it come to pass, that we may know
20 it!" | Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who
change darkness into light, and light into darkness, who change
21 bitter into sweet, and sweet into bitter! | Woe to those who are
22 wise in their own sight, and prudent in their own esteem! | Woe
to the champions at drinking wine, the valiant at mixing strong
23 drink! | To those who acquit the guilty for bribes, and deprive
24 the just man of his rights! | Therefore, as the tongue of fire licks
up stubble, as dry grass shrivels in the flame, even so their root
shall become rotten and their blossom scatter like dust; for they
have spurned the law of the Lord of hosts, and scorned the word
25 of the Holy One of Israel. | Therefore the wrath of the Lord
blazes against his people, he raises his hand to strike them; when
the mountains quake, their corpses shall be like refuse in the
streets. For all this, his wrath is not turned back, and his hand
is still outstretched.

26 ***Invasion*** He will give a signal to a far-off nation, and whistle
to them from the ends of the earth; speedily and promptly will
27 they come. | None of them will stumble with weariness, none
will slumber and none will sleep. None will have his waist belt
28 loose, nor the thong of his sandal broken. | Their arrows are
sharp, and all their bows are bent. The hoofs of their horses
seem like flint, and their chariot wheels like the hurricane. |

5, 19: Woe to those who want to command God, as it were, to perform miracles.

5, 20-30: God uses Assyria ("a far-off nation" v. 26) to punish His people.

29 Their roar is that of the lion, like the lion's whelps they roar;
they growl and seize the prey, they carry it off and none will
30 rescue it. | [They will roar over it, on that day, with a roaring
like that of the sea.]

II. EMMANUEL PROPHECIES

6

1 ***Call of Isaia*** In the year king Ozia died, I saw the Lord
seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment
2 filling the temple. | Seraphim were stationed above; each of
3 them had six wings: | with two they veiled their faces, with
two they veiled their feet, and with two they hovered aloft.
"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!" they cried one to the
4 other. "All the earth is filled with his glory!" At the sound of
that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled
with smoke.
5 Then I said, "Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of
unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips; yet my
6 eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the
seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with
tongs from the altar.
7 He touched my mouth with it. "See," he said, "now that this

6—12: These seven chapters are known as "The Book of Emmanuel" because of the predominance of this Messianic figure. Most of this section is from Isaia himself.

6—8: The background of these three chapters is the Syro-Ephraimite war.

6, 1-13: This passage is known as Isaia's inaugural vision because it was in this experience that he received his call from God to be a prophet.

6, 1: *In the year:* about 740 B.C. *King Ozia:* also called Uzziah or Azariah. The description resembles that of a powerful oriental potentate.

6, 2: *Seraphim:* literally, "the burning ones." This and v. 4 are the only places in the Bible where "seraphim" are mentioned.

6, 3: *They veiled their faces:* because of reverence toward God. *They veiled their feet:* a euphemism for their extremities, which they covered out of modesty. *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:* all the liturgies, not only the Roman, use this expression. The triple repetition is a Hebraism for the superlative: most holy. In this experience God's holiness impresses Isaia to the extent of becoming his most fundamental theological idea. From this basic revealed intuition he works out the conclusion that God's punishment must inevitably come because of the people's sins.

6, 5: *Doomed:* see Gn 32, 31b on the popular idea that seeing God meant death was to follow.

6, 7: *Touched your lips:* this is a symbolic ceremony to purify Isaia and thereby make him worthy to be a prophet. In the Mass the celebrant refers to this just before reading the Gospel.

has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" "Here I am," I said; "send me!" |
9 And he replied: Go and say to this people: Listen carefully, but you shall not understand! Look intently, but you shall know
10 nothing! | You are to make the heart of this people sluggish, to dull their ears and close their eyes; else their eyes will see, their ears hear, their heart understand, and they will turn and be healed.
11 "How long, O Lord?" I asked. And he replied: Until the cities are desolate, without inhabitants, houses, without a man, and
12 the earth is a desolate waste. | Until the Lord removes men far
13 away, and the land is abandoned more and more. | If there be still a tenth part in it, then this in turn shall be laid waste; as with a terebinth or an oak whose trunk remains when its leaves have fallen. [Holy offspring is the trunk.]

7

1 ***Birth of Emmanuel*** In the days of Achaz, king of Juda, son of Joatham, son of Ozia, Rasin, king of Aram, and Phacee, king of Israel, son of Romelia, went up to attack Jerusalem, but
2 they were not able to conquer it. | When word came to the house of David that Aram was encamped in Ephraim, the heart of the king and the heart of the people trembled, as the trees of the forest tremble in the wind.
3 Then the Lord said to Isaia: Go out to meet Achaz, you and your son Shear-Jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper
4 pool, on the highway of the fuller's field, and say to him: Take care you remain tranquil and do not fear; let not your courage fail before these two stumps of smoldering brands [the blazing anger of Rasin and the Arameans, and of the son of Romelia], |
5 because of the mischief that Aram [Ephraim and the son of

6, 9-10: In the strong accent of Semitic phraseology, it sounds as if Isaia's preaching was to cause the people's blindness. The sense is that the prophet should not be discouraged if the people reject his preaching—which God foresees. Mt 13, 14 and parallels take up this difficult passage.

6, 11-13: Isaia asks "how long" will the people be blind. God replies by announcing a foreign invasion and consequent deportation.

7, 1-2: This refers to 4 Kgs 16; 2 Par 28, the alliance of Syria ("Aram") and Ephraim ("Israel") against Juda ("the house of David") because Juda would not join an anti-Assyrian coalition.

7, 3: *Shear-Jashub:* the name literally means "a Remnant will return." It symbolized to the people a simultaneous threat and consolation. *Upper pool:* Achaz was on an inspection tour in preparation for the Syro-Ephraimite attack. See 7, 1-2 n.

6 Romelia] plots against you, saying, "Let us go up and tear Juda
asunder, make it our own by force, and appoint the son of
Tabeel king there."
7 Thus says the Lord: This shall not stand, it shall not be! |
8 Damascus is the capital of Aram, and Rasin the head of Da-
mascus; Samaria is the capital of Ephraim, and Romelia's son
9 the head of Samaria. | But within sixty years and five, Ephraim
shall be crushed, no longer a nation. Unless your faith is firm
you shall not be firm!
10.11 Again the Lord spoke to Achaz: Ask for a sign from the
Lord, your God; let it be deep as the nether world, or high as
12 the sky! | But Achaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt
13 the Lord!" | Then he said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not
enough for you to weary men, must you also weary my God?
14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin

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7, 6: *Appoint the son of Tabeel king there:* he would be more amenable to the plans of the Syro-Ephraimites.

7, 9: *Within sixty years and five:* the number is uncertain because the Hebrew text is not clear.

7, 10f: Since Achaz and the Davidic line would be in real danger of extinction if the Syro-Ephraimites should conquer Jerusalem, God tells Achaz through Isaia to ask for an extraordinary sign of assertion that his line is not going to be extinguished. This sign was to be proof that God has kept His promise of preserving the Davidic line, as Nathan said He would. See 2 Sm 7, 8-16 n.

7, 12: Achaz refuses to request a sign because he has more confidence in Assyria's military aid than in God's miracles. As a pretext, Achaz alludes to Dt 6, 16 on not tempting God.

7, 13: *House of David:* according to Isaia's prophecy, all the people, not only king Achaz, *will be affected.*

7, 14: The common long-standing opinion holds that Isaia directly and literally predicts the future Messia, and that He will be born of a virgin mother. The objection is that it is difficult to understand how this event of over seven hundred years later could be a sign to Achaz and his people. Moreover, it is questionable that the Fathers of the Church have been morally unanimous in this interpretation. The common opinion of modern commentators is: the sign was to signify the imminent birth of a contemporary child, preferably Achaz' son, Ezechia. He would continue the Davidic dynasty as God had promised (see v. 10f n). The chronological objections to this opinion are not unanswerable. Mt. 1, 23 would later understand from this Isaian text that the expected coming of the Messia Himself has been fulfilled. The moderns teach that His virginal birth is clearly taught in Mt 1, 23 for the first time, but they dispute whether the fulfillment must be understood in the typical or fuller sense. The Hebrew word *almah* means a young maiden or a young woman (unmarried or recently married). About 150 B.C. the Septuagint (Greek Bible) translated *almah* as *parthénos*. Even if this Greek word added a "virginal" nuance to the Hebrew word, it would not necessarily follow that the Greek translators predicted a virginal birth. ***Emmanuel:*** a symbolic name meaning "God is with us."

ROYAL MESSIANISM

How the Hope for a King Grew

DYNASTIC MESSIANISM

The Hope for Ideal Davidic Kings

Distinctive Messianic Features		Era (B.C.)
	DAVID	
David dynasty will be everlasting	Nathan—2 Samuel 7, 8-16	tenth century
	Royal Psalmists:	tenth century to six century exile
A universally ruling dynasty	Psalm 2	
A just dynasty	Psalm 44	
A justly universally ruling dynasty	Psalm 71	
Faith in the everlasting Davidic dynasty	Psalm 88	
A royal priestly dynasty	Psalm 109	
	ISAIA	
Faith in a child who will continue the dynasty	7, 14	c. 734
Four throne titles of the child	9, 5-6	
The sixfold spirit of Yahweh	11, 1-9	
	MICHEA	
Renewal of the Promise in 2 Sm 7, 8-16 and re-echo of it in Is 7, 14	5, 1-3	c. 700

PERSONAL MESSIANISM

The Hope for One Ideal King

	JEREMIA	
A just Messia-king	23, 5-6	c. 587
Renewals of the hope for a Messia-king	(30, 9 (33, 14-16	
	EZECHIEL	
A universal Messia-king	17, 22-23	c. 587
Renewals of the hope for a Messia-king	(34, 23-24 (37, 24-25	
	ZACHARIA	
A peaceful Messia-king	3, 8-10	520-518
Renewal of the hope for a Messia-king	6, 11-13	
	AGGAI	
Renewal of the hope for a Messia-king	2, 22-23	c. 520

The Forward Looking Concept of Biblical History continued to narrow its focus from the election of the tribe of Juda (see pp 24-25) to its most illustrious member, king David (see 2 Sm 7, 8-16 n).

The royal psalmists, together with the prophets Isaia and Michea, are best understood against the background of the promise made by God through the prophet Nathan that David's dynasty will last forever. The royal psalms and prophecies renew this promise and, at times, add distinctive features to the dynasty of the future. In other words, for about 400 years after the prophecy of 2 Sm 7, every historical king who succeeded David was partially fulfilling and realizing the prophecy of an everlasting dynasty. The lofty descriptions of the king and his reign by the psalmists and prophets were not meant to portray the particular historical king as a person; they only represented the aspirations which the people desired their future Davidic kings to have. The historical king bore the ideals of the nation irrespective of his personal abilities, great or poor. The aspirations and the ideals were based on what the people and the sacred writers believed to be the endowments God had in store for the future of the dynasty.

After centuries of disappointing Davidic kings, both as rulers and as religious leaders, the prophets began to despair of them. They began to doubt

whether the successors of David, because of their poor personal, political, and religious qualities, were capable of realizing the hopes for an ideal dynasty.

Scholars dispute who of the sacred writers was the first to express this disappointment, or who was the first to speak no longer of an ideal future dynasty but of one future ideal Messia-king. This new distinctive phase is often called Personal Messianism, as different from its preceding phase: Dynastic Messianism. The latter is the Messiaship of a dynasty, the former is the Messiaship of an individual king. Some believe it was Isaia (11, 1-9), but more think it was Jeremia (23, 5-6).

Jeremia saw, in 587 B.C., the nation and its royal family led into exile. It was clear to him that the nation was politically crushed under the Babylonian heel. On the other hand, the prophet believed that God's promise of an eternal dynasty could not come to naught. God's promise must be realized. But how? How was the Davidic dynasty going to carry out God's promise of an ideal nation leading an ideal world? Jeremia and subsequent royal prophets, it seems, either thought that God would raise up another descendant of the line of David against all political odds, or He would appoint an extraordinary person.

It is a moot question whether the idea of a personal Messia came from an observation of the failure of the monarchy plus a divine inspiration, or whether it came from a direct divine revelation.

During the period of the Messianism of the individual king the earlier prophecies of dynastic Messianism were most likely reread as personal and were, at times, even retouched to fit in with the historical king of the era. (A reading of all the texts with their annotations will make for a fuller explanation of the table.)

shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him
15 Emmanuel. He shall be living on curds and honey by the time
16 he learns to reject the bad and choose the good. For before the
child learns to reject the bad and choose the good, the land of
those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted.
17 The Lord shall bring upon you and your people and your
father's house days worse than any since Ephraim seceded from
18 Juda. [This means the king of Assyria.] | On that day the Lord
shall whistle for the fly that is in the farthest streams of Egypt,
19 and for the bee in the land of Assyria. | All of them shall come
and settle in the steep ravines and in the rocky clefts, on all
20 thornbushes and in all pastures. | On that day the Lord shall
shave with the razor hired from across the River [with the king
of Assyria] the head, and the hair between the legs. It shall also
21 shave off the beard. | On that day a man shall keep a heifer or a
couple of sheep, and from their abundant yield of milk he shall
22 live on curds; curds and honey shall be the food of all who
23 remain in the land. On that day every place where there used to
be a thousand vines, worth a thousand pieces of silver, shall be
24 turned to briers and thorns. Men shall go there with bow and
25 arrows; for all the country shall be briers and thorns. For fear of
briers and thorns you shall not go upon any mountainside which
used to be hoed with the mattock; they shall be grazing land for
cattle and shall be trampled upon by sheep.

8

1 ***The Son of Isaia*** The Lord said to me: Take a large cyl-
inder seal, and inscribe on it in ordinary letters: "Belonging to
2 Maher-shalal-hash-baz." | And I took reliable witnesses, Uria
3 the priest, and Zacharia, son of Barachia. Then I went to the
prophetess and she conceived and bore a son. The Lord said to
4 me: Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, | for before the child

7, 15: *On curds and honey:* it is disputed whether this means living in abundance or in destitution, or on a relatively rich diet for destitute people.

7, 19-25: Perhaps it is better to dissociate this passage from the preceding Emmanuel section.

7, 20: The Lord will use Assyria to punish His people.

7, 20-23: *Curds and honey:* see 7, 15 n.

8, 1-2: *Maher-shalal-hash-baz:* God commands Isaia to give his other son (v. 3) this symbolic name: "quick spoils; speedy plunder" as a reminder of his prediction of how the Assyrian would act. Isaia had "witnesses" for his prediction (v. 4).

8, 3: *The prophetess:* Isaia's wife.

knows how to call his father or mother by name, the wealth of
Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried off by the
king of Assyria.
5.6 Again the Lord spoke to me: | Because this people has re-
jected the waters of Siloe that flow gently, and melts with fear
7 before the loftiness of Rasin and Romelia's son, | therefore the
Lord raises against them the waters of the River, great and
mighty [the king of Assyria and all his power]. It shall rise
8 above all its channels, and overflow all its banks; | it shall pass
into Juda, and flood it all throughout: up to the neck it shall
reach; it shall spread its wings the full width of your land,
Emmanuel!
9 Know, O peoples, and be appalled! Give ear, all you distant
10 lands! Arm, but be crushed! Arm, but be crushed! | Form a plan,
and it shall be thwarted; make a resolve, and it shall not be
carried out, for "With us is God!"

11 ***Disciples of Isaia*** For thus said the Lord to me, taking
hold of me and warning me not to walk in the way of this
12 people: | Call not alliance what this people calls alliance, and
13 fear not, nor stand in awe of what they fear. | But with the
Lord of hosts make your alliance—for him be your fear and
14 your awe. | Yet he shall be a snare, an obstacle and a stumbling
stone to both the houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to those
15 who dwell in Jerusalem; | and many among them shall stumble
and fall, broken, snared, and captured.
16 The record is to be folded and the sealed instruction kept
17 among my disciples. For I will trust in the Lord, who is hiding
18 his face from the house of Jacob; yes, I will wait for him. Look
at me and the children whom the Lord has given me: we are
signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts who dwells
19 on Mount Sion. And when they say to you, "Inquire of mediums
and fortunetellers (who chirp and mutter!); should not a people
inquire of their gods, apply to the dead on behalf of the living?"
20 —then this document will furnish its instruction. That kind of
thing they will surely say.

8, 6: *This people:* the people of Jerusalem and of Juda rejected God's gentle protection ("the waters of Siloe"). Isaia uses in a metaphorical sense the stream that flowed into the pool of Siloe in Jerusalem.

8, 7: *The River:* Euphrates.

8, 14-15: The general sense is that the privileged people may incur a greater punishment if they do not follow God.

8, 18: *Signs and portents:* a reference to the symbolic names of the prophet's two sons.

23 ***The Prince of Peace*** First he degraded the land of Zabu
lon and the land of Nephthali; but in the end he has glorifiec
the seaward road, the land west of the Jordan, the District o
the Gentiles. Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness: fo
there is no gloom where but now there was distress.

9

1 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.
2 You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, a
they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry
3 when dividing spoils. | For the yoke that burdened them, th
pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have
4 smashed, as on the day of Madian. | For every boot that trampec
in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel fo
flames.
5 For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder
dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero
6 Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. | His dominion is vast anc
forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom

8, 23: Vv. 21 and 22 have been transposed and placed within ch. 14
25, which affords the context in which they can be understood. On the
explanation of verse arrangement see Za 4, 4ff n. Many agree tha
v. 23 alludes to 4 Kgs 15, 29 in the early 730's when the Assyriar
Tiglath Pileser III attacked northern Palestine ("Zabulon . . . Neph
thali"). *In the end he has glorified:* for the rest of this verse and to
introduce the Messianic section, 9, 1ff, Isaia speaks from the perspective
of the Messianic age already come. In other words, he uses the prophetic
perfect, an affirmation of something desired in the future. *The seaward
road:* the road from Damascus to southern Galilee and straight across to
the Mediterranean Sea. *District of the Gentiles:* northern Galilee was
largely populated by Gentiles.

9, 1: *Walked in darkness:* this is a reference to the people who are in
distress ("darkness") because of the invasion (see 8, 23 n). They "have
seen" (see "prophetic perfect" in 8, 23 n) the joy ("light") of the
coming deliverer.

9, 3: *Madian:* a reference to Jgs 8—9.

9, 5: *A child is born:* Isaia refers to Emmanuel (7, 14 n) where the
"sign" is Ezechia. If so, then these four titles are applied to him only
insofar as he represents the ideal David who one day is to realize all
God's promises made to David. It is not evident that Isaia is thinking
of the one Messia. *Dominion:* authority. Many Fathers accommodate this
text to Christ reigning from the cross. *God-Hero, Father-Forever:*
modern scholars do not interpret these expressions to mean divinity.
"God-Hero" means a defender of the people. *Prince of Peace:* Isaia
means in the immediate sense a military peace, but in the New Testa-
ment era it was clearly understood as the peace between God and man.
These four epithets are aptly found in the Introit of the third Mass of
Christmas and the Octave of the Nativity of Our Lord.

which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

7 ***Fall of the Northern Kingdom*** The Lord has sent word
8 against Jacob, it falls upon Israel; | and all the people know it,
Ephraim and those who dwell in Samaria, those who say in arro-
9 gance and pride of heart, | "Bricks have fallen, but we will
build with cut stone; sycamores are felled, but we will replace
10 them with cedars." | But the Lord raises up their foes against
11 them and stirs up their enemies to action: | Aram on the east
and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth.
For all this, his wrath is not turned back, and his hand is still
outstretched!
12 The people do not turn to him who struck them, nor seek the
13 Lord of hosts. | So the Lord severs from Israel head and tail,
14 palm branch and reed in one day. | [The elder and the noble
are the head, the prophet who teaches falsehood is the tail.] |
15 The leaders of this people mislead them and those to be led are
16 engulfed. | For this reason, the Lord does not spare their young
men, and their orphans and widows he does not pity; they are
wholly profaned and sinful, and every mouth gives vent to folly.
For all this, his wrath is not turned back, his hand is still out-
17 stretched! | For wickedness burns like fire, devouring brier and
thorn; it kindles the forest thickets, which go up in columns of
18 smoke. | At the wrath of the Lord of hosts the land quakes, and
the people are like fuel for fire; no man spares his brother, each
19 devours the flesh of his neighbor. | Though they hack on the
right, they are hungry; though they eat on the left, they are not
20 filled. | Manasse devours Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasse; to-
gether they turn on Juda. For all this, his wrath is not turned
back, his hand is still outstretched!

10

1 ***Social Injustice*** Woe to those who enact unjust statutes

9, 7—10, 4: There are various interpretations of this oracle. One probable opinion holds that it is a warning of an imminent catastrophe for Juda and for the northern kingdom ("Ephraim"). The future catastrophe is pictured in terms of past calamities which befell the northern kingdom.

9, 11: The northern kingdom had been invaded by the Syrians ("Aram") and by the Philistines. *For all this . . . outstretched:* this refrain, repeated four times, means that God has "stretched out" His hand to continue His punishment.

9, 13: *Head and tail:* the people. *Palm branch and reed:* the leaders.

9, 20: *Manasse . . . Ephraim:* "Ephraim" is one of the two major tribes of the northern kingdom.

2 and who write oppressive decrees, | depriving the needy of
judgment and robbing my people's poor of their rights, making
3 widows their plunder, and orphans their prey! | What will you
do on the day of punishment, when ruin comes from afar? To
whom will you flee for help? Where will you leave your wealth,
4 | lest it sink beneath the captive or fall beneath the slain? For
all this, his wrath is not turned back, his hand is still out-
stretched!

5 ***Assyria the Unconscious Instrument of God*** Woe to
6 Assyria! My rod in anger, my staff in wrath. | Against an
impious nation I send him, and against a people under my
wrath I order him to seize plunder, carry off loot, and tread
7 them down like the mud of the streets. | But this is not what
he intends, nor does he have this in mind; rather, it is in his
8 heart to destroy, to make an end of nations not a few. | "Are
9 not my commanders all kings?" he says, | "Is not Chalane like
Charchamis, or Hamath like Arphad, or Samaria like Damascus?
10 | Just as my hand reached out to idolatrous kingdoms that had
11 more images than Jerusalem and Samaria, | just as I treated
Samaria and her idols, shall I not do to Jerusalem and her graven
images?"
12 [But when the Lord has brought to an end all his work on
Mount Sion and in Jerusalem, I will punish the utterance of
13 the king of Assyria's proud heart, | and the boastfulness of his
haughty eyes. For he says:] "By my own power I have done it,
and by my wisdom, for I am shrewd. I have moved the boun-
daries of peoples, their treasures I have pillaged, and, like a
14 giant, I have put down the enthroned. | My hand has seized
like a nest the riches of nations; as one takes eggs left alone, so I
took in all the earth; no one fluttered a wing, or opened a mouth,
or chirped!"
15 Will the axe boast against him who hews with it? Will the
saw exalt itself above him who wields it? As if a rod could
16 sway him who lifts it, or a staff him who is not wood! | There-
fore the Lord, the Lord of hosts, will send among his fat ones
leanness, and instead of his glory there will be kindling like the
17 kindling of fire. | The Light of Israel will become a fire, Israel's

10, 5-27: The historical background of this prophecy is probably Sennacherib's invasion of 701. Isaia explains how God uses Assyria as His instrument to punish His people ("impious nation," v. 6) under whose rule Juda suffers.

10, 9: One city is the same as the other insofar as the Assyrians captured them.

10, 16: *Fat ones:* Assyrians.

Holy One a flame, that burns and consumes his briers and his
18 thorns in a single day. | His splendid forests and orchards will
19 be consumed, soul and body; | and the remnant of the trees in
his forest will be so few, like poles set up for signals, that any
20 boy can record them. | On that day the remnant of Israel, the
survivors of the house of Jacob, will no more lean upon him
who struck them; but they will lean upon the Lord, the Holy
21 One of Israel, in truth. | A remnant will return, the remnant of
22 Jacob, to the mighty God. | For though your people, O Israel,
were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return;
their destruction is decreed as overwhelming justice demands.
23 Yes, the destruction he has decreed, the Lord, the God of
24 hosts, will carry out within the whole land. Therefore thus says
the Lord, the God of hosts: O my people, who dwell in Sion, do
not fear the Assyrian, though he strikes you with a rod, and
25 raises his staff against you. For only a brief moment more, and
26 my anger shall be over; but them I will destroy in wrath. Then
the Lord of hosts will raise against them a scourge such as
struck Madian at the rock of Oreb; and he will raise his staff
27 over the sea as he did against Egypt. | On that day, his burden
shall be taken from your shoulder, and his yoke shattered from
your neck.

Sennacherib's Invasion He has come up from the direction
28 of Rimmon, | he has reached Aiath, passed through Magron, at
29 Machmas his supplies are stored. | They cross the ravine: "We
will spend the night at Geba." Rama is in terror, Gabaa of Saul
30 has fled. | Cry and shriek, O daughter of Gallim! Hearken,
31 Laisa! Answer her, Anathoth! | Medemena is in flight, the in-
32 habitants of Gebim seek refuge. | Even today he will halt at
Nobe, he will shake his fist at the mount of daughter Sion, the
33 hill of Jerusalem! | Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, lops
off the boughs with terrible violence; the tall of stature are

10, 21: *A remnant will return:* see 7, 3 n.

10, 26: A reference to Jgs 7, 25.

10, 27b—11, 16: In this oracle, Isaia says that the Assyrians will devastate Juda but a remnant will survive.

10, 27b-32: Many agree that this is a characteristic example of how a prophet's prediction does not extend to details but to a general truth. In fact, Sennacherib's invasion did not enter Jerusalem from the northern route as described here but from the route of the Mediterranean seacoast.

10, 33-34: Juda is poetically described as either a forest cut down and burned, or Yahweh is described as a woodsman, cutting down the invaders.

34 felled, and the lofty ones brought low; | the forest thickets are
felled with the axe, and Lebanon in its splendor falls.

11

1 ***The Rule of Emmanuel*** But a shoot shall sprout from the
2 stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. | The
spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and
understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of
3 knowledge and of fear of the Lord, | and his delight shall be
the fear of the Lord. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by
4 hearsay shall he decide, | but he shall judge the poor with
justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike
the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of
5 his lips he shall slay the wicked. | Justice shall be the band
around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.
6 Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard
shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall
7 browse together, with a little child to guide them. | The cow
and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest;
8 the lion shall eat hay like the ox. | The baby shall play by the
cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. |
9 There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for
the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water
covers the sea.

11, 1-9: Scholars hesitate to say at which point in the royal Messianic strand the Messianic figure ("shoot," v. 1) becomes one definite person of the future who is to realize God's promises—in distinction to the Messianic figure representing the Davidic dynasty of God's promises as in 2 Sm 7, 8-16; Is 7, 8-16; 9, 5-6, and the royal psalms. Some claim that this text is the point at which Isaia is directly and literally speaking of the future Messia, Christ. Others claim that in this text, as in previous ones (7, 14; 9, 6), Isaia still speaks of an ideal Davidic king carrying the hopes of the Davidic dynasty. (There are other opinions.)

11, 1: *Stump of Jesse:* the father of David was Jesse.

11, 2-3: *The spirit of the Lord:* Isaia is not speaking of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, but of the common Old Testament expression for God's power bestowing the gifts on the Messianic figure. (See Jgs 3, 7-11 n for an example of how this power made "judges.") The gifts are six not seven, since the last two are in reality one, "the fear of the Lord." The Septuagint (Greek Bible) and the Latin Vulgate read "piety" in place of the first "fear of the Lord," thus giving rise to the "seven gifts of the Holy Spirit," a terminology stemming from the Fathers of the Church.

11, 4: *With the rod of his mouth . . . with the breath of his lips:* two synonyms for His word.

11, 6-9: Isaia symbolically expresses the joys of the Messianic age, especially peace, through an idyllic description of Paradise.

10 ***Union of Ephraim and Juda*** On that day, the root of
Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek
11 out, for his dwelling shall be glorious. | On that day, the Lord
shall again take it in hand to reclaim the remnant of his people
that is left from Assyria and Egypt, Phathures, Ethiopia, and
12 Elam, Sennaar, Hamath, and the isles of the sea. | He shall raise
a signal to the nations and gather the outcasts of Israel; the
dispersed of Juda he shall assemble from the four corners of the
13 earth. | The envy of Ephraim shall pass away, and the rivalry
of Juda be removed; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Juda, and
14 Juda shall not be hostile to Ephraim; | but they shall swoop
down on the foothills of the Philistines to the west, together they
shall plunder the Cedemites; Edom and Moab shall be their
15 possessions, and the Ammonites their subjects. | The Lord shall
dry up the tongue of the Sea of Egypt, and wave his hand over
the Euphrates in his fierce anger and shatter it into seven stream-
16 lets, so that it can be crossed in sandals. | There shall be a high-
way for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria, as
there was for Israel when he came up from the land of Egypt.

12

1 ***Song of Thanksgiving*** On that day, you will say: I give
you thanks, O Lord; though you have been angry with me, your
2 anger has abated, and you have consoled me. | God indeed is
my savior; I am confident and unafraid. My strength and my
courage is the Lord, and he has been my savior.
3 With joy you will draw water at the fountain of salvation, |
4 and say on that day: Give thanks to the Lord, acclaim his name;
among the nations make known his deeds, proclaim how exalted
5 is his name. | Sing praise to the Lord for his glorious achieve-
6 ment; let this be known throughout all the earth. | Shout with
exultation, O city of Sion, for great in your midst is the Holy
One of Israel!

11, 10: The prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles.

11, 11: *Phathures . . . sea:* some of the countries where the chosen people lived in exile, e.g., southern Egypt ("Phathures").

11, 12: *The outcasts of Israel:* the Samaritans whom the Assyrians deported.

11, 14: *Cedemites:* Arabian Desert tribes.

12, 1-6: This is Isaia's psalm-like thanksgiving song, with Exodus overtones, for the promised Emmanuel ("God is my savior").

12, 3: Through the analogy of water, precious in dry eastern countries, Isaia describes the abundance of the Messianic age.

III. ORACLES AGAINST THE PAGAN NATIONS

13

1 ***Babylon*** An oracle concerning Babylon; a vision of Isaia,
son of Amos.
2 Upon the bare mountains set up a signal; cry out to them,
wave for them to enter the gates of the volunteers.
3 I have commanded my dedicated soldiers, I have summoned
my warriors, eager and bold to carry out my anger.
4 Listen! the rumble on the mountains: that of an immense
throng! Listen! the noise of kingdoms, nations assembled! The
5 Lord of hosts is mustering an army for battle. | They come
from a far-off country, and from the end of the heavens, the
Lord and the instruments of his wrath, to destroy all the land.
6 Howl, for the day of the Lord is near; as destruction from the
7 Almighty it comes. | Therefore all hands fall helpless, every
8 man's heart melts | in terror. Pangs and sorrows take hold of
them, like a woman in labor they writhe; they look aghast at
9 each other, their faces aflame. | Lo, the day of the Lord comes
cruel, with wrath and burning anger; to lay waste the land and
destroy the sinners within it!
10 The stars and constellations of the heavens send forth no
light; the sun is dark when it rises, and the light of the moon
11 does not shine. | Thus I will punish the world for its evil and
the wicked for their guilt. I will put an end to the pride of the
12 arrogant, the insolence of tyrants I will humble. | I will make
mortals more rare than pure gold, men, than gold of Ophir. |
13 For this I will make the heavens tremble and the earth shall be
shaken from its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts on the
day of his burning anger.
14 Like a hunted gazelle, or a flock that no one gathers, every
15 man shall turn to his kindred and flee to his own land. | Every-

13—23: See the basic meaning of the oracles against the pagan nations in Am 1, 2 n. These eleven chapters comprise oracles from which much is learned about the social conditions of the pagan countries, and often the distinctive characteristics of each people are highlighted.

13, 1—14, 23: According to the majority of commentators, ancient and modern, this oracle is on the destruction of Babylon.

13, 1-16: God summons His angels to assemble the Medes (1-5) against panic-stricken Babylon (6-16).

13, 2: *To them:* a reference to the Medes of v. 17. *The gates of the volunteers:* this may be the name of one of Babylon's city gates.

13, 3: *Soldiers . . . warriors:* Medes.

13, 12: *Ophir:* most probably located on the western coast of Arabia opposite Somaliland.

one who is caught shall be run through; to a man, they shall fall
by the sword. The bows of the young men shall be smashed, |
16 their infants dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall
be plundered and their wives ravished.
17 I am stirring up against them the Medes, who think nothing
18 of silver and take no delight in gold. | The fruit of the womb
they shall not spare, nor shall they have eyes of pity for chil-
19 dren. | And Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory and pride
of the Chaldeans, shall be overthrown by God like Sodom and
20 like Gomorra. | She shall never be inhabited, nor dwelt in, from
age to age; the Arab shall not pitch his tent there, nor shepherds
21 couch their flocks. | But wildcats shall rest there and owls shall
fill the houses; there ostriches shall dwell, and satyrs shall dance.
22 | Desert beasts shall howl in her castles, and jackals in her
luxurious palaces. Her time is near at hand and her days shall
not be prolonged.

14

1 ***The King of Babylon*** When the Lord has pity on Jacob
and again chooses Israel and settles them on their own soil, the
aliens will join them and be counted with the house of Jacob. |
2 The house of Israel will take them and bring them along to its
place, and possess them as male and female slaves on the Lord's
soil, making captives of its captors and ruling over its oppres-
3 sors. On the day the Lord relieves you of sorrow and unrest and
4 the hard service in which you have been enslaved, you will take
up this taunt-song against the king of Babylon: How the op-
5 pressor has reached his end! how the turmoil is stilled! | The
Lord has broken the rod of the wicked, the staff of the tyrants
6 that struck the peoples in wrath relentless blows; that beat
7 down the nations in anger, with oppression unchecked. | The
8 whole earth rests peacefully, song breaks forth; | the very
cypresses rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon: "Now
that you are laid to rest, there will be none to cut us down."
9 The nether world below is all astir preparing for your coming;
it awakens the shades to greet you, all the leaders of the earth;

13, 21: *Satyrs:* goat-like demons symbolic of immorality as indicated in Lv 17, 7.

14, 1-2: These verses express two common hopes in prophetic literature, namely, the reunion of the northern and southern kingdoms and the conversion of the Gentiles.

14, 4-21: This dramatic "taunt-song" is one of the high points of Old Testament poetry. It can take its place in world literature with no apology. It is perhaps best understood as Babylon personified rather than a definite historical Babylonian king.

10 it has the kings of all nations rise from their thrones. | All of
them speak out and say to you, "You too have become weak
11 like us, you are the same as we. | Down to the nether world
your pomp is brought, the music of your harps. The couch
beneath you is the maggot, your covering, the worm."
12 How have you fallen from the heavens, O morning star, son
of the dawn! How are you cut down to the ground, you who
13 mowed down the nations! | You said in your heart: "I will
scale the heavens; above the stars of God I will set up my
throne; I will take my seat on the Mount of Assembly, in the
14 recesses of the North. | I will ascend above the tops of the
clouds; I will be like the Most High!"
15 Yet down to the nether world you go to the recesses of the
16 pit! | When they see you they will stare, pondering over you:
"Is this the man who made the earth tremble, and kingdoms
17 quake? | Who made the world a desert, razed its cities, and
18 gave his captives no release? | All the kings of the nations lie in
19 glory, each in his own tomb; | but you are cast forth without
burial, loathsome and corrupt, clothed as those slain at sword-
point, a trampled corpse. Going down to the pavement of the
20 pit, | you will never be one with them in the grave. For you
have ruined your land, you have slain your people."
He will not be named forever, that scion of an evil race! |
21 Make ready to slaughter his sons for the guilt of their fathers;
lest they rise and possess the earth, and fill the breadth of the
world with tyrants.
22 I will rise up against them, says the Lord of hosts, and cut
off from Babylon name and remnant, progeny and offspring,
23 says the Lord. | I will make it a haunt of hoot owls and a
marshland; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, says
the Lord of hosts.

24 ***Assyria*** The Lord of hosts has sworn: As I have resolved,
25 so shall it be; as I have proposed, so shall it stand: | I will
break the Assyrian in my land and trample him on my moun-
8,21 tains; | he shall pass through it hard-pressed and hungry, and

14, 12-15: The inspired author's source may be a Chanaanite myth of the "morning star" ascending over all other stars only to be dashed down by the splendor of the victorious sun.

14, 12: *Morning star:* the Vulgate translated it "Lucifer," which the Fathers of the Church accommodated to Lucifer falling from heaven.

14, 13: *Mount of Assembly, in the recesses of the North:* the biblical Olympus of the Greeks.

14, 19-20: The ancient underlying idea is the utter horror of unburied human corpses. The other kings had a decent burial but not "Babylon."

in his hunger he shall become enraged, and curse his king and
his gods. He shall look upward, but there shall be strict dark-
8,22 ness without any dawn; he shall gaze at the earth, but there
shall be distress and darkness, with the light blacked out by its
14,25 clouds. | Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his
26 burden from their shoulder. | This is the plan proposed for the
whole earth, and this the hand outstretched over all nations. |
27 The Lord of hosts has planned; who can thwart him? His hand
is stretched out; who can turn it back?

28 ***Philistia*** In the year that king Achaz died, there came this
29 oracle: | Rejoice not, O Philistia, not a man of you, that the
rod which smote you is broken; for out of the serpent's root
30 shall come an adder, its fruit shall be a flying saraph. | In my
pastures the poor shall eat, and the needy lie down in safety;
but I will kill your root with famine that shall slay even your
31 remnant. | Howl, O gate; cry out, O city! Philistia, all of you
melts away! For there comes a smoke from the north, without
a straggler in the ranks.
32 What will one answer the messengers of the nation? "The
Lord has established Sion, and in her the afflicted of his people
find refuge."

15

1 ***Moab*** Oracle on Moab: Laid waste in a night, Ar of Moab
is destroyed; laid waste in a night, Kir of Moab is destroyed. |
2 Up goes daughter Dibon to the high places to weep; over Nebo
and over Madaba Moab wails. Every head is shaved, every beard
3 sheared off. | In the streets they wear sackcloth, lamenting and
weeping; on rooftops and in the squares everyone wails. |
4 Hesebon and Eleale cry out, they are heard as far as Jahas.
At this the loins of Moab tremble, his soul quivers within him; |
5 the heart of Moab cries out, his fugitives reach Segor [Eglath-
Shelishiyah]. The ascent of Luhith they climb weeping; on the
way to Horonaim they utter rending cries.
6 The waters of Nemrim have become a waste; the grass is
7 withered, new growth is gone, nothing is green. | So now what-
ever they have acquired or stored away they carry across the

14, 28: King Achaz died about 716 B.C.
14, 29-32: The general sense is: Juda will rise from her fall but not Philistia.
14, 29: *The rod:* the identity of the Assyrian monarch here depends on the exact date of Achaz' death in v. 28.
15—16: Depending on the interpretation of "in times past" (16, 13), scholars give different dates for this prediction of Moab's fall.

8 Gorge of the Poplars, | for the cry has gone round the land of
Moab; as far as Eglaim the wailing, and to Beer-elim, the wail. |
9 The waters of Dimon were filled with blood, but I will bring
still more upon Dimon: lions for those who are fleeing from
Moab and for those who remain in the land!

16

1 Send them forth, hugging the earth like reptiles, from Sela
2 across the desert, to the mount of daughter Sion. | Like flushed
birds, like startled nestlings, are the daughters of Moab at the
3 fords of the Arnon. | Offer counsel, take their part: at high
noon let your shadow be like the night, to hide the outcasts, to
4 conceal the fugitives. | Let the outcasts of Moab live with you,
be their shelter from the destroyer. When the struggle is ended,
the ruin complete, and they have done with trampling the land, |
5 a throne shall be set up in mercy, and on it shall sit in fidelity [in
David's tent] a judge upholding right and prompt to do justice.
6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, how very proud he is,
with his haughty, arrogant insolence that his empty words do
not match.
7 Therefore Moab wails for Moab, everywhere they wail; for
the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth they sigh, stricken with grief. |
8 The terraced slopes of Hesebon languish the vines of Sabama,
whose clusters overpowered the lords of nations, while they
reached as far as Jazer and scattered over the desert, and whose
9 branches spread forth and extended over the sea. | Therefore
I weep with Jazer for the vines of Sabama; I water you with
tears, Hesebon and Eleale; for on your summer fruits and
10 harvests the battle cry has fallen. | From the orchards are taken
away joy and gladness, in the vineyards there is no singing, no
shout of joy; in the wine presses no one treads grapes, the vin-
11 tage shout is stilled. | Therefore for Moab my breast moans like
12 a lyre, and my heart for Kir-hareseth. | Though Moab shall be
seen tiring himself on the high place, entering his sanctuary to
pray, it shall avail him nothing.
13 This is the word the Lord spoke against Moab in times past. |
14 But now the Lord has spoken: In three years, like those of a
hireling, the glory of Moab shall be degraded despite all its great
multitude; there shall be a remnant, very small and weak.

17

1 ***Damascus*** Oracle on Damascus: Lo, Damascus shall cease

17, 1-14: Perhaps before 735 Isaia predicted the fall of Damascus to the Assyrians which occurred in 732 B.C.

to be a city and become a ruin; | her cities shall be forever
abandoned, given over to flocks to lie in undisturbed. | The
fortress shall be lost to Ephraim and the kingdom to Damascus;
the remnant of Aram shall have the same glory as the Israelites,
says the Lord of hosts.
On that day the glory of Jacob shall fade, and his full body
grow thin, like the reaper's mere armful of stalks when he
gathers the standing grain; or as when one gleans the ears in the
valley of Raphaim. | Only a scattering of grapes shall be left!
As when an olive tree has been beaten, two or three olives remain
at the very top, four or five on its fruitful branches, says the
Lord, the God of Israel.
On that day man shall look to his maker, his eyes turned
toward the Holy One of Israel. | He shall not look to the altars,
his handiwork, nor shall he regard what his fingers have made:
the sacred poles or the incense stands. | On that day his strong
cities shall be like those abandoned by the Hevites and Amor-
rites when faced with the children of Israel: they shall be laid
waste. | For you have forgotten God, your savior, and remem-
bered not the Rock, your strength. Therefore, though you plant
your pagan plants and set out your foreign vine slips, | though
you make them grow the day you plant them and make your
sprouts blossom on the next morning, the harvest shall disap-
pear on the day of the grievous blow, the incurable blight.
Ah! the roaring of many peoples that roar like the roar of the
seas! The surging of nations that surge like the surging of
mighty waves! | But God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee
far away; windswept, like chaff on the mountains, like tumble-
weed in a storm. | In the evening, they spread terror, before
morning, they are gone! Such is the portion of those who despoil
us, the lot of those who plunder us.

18

Ethiopia Ah, land of buzzing insects, beyond the rivers of
Ethiopia, | sending ambassadors by sea, in papyrus boats on the
waters! Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and bronzed, to a
people dreaded near and far, a nation strong and conquering,
whose land is washed by rivers. | All you who inhabit the world,
who dwell on earth, when the signal is raised on the mountain,
look! When the trumpet blows, listen!

18, 1-7: Generally scholars date this Isaian oracle shortly before Sennacherib's invasion of 701. On the occasion of an embassy from Egypt, then ruled by an Ethiopic dynasty, Juda was invited to join an alliance against Assyria. Isaia objects to the alliance.

4 For thus says the Lord to me: I will quietly look on from
where I dwell, like the glowing heat of sunshine, like a cloud of
5 dew at harvest time. | Before the vintage, when the flowering is
ended, and the blooms are succeeded by ripening grapes, then
comes the cutting of branches with pruning hooks and the dis-
6 carding of the lopped-off shoots. | They shall all be left to the
mountain birds of prey, and to the beasts in the land; the birds
of prey shall summer on them and on them all the beasts of the
earth shall winter.
7 Then will gifts be brought to the Lord of hosts from a people
tall and bronzed, from a people dreaded near and far, a nation
strong and conquering, whose land is washed by rivers,—to
Mount Sion where dwells the name of the Lord of hosts.

19

1 *Egypt* Oracle on Egypt: See, the Lord is riding on a swift
cloud on his way to Egypt; the idols of Egypt tremble before
2 him, the hearts of the Egyptians melt within them. | I will rouse
Egypt against Egypt: brother will war against brother, neighbor
against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. |
3 The courage of the Egyptians ebbs away within them, and I will
bring to nought their counsel; they shall consult idols and
4 charmers, ghosts and spirits. | I will deliver Egypt into the
power of a cruel master, a harsh king who shall rule over them,
5 says the Lord, the Lord of hosts. | The waters shall be drained
6 from the sea, the river shall shrivel and dry up; | its streams
shall become foul, and the canals of Egypt shall dwindle and
7 dry up. Reeds and rushes shall wither away, | and bulrushes
on the bank of the Nile; all the sown land along the Nile shall
8 dry up and blow away, and be no more. | The fishermen shall
mourn and lament, all who cast hook in the Nile; those who
9 spread their nets in the water shall pine away. | The linen-
workers shall be disappointed, the combers and weavers shall
10 turn pale; | the spinners shall be crushed, all the hired laborers
shall be despondent.
11 Utter fools are the princes of Soan! the wisest of Pharao's
advisers give stupid counsel. How can you say to Pharao, "I am
12 a disciple of wise men, of ancient kings?" | Where then are
your wise men? Let them tell you and make known what the

19, 1-25: Many experts date this poem some time after the end of the exile in 538 B.C.

19, 1-15: The miseries of Egypt, poetically described, will end in her conquest by a foreign "cruel master" (v. 4) who is historically difficult to identify.

19, 11: *Soan:* a key Egyptian city in northern Egypt.

13 Lord of hosts has planned against Egypt. | The princes of Soan
have become fools, the princes of Memphis have been deceived.
14 The chiefs of her tribes have led Egypt astray. | The Lord has
prepared among them a spirit of dizziness, and they have made
Egypt stagger in whatever she does, as a drunkard staggers in
15 his vomit. | Egypt shall have no work to do for head or tail,
palm branch or reed.
16 On that day the Egyptians shall be like women, trembling
with fear, because of the Lord of hosts shaking his fist at them.
1 And the land of Juda shall be a terror to the Egyptians. Every
time they remember Juda, they shall stand in dread because of
the plan which the Lord of hosts has in mind for them.
18 On that day there shall be five cities in the land of Egypt
speaking the language of Chanaan and swearing by the Lord of
hosts; one shall be called "City of the Sun."
19 On that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the land of
20 Egypt, and a sacred pillar to the Lord near the boundary. It shall
be a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt,
when they cry out to the Lord against their oppressors, and he
21 sends them a savior to defend and deliver them. The Lord shall
make himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the
Lord in that day; they shall offer sacrifices and oblations, and
22 fulfill the vows they make to the Lord. Although the Lord shall
smite Egypt severely, he shall heal them; they shall turn to the
Lord and he shall be won over and heal them.
23 On that day there shall be a highway from Egypt to Assyria;
the Assyrians shall enter Egypt, and the Egyptians enter Assyria,
and Egypt shall serve Assyria.
24 On that day Israel shall be a third party with Egypt and
25 Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the land, | when the Lord of
hosts blesses it: "Blessed be my people Egypt, and the work of
my hands Assyria, and my inheritance, Israel."

20

1 ***Captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia*** In the year the general
sent by Sargon, king of Assyria, fought against Azotus and
2 captured it, | the Lord gave a warning through Isaia, the son
of Amos: Go and take off the sackcloth from your waist, and

19, 13: *Memphis:* a one-time capital city of Egypt.
19, 15: See 9, 13 n.
19, 16-25: A description in prose of Egypt's future conversion.
19, 18: An enigmatic verse.
20, 1-6: The symbolic act signified the folly of Juda's dependence on Egypt and Ethiopia, who in turn were conquered by Assyria. See v. 3 n. Isaia often spoke of this folly.

remove the sandals from your feet. This he did, walking naked
3 and barefoot. | Then the Lord said: Just as my servant Isaia has
gone naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and portent
4 against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead
away captives from Egypt, and exiles from Ethiopia, young and
old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered [the shame
5 of Egypt]. They shall be dismayed and ashamed because of
6 Ethiopia, their hope, and because of Egypt, their boast. The
inhabitants of this coastland shall say on that day, "Look at our
hope! We have fled here for help and deliverance from the king
of Assyria; where can we flee now?"

21

1 ***Fall of Babylon*** Oracle on the wastelands by the sea: Like
whirlwinds sweeping in waves through the Negeb, there comes
2 from the desert, from the fearful land, | a cruel sight, revealed
to me: the traitor betrays, the despoiler spoils. "Go up, Elam;
3 besiege, O Media; I will put an end to all groaning!" | There-
fore my loins are filled with anguish, pangs have seized me
like those of a woman in labor; I am too bewildered to hear,
4 too dismayed to look. | My mind reels, shuddering assails me;
my yearning for twilight has turned into dread.
5 They set the table, spread out the rugs; they eat, they drink.
Rise up, O princes, oil the shield!
6 For thus says my Lord to me: Go, station a watchman, let
7 him tell what he sees. | If he sees a chariot, a pair of horses,
someone riding an ass, someone riding a camel, then let him pay
8 heed, very close heed. | Then the watchman cried, "On the
watchtower, O my Lord, I stand constantly by day; and I stay at
9 my post through all the watches of the night. | Here he comes
now: a single chariot, a pair of horses; he calls out and says,

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20, 3: Isaia's action of living like a slave was a sign of Egypt and Ethiopia who were to be enslaved by Assyria.

21, 1-10: This oracle is on the fall of Babylon in 538 B.C. and is not generally considered a prophecy by Isaia but by a sixth century prophet.

21, 1: *The wastelands by the sea:* lower Babylonia.

21, 2: *Elam . . . Media:* Cyrus' allies, the Elamites and Medes, who captured Babylon in 538 B.C. *I will put an end to all groaning:* of those oppressed by Babylon.

21, 5: The soldiers of Babylon are depicted at a banquet when the city was captured. Commentators often warn that, although Herodotus and Xenophon said that the Babylonian nobles were feasting on the eve of Babylon's fall, the sacred writers' descriptions of this scene (e.g., Dn 5) are not necessarily reporting the historical event in question but they may be using the feast as a literary symbol of a secure people suddenly overthrown by the enemy. *Oil the shield:* to make blows slide off the shields.

'Fallen, fallen is Babylon, and all the images of her gods are
smashed to the ground.' "
10 O my people who have been threshed, beaten on my thresh-
ing floor! What I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of
Israel, I have announced to you.

11 *Edom* Oracle on Edom: They call to me from Seir, "Watch-
man, how much longer the night? Watchman, how much longer
12 the night?" | The watchman replies, "Morning has come, and
again night. If you will ask, ask; come back again."

13 *Arabia* Oracle on Arabia: In the thicket in the nomad coun-
14 try spend the night, O caravans of Dedanites. | Meet the thirsty,
bring them water; you who dwell in the land of Thema, greet
15 the fugitives with bread. | They flee from the sword, from the
whetted sword; from the taut bow, from the fury of battle.
16 For thus says the Lord to me: In another year, like those of
17 a hireling, all the glory of Cedar shall come to an end. Few of
Cedar's stalwart archers shall remain, for the Lord, the God of
Israel, has spoken.

22

1 *Jerusalem* Oracle of the Valley of Vision: What is the
matter with you now, that you have gone up, all of you, to the
2 housetops, | O city full of noise and chaos, O wanton town!
Your slain are not slain with the sword, nor killed in battle. |
3 All your leaders fled away together, fled afar off; all who were
in you were captured together, captured without the use of a
4 bow. | At this I say: Turn away from me, let me weep bitterly;
do not try to comfort me for the ruin of the daughter of my
5 people. | It is a day of panic, rout and confusion, from the Lord,
the God of hosts, in the Valley of Vision. Walls crash; they cry
6 for help to the mountains. | Elam takes up the quivers, Aram

21, 11-12: Scholars do not know the date or the historical circumstances of this oracle. Brief oracles are often difficult to date. *Seir:* Edom. The prophet hears the Edomites' quest "how much longer the night" of suffering. The prophet ("watchman") replies that they are to ask again later.

21, 13-17: This may date from Isaia about 716 on the occasion of one of Sargon's campaigns. The tribe of Cedar flees south toward the tribes of Dedan ("Dedanites") and Thema, but they flee in vain, for "in another year" (v. 16) the tribe of Cedar will be devastated.

22, 1-14: This oracle is generally dated about the time of Sennacherib's invasion of Juda in 701 B.C.

22, 1: *Valley of Vision:* an enigmatic phrase.

22, 6: Three Assyrian allies.

7 mounts the horses, and Kir uncovers the shields. | Your choice
valleys are filled with chariots, and horses are posted at the
8 gates, | and shelter over Juda is removed.
On that day you looked to the weapons in the House of the
9 Forest; | you saw that the breaches in the City of David were
10 many; you collected the water of the lower pool. You numbered
the houses of Jerusalem, tearing some down to strengthen the
11 wall; you made a reservoir between the two walls for the water
of the old pool. But you did not look to the city's Maker, nor did
you consider him who built it long ago.
12 On that day the Lord, the God of hosts, called on you to weep
13 and mourn, to shave your head and put on sackcloth. | But
look! you feast and celebrate, you slaughter oxen and butcher
sheep, you eat meat and drink wine: "Eat and drink, for
14 tomorrow we die!" | This reaches the ears of the Lord of hosts
—You shall not be pardoned this wickedness till you die, says
the Lord, the God of hosts.

15 ***Sobna and Eliacim*** Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts:
16 Up, go to that official, Sobna, master of the palace, | who has
hewn for himself a sepulcher on a height and carved his tomb
in the rock: "What are you doing here, and what people have
you here, that here you have hewn for yourself a tomb?" |
17 The Lord shall hurl you down headlong, mortal man! He shall
18 grip you firmly | and roll you up and toss you like a ball into an
open land to perish there, you and the chariots you glory in,
19 you disgrace to your master's house! | I will thrust you from
your office and pull you down from your station.
20 On that day I will summon my servant Eliacim, son of Helcia;
21 | I will clothe him with your robe, and gird him with your sash,
and give over to him your authority. He shall be a father to the
22 inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Juda. | I will
place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; when he
opens, no one shall shut, when he shuts, no one shall open. |
23 I will fix him like a peg in a sure spot, to be a place of honor
24 for his family; | on him shall hang all the glory of his family:

22, 8-11: Isaia reproaches the Jerusalemites for preparing a siege without asking God's help.

22, 8: *House of the Forest:* one of Solomon's buildings used as an armory (3 Kgs 7, 2).

22, 18: *An open land:* a foreign land.

22, 22: *Key:* authority to allow or refuse access to the king. The "master of the palace" (v. 15) wore the key hanging from his shoulder. See Mt 16, 19.

22, 24-25: The general meaning is a warning against nepotism. On

descendants and offspring, all the little dishes, from bowls to jugs.

25 On that day, says the Lord of hosts, the peg fixed in a sure spot shall give way, break off and fall, and the weight that hung on it shall be done away with; for the Lord has spoken.

23

1 ***Tyre and Sidon*** Oracle on Tyre: Wail, O ships of Tharsis, for your port is destroyed; from the land of the Chetthim the
2 news reaches them. | Silence! you who dwell on the coast, you
3 merchants of Sidon, whose messengers crossed the sea | over the deep waters. The grain of Sihor, the harvest of the Nile, was her
4 revenue, and she the merchant among nations. | Shame, O Sidon, fortress on the sea, for the sea has spoken: "I have not been in labor, nor given birth, nor raised young men, nor reared
5 virgins." | When it is heard in Egypt they shall be in anguish at
6 the news of Tyre. | Pass over to Tharsis, wailing, you who
7 dwell on the coast! | Is this your wanton city, whose origin is from of old, whose feet have taken her to dwell in distant lands?
8 | Who has planned such a thing against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are the
9 earth's honored men? | The Lord of hosts has planned it, to disgrace all pride of majesty, to degrade all the earth's honored
10 men. | Cross to your own land, O ship of Tharsis; the harbor is
11 no more. | His hand he stretches out over the sea, he shakes kingdoms; the Lord has ordered the destruction of Chanaan's
12 strongholds. | You shall exult no more, he says, you who are now oppressed, virgin daughter Sidon. Arise, pass over to the Chetthim, even there you shall find no rest.
13 [This people is the land of the Chaldeans, not Assyria.] She whom the impious founded, setting up towers for her, has had
14 her castles destroyed, and has been turned into a ruin. | Lament, O ships of Tharsis for your haven is destroyed.
15 On that day, Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years. With the days of another king, at the end of seventy years, it shall be
16 for Tyre as in the song about the harlot: | Take a harp, go

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Eliacim will depend the glory of his family ("little dishes from bowls to jugs").

23, 1-18: This may be from Isaia, but authors date this oracle from the time of the Assyrians in the eighth century to 332 B.C. when the island fortress fell to Alexander the Great.

23, 1-14: A poem on an invader who destroys Tyre and Sidon.

23, 15-18: A prose addition on the restoration of Tyre in seventy years and its conversion to Yahweh.

about the city, O forgotten harlot; pluck the strings skillfully,
sing many songs, that they may remember you.
17 At the end of the seventy years the Lord shall visit Tyre.
She shall return to her hire and deal with all the world's
18 kingdoms on the face of the earth. But her merchandise and
her hire shall be sacred to the Lord. It shall not be stored up or
laid away, but from her merchandise those who dwell before the
Lord shall eat their fill and clothe themselves in choice attire.

IV. APOCALYPSE OF ISAIA

24

1 ***Devastation of the World: A Remnant Saved*** Lo, the
Lord empties the land and lays it waste; he turns it upside down,
2 scattering its inhabitants: | layman and priest alike, servant and
master, the maid as her mistress, the buyer as the seller, the
3 lender as the borrower, the creditor as the debtor. | The earth
is utterly laid waste, utterly stripped, for the Lord has decreed
4 this thing. | The earth mourns and fades, the world languishes
5 and fades; both heaven and earth languish. | The earth is
polluted because of its inhabitants, who have transgressed laws,
6 violated statutes, broken the ancient covenant. | Therefore a
curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants pay for their guilt;
therefore they who dwell on earth turn pale, and few men are
7 left. | The wine mourns, the vine languishes, all the merry-
8 hearted groan. | Stilled are the cheerful timbrels, ended the
9 shouts of the jubilant, stilled is the cheerful harp. | They cannot
sing and drink wine; strong drink is bitter to those who partake
10 of it. | Broken down is the city of chaos, shut against entry,
11 every house. | In the streets they cry out for lack of wine; all
12 joy has disappeared and cheer has left the land. | In the city
nothing remains but ruin; its gates are battered and desolate. |

24—27: Scholars call these four chapters the "Apocalypse of Isaia." It is written by an unknown author, and dated between 535 to 333 B.C., i.e., some time during the Persian period when the Jews were striving to rebuild their nation after the exile. It is loosely called "Apocalypse" because of the veiled way in which God's enemies are indicated, and because it is an international scene of God's judgment on all the pagan nations. The fully developed literary form of apocalypse appears in the Book of Daniel. The historical era just beyond the author's day is painted poetically in the colors of the immorality of the prophet's own day. He is not speaking of the end of the world. Thus, this section is appropriate here because it follows the section where individual pagan nations were described (chs. 13—23).

24, 6: *A curse:* a probable allusion to punishment as the consequence of disobedience to God (Dt 27, 15ff).

13 Thus it is within the land, and among the peoples, as with an
olive tree after it is beaten, as with a gleaning when the vintage
14 is done. | These lift up their voice in acclaim; from the sea
15 they proclaim the majesty of the Lord: | "For this, in the
coastlands, give glory to the Lord! In the coastlands of the sea,
16 to the name of the Lord, the God of Israel!" | From the end
of the earth we hear songs: "Splendor to the Just One!" But I
said, "I am wasted, wasted away. Woe is me! The traitors
17 betray: with treachery have the traitors betrayed! | Terror, pit,
18 and trap are upon you, inhabitant of the earth; | he who flees
at the sound of terror will fall into the pit; he who climbs out of
the pit will be caught in the trap. For the windows on high will
19 be opened and the foundations of the earth will shake. | The
earth will burst asunder, the earth will be shaken apart, the
20 earth will be convulsed. | The earth will reel like a drunkard,
and it will sway like a hut; its rebellion will weigh it down,
until it falls, never to rise again."
21 On that day the Lord will punish the host of the heavens in
22 the heavens, and the kings of the earth on the earth. | They will
be gathered together like prisoners into a pit; they will be shut
up in a dungeon, and after many days they will be punished. |
23 Then the moon will blush and the sun grow pale, for the Lord
of hosts will reign on Mount Sion and in Jerusalem, glorious
in the sight of his elders.

25

1 O Lord, you are my God, I will extol you and praise your
name; for you have fulfilled your wonderful plans of old,
2 faithful and true. | For you have made the city a heap, the
fortified city a ruin; the castle of the insolent is a city no more,
3 nor ever to be rebuilt. | Therefore a strong people will honor
4 you, fierce nations will fear you. | For you are a refuge to the
poor, a refuge to the needy in distress; shelter from the rain,
5 shade from the heat. As with the cold rain, | as with the desert
6 heat, even so you quell the uproar of the wanton. | On this
mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast
of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice
7 wines. | On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all
8 peoples, the web that is woven over all nations; | he will destroy

24, 21: *The host of the heavens:* a frequent biblical expression for the stars.

24, 23: *His elders:* angels.

25, 1-8: The "Apocalypse" is sprinkled with hymns of supplication and thanksgiving.

25, 6: *On this mountain:* a frequent biblical symbol of Jerusalem.

death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all
faces; the reproach of his people he will remove from the whole
earth; for the Lord has spoken.
9 On that day it will be said: "Behold our God, to whom we
looked to save us! This is the Lord for whom we looked; let us
10 rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!" | For the hand of the
Lord will rest on this mountain, but Moab will be trodden down
11 as a straw is trodden down in the mire. | He will stretch forth
his hands in Moab as a swimmer extends his hands to swim;
he will bring low their pride as his hands sweep over them. |
12 The high-walled fortress he will raze, and strike it down level
with the earth, with the very dust.

26

1 ***The Divine Vindicator*** On that day they will sing this song
in the land of Juda: "A strong city have we; he sets up walls
2 and ramparts to protect us. | Open up the gates to let in a
3 nation that is just, one that keeps faith. | A nation of firm
purpose you keep in peace; in peace, for its trust in you."
4 Trust in the Lord forever! For the Lord is an eternal Rock. |
5 He humbles those in high places, and the lofty city he brings
down; he tumbles it to the ground, levels it with the dust. |
6 It is trampled underfoot by the needy, by the footsteps of the
7 poor. | The way of the just is smooth; the path of the just you
8 make level. | Yes, for your way and your judgments, O Lord,
we look to you; your name and your title are the desire of our
9 souls. | My soul yearns for you in the night, yes, my spirit
within me keeps vigil for you; when your judgment dawns upon
10 the earth, the world's inhabitants learn justice. | The wicked
man, spared, does not learn justice; in an upright land he acts
11 perversely, and sees not the majesty of the Lord. | O Lord,
your hand is uplifted, but they behold it not; let them be shamed
when they see your zeal for your people: let the fire prepared
12 for your enemies consume them. | O Lord, you mete out peace
to us, for it is you who have accomplished all we have done. |
13 O Lord, our God, other lords than you have ruled us; it is from
you only that we can call upon your name.
14 Dead they are, they have no life, shades that cannot rise;
for you have punished and destroyed them, and wiped out all
15 memory of them. | You have increased the nation, O Lord,
increased the nation to your own glory, and extended far all the

25, 10: *Moab:* more probably Moab is used as a symbol for an oracle against all the nations.
26, 4: *An eternal Rock:* a frequent biblical title for Yahweh.

16 borders of the land. | O Lord, oppressed by your punishment,
17 we cried out in anguish under your chastising. | As a woman
about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pains, so were
18 we in your presence, O Lord. | We conceived and writhed in
pain, giving birth to wind; salvation we have not achieved for
the earth, the inhabitants of the world cannot bring it forth. |
19 But your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise; awake and sing,
you who lie in the dust. For your dew is a dew of light, and the
land of shades gives birth.

20 ***Day of the Lord: Reward and Punishment*** Go, my
people, enter your chambers, and close your doors behind you;
hide yourselves for a brief moment, until the wrath is past. |
21 See, the Lord goes forth from his place, to punish the wickedness
of the earth's inhabitants; the earth will reveal the blood upon
her, and no longer conceal her slain.

27

1 On that day, the Lord will punish with his sword that is
cruel, great, and strong, Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan
the coiled serpent; and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.
2.3 On that day—the pleasant vineyard, sing about it! | I, the
Lord, am its keeper, I water it every moment; lest anyone harm
4 it, night and day I guard it. | I am not angry, but if I were to
find briers and thorns, in battle I should march against them;
8 I should burn them all. | Expunging and expelling, I should
strive against them, carrying them off with my cruel wind in
time of storm.
6 In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall sprout and
7 blossom, covering all the world with fruit. | Is he to be smitten
as his smiter was smitten? or slain as his slayer was slain? |
5 Or shall he cling to me for refuge? He must make peace with
9 me; peace shall he make with me! | This, then, shall be the
expiation of Jacob's guilt, this the whole fruit of the removal of
his sin: he shall pulverize all the stones of the altars like pieces
of chalk; no sacred poles or incense altars shall stand.
10 For the fortified city shall be desolate, an abandoned pasture,

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26, 19: Scholars still dispute whether this text is to be interpreted as a corporeal resurrection of the people of Israel from the dead or a symbolic resurrection in the sense of a national and political restoration of the nation. For other resurrection texts see Dn 12, 2-3 n; 2 Mc 7, 9 n.

27, 1: *Leviathan . . . dragon:* see Jb 7, 12 n on God's conquest of evil powers.

27, 2-4: This is reminiscent of the Vineyard Song in 5, 1-2.

27, 8: For explanation of rearrangement of verses: see Za 4, 4ff.

a forsaken wilderness, where calves shall browse and lie. Its
11 boughs shall be destroyed, | its branches shall wither and be
broken off, and women shall come to build a fire with them
This is not an understanding people; therefore their maker shall
not spare them, nor shall he who formed them have mercy on
them.
12 On that day, the Lord shall beat out the grain between the
Euphrates and the valley of Egypt, and you shall be gleaned
one by one, O sons of Israel.
13 On that day, a great trumpet shall blow, and the lost in the
land of Assyria and the outcasts in the land of Egypt shall come
and worship the Lord on the holy mountain, in Jerusalem.

V. THE LORD ALONE, ISRAEL'S AND JUDA'S SALVATION

28

1 ***The Fate of Samaria*** Woe to the majestic garland of the
drunkards of Ephraim, to the fading blooms of his glorious
beauty, on the head [of the fertile valley] of those who are
2 stupefied with wine. | Behold, the Lord has a strong one and a
mighty, who, like a downpour of hail, a destructive storm, like
a flood of water, great and overflowing, levels to the ground
3 with violence; | with feet that will trample the majestic garland
4 of the drunkards of Ephraim. | The fading blooms of his glori-
ous beauty on the head of the fertile valley will be like an early
fig before summer: when a man sees it, he picks and swallows
it at once.
5 On that day the Lord of hosts will be a glorious crown and a
6 brilliant diadem to the remnant of his people, | a spirit of
justice to him who sits in judgment, and strength to those who
turned back the battle at the gate.

27, 12: A poetic description of the reunion of the chosen people between her two ideal borders, "the Euphrates and the valley of Egypt."

27, 13: A common prophetic passage on the conversion of the Gentiles.

28—33: Most of this section is often considered to come from Isaia The main interest here is Juda. The historical background seems to be the time between the fall of Samaria, (722-21) and Sennacherib's invasion, (701) but closer to the latter.

28, 1-6: This Isaian oracle is generally dated some time before the fall of Samaria.

28, 1: *Majestic garland:* Samaria's poetic name connotes a frolic ornament of the "drunkards of Ephraim," the people of the northern kingdom.

28, 2: An allusion to the Assyrians who were to capture Samaria.

7 *Against Juda* But these also stagger from wine and stumble
from strong drink: priest and prophet stagger from strong
drink, overpowered by wine; led astray by strong drink, stagger-
8 ing in their visions, tottering when giving judgment. | Yes, all
the tables are covered with filthy vomit, with no place left
9 clean. | "To whom would he impart knowledge? To whom
would he convey the message? To those just weaned from milk,
10 those taken from the breast? | For he says, 'Command on com-
mand, command on command, rule on rule, rule on rule, here a
11 little, there a little!' " | Yes, with stammering lips and in a
12 strange language he will speak to this people | to whom he said:
This is the resting place, give rest to the weary; here is repose—
13 but they would not listen. | So for them the word of the Lord
shall be: "Command on command, command on command, rule
on rule, rule on rule, here a little, there a little!" So that when
they walk, they stumble backward, broken, ensnared, and
captured.

14 Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, you arrogant, who rule
15 this people in Jerusalem: | Because you say, "We have made a
covenant with death, and with the nether world we have made
a pact; when the overwhelming scourge passes, it will not reach
us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have
16 found a hiding place,"— | therefore, thus says the Lord God:
See, I am laying a stone in Sion, a stone that has been tested,
a precious cornerstone as a sure foundation; he who puts his
17 faith in it shall not be shaken. | I will make of right a measuring
line, of justice a level.—Hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
18 and waters shall flood the hiding place. | Your covenant with
death shall be canceled and your pact with the nether world
shall not stand. When the overwhelming scourge passes, you
19 shall be trampled down by it. | Whenever it passes, it shall take
you; morning after morning it shall pass, by day and by night;
20 terror alone shall convey the message. | For the bed shall be too
short to stretch out in, and the cover too narrow to wrap in. |
21 For the Lord shall rise up as on Mount Pharasim, bestir himself

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28, 9-10: These are the words of those who mock Isaia.

28, 13: Isaia has God put their mocking words (vv. 9-10) on the lips of pagan conquerors; thus the jest of the people turns into a threat.

28, 15: An allusion to a foreign political alliance by a Judean king (Achaz? Ezechia?) against Assyria.

28, 16: Isaia poetically speaks of trusting faith in God as a "cornerstone," a "foundation." This expression does not refer literally and directly to the future Messia even though Rom 9, 33; 10, 11; 1 Pt 2, 6 reread this text as referring to the Messia. See Ps 117, 22 n.

28, 18: For the same allusion see 28, 15 n.

28, 21: *Mount Pharasim . . . Gabaon:* places where David was

as in the valley of Gabaon, to carry out his work, his singular
22 work, to perform his deed, his strange deed. | Now, be arrogant
no more lest your bonds be tightened, for I have heard from the
Lord, the God of hosts, the destruction decreed for the whole
earth.
23 Give ear and hear my voice, pay attention and listen to what
24 I say: Is the plowman forever plowing, always loosening and
25 harrowing his land for planting? | When he has leveled the
surface, does he not scatter gith and sow cumin, put in wheat
26 and barley, with spelt as its border? | He has learned this rule,
27 instructed by his God. | Gith is not threshed with a sledge, nor
does a cartwheel roll over cumin. But gith is beaten out with a
28 staff, and cumin crushed for food with a rod. | No, he does
not thresh it unendingly, nor does he crush it with his noisy
29 cartwheels and horses. | This too comes from the Lord of hosts;
wonderful is his counsel and great his wisdom.

29

1 ***The Fall of Jerusalem*** Woe to Ariel, Ariel, the city where
David encamped! Add year to year, let the feasts come round. |
2 But I will bring distress upon Ariel, with mourning and grief.
3 You shall be to me like Ariel, | I will encamp like David
against you; I will encircle you with outposts and set up siege
4 works against you. | Prostrate you shall speak from the earth,
and from the base dust your words shall come. Your voice shall
be like a ghost's from the earth, and your words like chirping
5 from the dust. | The horde of your arrogant shall be like fine
dust, the horde of the tyrants like flying chaff. Then suddenly, in
6 an instant, | you shall be visited by the Lord of hosts, with
thunder, earthquake, and great noise, whirlwind, storm, and the
flame of consuming fire.
7 Then like a dream, a vision in the night, shall be the horde of
all the nations who war against Ariel with all the earthworks of
8 her besiegers. | As when a hungry man dreams he is eating and
awakens with an empty stomach, or when a thirsty man dreams

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victorious over the Philistines. God will execute a "strange deed." He will fight against His people.

28, 23-29: The general message of the obscure parable is that the people should act as intelligently as the farmer. Isaia seems to be objecting to the foreign alliance.

29, 1-8: This prophecy is commonly dated about 701 when Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem. God will punish Jerusalem ("Ariel") and Assyria.

29, 7-8: At the last moment God will save Jerusalem from the Assyrians.

he is drinking and awakens faint and dry, so shall the horde of all the nations be, who make war against Mount Sion.

9 ***Blindness and Perversity*** Be irresolute, stupefied; blind yourselves and stay blind! Be drunk, but not from wine, stagger,
10 but not from strong drink! | For the Lord has poured out on you a spirit of deep sleep. He has shut your eyes [the prophets] and covered your heads [the seers].
11 For you the revelation of all this has become like the words of a sealed scroll. When it is handed to one who can read, with the
12 request, "Read this," he replies, "I cannot; it is sealed." When it is handed to one who cannot read, with the request, "Read this," he replies, "I cannot read."
13 The Lord said: Since this people draws near with words only and honors me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from me, and their reverence for me has become routine
14 observance of the precepts of men, | therefore I will again deal with this people in surprising and wondrous fashion: the wisdom of its wise men shall perish and the understanding of its
15 prudent men be hid. | Woe to those who would hide their plans too deep for the Lord! Who work in the dark, saying, "Who
16 sees us, or who knows us?" | Your perversity is as though the potter were taken to be the clay: as though what is made should say of its maker, "He made me not!" Or the vessel should say of the potter, "He does not understand."

17 ***Redemption*** But a very little while, and Lebanon shall be changed into an orchard, and the orchard be regarded as a forest!
18 | On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book; and out
19 of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. | The lowly will ever find joy in the Lord, and the poor rejoice in the
20 Holy One of Israel. | For the tyrant will be no more and the arrogant will have gone; all who are alert to do evil will be cut
21 off, | those whose mere word condemns a man, who ensnare his defender at the gate, and leave the just man with an empty

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29, 9-24: It is disputed whether this section contains more than one oracle. To date it precisely is difficult.

29, 9-10: The people do not understand Isaia's warnings because they have blinded themselves through obstinacy. It is characteristically Semitic to attribute everything to God, even spiritual blindness. The Semites do not distinguish between causing and allowing. Rom 11, 8 quotes v. 10.

29, 13-14: God will punish them for their insincerity. See Mt 15, 8f.

29, 15-16: They cannot conceal their political plans from God.

29, 17-24: Eventually the people will return to God.

22 claim. | Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of the house of
Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: Now Jacob shall have nothing
23 to be ashamed of, nor shall his face grow pale. | When his
children see the work of my hands in his midst, they shall keep
my name holy; they shall reverence the Holy One of Jacob, and
24 be in awe of the God of Israel. | Those who err in spirit shall
acquire understanding, and those who find fault shall receive
instruction.

30

1 ***Futile Alliance with Egypt*** Woe to the rebellious chil-
dren, says the Lord, who carry out plans that are not mine, who
weave webs that are not inspired by me, adding sin upon sin. |
2 They go down to Egypt, but my counsel they do not seek. They
find their strength in Pharao's protection and take refuge in
3 Egypt's shadow; | Pharao's protection shall be your shame,
4 and refuge in Egypt's shadow your disgrace. | When their
5 princes are at Soan and their messengers reach Hanes, | all
shall be ashamed of a people that gain them nothing, neither
help nor benefit, but only shame and reproach.
6 [Oracle on the Beasts of the Negeb]
Through the distressed and troubled land of the lioness and
roaring lion, of the viper and flying saraph, they carry their
riches on the backs of asses and their treasures on the humps of
7 camels to a people good for nothing, | to Egypt whose help is
futile and vain. Therefore I call her "Rahab quelled."
8 Now come, write it on a tablet they can keep, inscribe it in a
9 record; that it may be in future days an eternal witness: | This
is a rebellious people, deceitful children, children who refuse to
10 obey the law of the Lord. | They say to the seers, "Have no
visions"; to the prophets, "Do not descry for us what is right;
11 speak flatteries to us, conjure up illusions. | Out of the way!
Out of our path! Let us hear no more of the Holy One of Israel."
12 Therefore, thus says the Holy One of Israel: Because you
reject this word, and put your trust in what is crooked and
13 devious, and depend on it, | this guilt of yours shall be like a
descending rift bulging out in a high wall whose crash comes

30, 1-7: Isaia's oracle against Juda's embassy to Egypt for a futile alliance against Assyria. King Ezechia sent this embassy after the Assyrian monarch Sargon II died in 705.

30, 4: *Soan . . . Hanes:* Egyptian cities in the Delta.

30, 7: *Rahab quelled:* Egypt is compared to a sea monster ("Rahab") who is silenced ("quelled") when Juda asks for aid.

30, 8-18: Isaia summarizes his misgivings about the alliance with Egypt.

14 suddenly, in an instant. | It crashes like a potter's jar smashed
beyond rescue, and among its fragments cannot be found a sherd
to scoop fire from the hearth or dip water from the cistern.
15 For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: By wait-
ing and by calm you shall be saved, in quiet and in trust your
16 strength lies. But this you did not wish. | "No," you said,
"upon horses we will flee."—Very well, flee! "Upon swift
steeds we will ride."—Not so swift as your pursuers. |
17 A thousand shall tremble at the threat of one; if five threaten
you, you shall flee, until you are left like a flagstaff on the
18 mountaintop, like a flag on the hill. | Yet the Lord is waiting
to show you favor, and he rises to pity you; for the Lord is a God
19 of justice: blessed are all who wait for him! | O people of Sion,
who dwell in Jerusalem, no more will you weep; he will be
gracious to you when you cry out, as soon as he hears he will
20 answer you. | The Lord will give you the bread you need and
the water for which you thirst. No longer will your Teacher
hide himself, but with your own eyes you shall see your Teacher,
21 | while from behind, a voice shall sound in your ears: "This is
the way; walk in it," when you would turn to the right or to the
22 left. | And you shall consider unclean your silver-plated idols
and your gold-covered images; you shall throw them away like
filthy rags to which you say, "Begone!"

23 *Sion's Future Prosperity* He will give rain for the seed
that you sow in the ground, and the wheat that the soil produces
will be rich and abundant. On that day your cattle will graze
24 in spacious meadows; | the oxen and the asses that till the
ground will eat silage tossed to them with shovel and pitchfork.
25 | Upon every high mountain and lofty hill there will be streams
of running water. On the day of the great slaughter, when the
26 towers fall, | the light of the moon will be like that of the sun
and the light of the sun will be seven times greater [like the
light of seven days]. On the day the Lord binds up the wounds
of his people, he will heal the bruises left by his blows.

27 *Divine Judgment on Assyria* See the name of the Lord

30, 15: *In trust:* of God, not Egypt.

30, 19-26: Scholars often consider this prose addition to be by a later hand that elaborated Isaia's preceding oracle by way of encouragement to the people.

30, 20: *Teacher:* Yahweh.

30, 27-33: Many agree that this is Isaia's oracle of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701.

30, 27: *The name of the Lord:* a characteristic circumlocution for the Lord.

coming from afar in burning wrath, with lowering clouds! His
lips are filled with fury, his tongue is like a consuming fire;
28 his breath, like a flood in a ravine that reaches suddenly to the
neck, will winnow the nations with a destructive winnowing
and with repeated winnowings will he battle against them
[and a bridle on the jaws of the peoples to send them astray].
30 The Lord will make his glorious voice heard, and let it be seen
how his arm descends in raging fury and flame of consuming
31 fire, in driving storm and hail. | When the Lord speaks, Assyria
32 will be shattered, as he strikes with the rod; | while at every
sweep of the rod which the Lord will bring down on him in
29 punishment, you will sing as on a night when a feast is observed
and be merry of heart, as one marching along with a flute
toward the mountain of the Lord, toward the Rock of Israel
33 accompanied by the timbrels and lyres. | For the pyre has long
been ready, prepared for the king; broad and deep it is piled
with dry grass and wood in abundance, and the breath of the
Lord, like a stream of sulphur, will set it afire.

31

1 ***Against the Egyptian Alliance*** Woe to those who go
down to Egypt for help, who depend upon horses; who put
their trust in chariots because of their number, and in horsemen
because of their combined power, but look not to the Holy One
2 of Israel nor seek the Lord! | Yet he too is wise and will bring
disaster; he will not turn from what he has threatened to do
He will rise up against the house of the wicked and against
3 those who help evildoers. | The Egyptians are men, not God
their horses are flesh, not spirit; when the Lord stretches forth
his hand, the helper shall stumble, the one helped shall fall, and
both of them shall perish together.
4 Thus says the Lord to me: As a lion or a lion cub growling
over its prey, with a band of shepherds assembled against it, is
neither frightened by their shouts nor disturbed by their noise
so shall the Lord of hosts come down to wage war upon the
5 mountain and hill of Sion. | Like hovering birds, so the Lord
of hosts shall shield Jerusalem, to protect and deliver, to spare
and rescue it.
6 Return, O children of Israel, to him whom you have utterly
7 deserted. On that day each one of you shall spurn his sinful
idols of silver and gold, which he made with his hands.

30, 30: Find v. 29 after v. 32.

31, 1-9: It is generally held that this oracle refers to the same situation as explained in 30, 1-7 n.

8 ***Downfall of Assyria*** Assyria shall fall by a sword not
wielded by man, no mortal sword shall devour him; he shall flee
before the sword, and his young men shall be impressed as
9 laborers. | He shall rush past his crag in panic, and his princes
shall flee in terror from his standard, says the Lord who has
a fire in Sion and a furnace in Jerusalem.

32

1 ***The Kingdom of Justice*** See, a king will reign justly and
2 princes will rule rightly. | Each of them will be a shelter from
the wind, a retreat from the rain. They will be like streams of
water in a dry country, like the shade of a great rock in a parched
3 land. | The eyes of those who see will not be closed; the ears
4 of those who hear will be attentive. | The flighty will become
wise and capable, and the stutterers will speak fluently and
5 clearly. | No more will the fool be called noble, nor the trickster
6 be considered honorable. | For the fool speaks foolishly, plan-
ning evil in his heart: how to do wickedness, to speak perversely
against the Lord, to let the hungry go empty and the thirsty be
7 without drink. | And the trickster uses wicked trickery, planning
crimes: how to ruin the poor with lies, and the needy when they
8 plead their case. | But the noble man plans noble things, and by
noble things he stands.

9 ***The Women of Jerusalem*** O complacent ladies, rise up
and hear my voice, overconfident women, give heed to my words.
10 | In a little more than a year you overconfident ones will be
11 shaken; the vintage will fail, there will be no harvest. | Tremble,
you who are complacent! Shudder, you who are overconfident!
12 Strip yourselves bare, with only a loincloth to cover you. | Beat
13 your breasts for the pleasant fields, the fruitful vine, | and the
soil of my people, overgrown with thorns and briers; for all the
14 joyful houses, the wanton city. | Yes, the castle will be forsaken,
19 the noisy city deserted; | down it comes, as trees come down in
the forest! The city will be utterly laid low. Hill and tower
will become wasteland forever for wild asses to frolic in, and

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31, 9: *Crag:* the king is a rallying point for soldiers in the field of battle.

32, 1-20: The date, unity, and Isaian authorship are disputed. The future ideal king and kingdom are considered Messianic by many, though they are pictured in weak colors.

32, 5-7: This is probably the most graphic biblical description of a fool's depravity. See Ps 38, 9 n.

32, 14: *Castle:* Jerusalem's citadel.

15 flocks to pasture, | until the spirit from on high is poured out o
us.
Then will the desert become an orchard and the orchard b
16 regarded as a forest. | Right will dwell in the desert and justic
17 abide in the orchard. | Justice will bring about peace; right wil
18 produce calm and security. | My people will live in peacefu
20 country, in secure dwellings and quiet resting places. | Happ
are you who sow beside every stream, and let the ox and the as
go freely!

33

1 ***Overthrow of Assyria*** Woe, O destroyer never destroyed
O traitor never betrayed! When you finish destroying, you wil
be destroyed; when wearied with betraying, you will be betrayed
2 | O Lord, have pity on us, for you we wait. Be our strengt
3 every morning, our salvation in time of trouble! | At the roarin
sound, peoples flee; when you rise in your majesty, nations ar
4 scattered. | Men gather spoil as caterpillars are gathered up
5 they rush upon it like the onrush of locusts. | The Lord i
exalted, enthroned on high; he fills Sion with right and justice
6 | That which makes her seasons lasting, the riches that save he
are wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is her treasure
7 See, the men of Ariel cry out in the streets, the messengers o
8 Salem weep bitterly. | The highways are desolate, traveler
have quit the paths, covenants are broken, witnesses are spurned
9 yet no man gives it a thought. | The country languishes i
mourning, Lebanon withers with shame; Saron is like the steppe
Basan and Carmel are stripped bare.
10 Now will I rise up, says the Lord, now will I be exalted, nov
11 be lifted up. | You conceive dry grass, bring forth stubble; m
12 spirit shall consume you like fire. | The peoples shall be as in
limekiln, like brushwood cut down for burning in the fire.
13 Hear, you who are far off, what I have done; you who are near
14 acknowledge my might. | On Sion sinners are in dread, trem
bling grips the impious: "Who of us can live with the consum
15 ing fire? who of us can live with the everlasting flames?" | H
who practices virtue and speaks honestly, who spurns what i
gained by oppression, brushing his hands free of contact with
bribe, stopping his ears lest he hear of bloodshed, closing hi
16 eyes lest he look on evil— | He shall dwell on the heights, hi
stronghold shall be the rocky fastness, his food and drink i
steady supply.

33, 1-24: This is often interpreted as an oracle after the exile.
33, 7: *Ariel . . . Salem:* different names for Jerusalem.

17 ***Restoration of Sion*** Your eyes will see a king in his splen-
18 dor, they will look upon a vast land. | Your mind will dwell
on the terror: "Where is he who counted, where is he who
19 weighed? Where is he who counted the towers?" | To the
people of alien tongue you will look no more, the people of
obscure speech, stammering in a language not understood. |
20 Look to Sion, the city of our festivals; let your eyes see Jeru-
salem as a quiet abode, a tent not to be struck, whose pegs will
never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes severed.

Indeed the Lord will be there with us, majestic; yes, the Lord
our judge, the Lord our lawgiver, the Lord our king, he it is who
21 will save us. | In a place of rivers and wide streams on which
22 no boat is rowed, where no majestic ship passes, | the rigging
hangs slack; it cannot hold the mast in place, nor keep the sail
spread out. Then the blind will divide great spoils and the lame
23 will carry off the loot. | No one who dwells there will say, "I
am sick"; the people who live there will be forgiven their guilt.

VI. THE LORD, SION'S AVENGER

34

1 ***Judgment upon Edom*** Come near, O nations, and hear;
be attentive, O peoples! Let the earth and what fills it listen, the
2 world and all it produces. | The Lord is angry with all the
nations and is wrathful against all their host; he has doomed
3 them and given them over to slaughter. | Their slain shall be
cast out, their corpses shall send up a stench; the mountains
4 shall run with their blood, | and all the hills shall rot; the
heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll, and all their host shall
wither away, as the leaf wilts on the vine, or as the fig withers
on the tree.

When my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens, lo, it shall
come down in judgment upon Edom, a people I have doomed. |
6 The Lord has a sword filled with blood, greasy with fat, with
the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of rams' kidneys; for
the Lord has a sacrifice in Bosra, a great slaughter in the land of

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33, 22: Find v. 21 after this verse.

33, 23: In those ideal days the blind and lame will suffice to ward off the enemy.

34–35: These two chapters are ordinarily interpreted as a literary unit on the punishment of the enemy (34) and the restoration of the chosen People (35). Most scholars date this section after Isaia's time and during the exile, but they dispute about a more specific date.

34, 6: *Edom:* many believe that Edom here is a symbol of God's enemies as Moab. See 25, 10 n.

7 Edom. | Wild oxen shall be struck down with fatlings, and
bullocks with bulls; their land shall be soaked with blood, and
8 their earth greasy with fat. | For the Lord has a day of venge-
9 ance, a year of requital by Sion's defender. | Edom's streams
shall be changed into pitch and her earth into sulphur, and her
10 land shall become burning pitch; | night and day it shall not be
quenched, its smoke shall rise forever. From generation to
generation she shall lie waste, never again shall anyone pass
11 through her. | But the desert owl and hoot owl shall possess
her, the screech owl and raven shall dwell in her. The Lord will
measure her with line and plummet to be an empty waste for
satyrs to dwell in.
12 Her nobles shall be no more, nor shall kings be proclaimed
13 there; all her princes are gone. | Her castles shall be overgrown
with thorns, her fortresses with thistles and briers. She shall
14 become an abode for jackals and a haunt for ostriches. | Wild-
cats shall meet with desert beasts, satyrs shall call to one
another; there shall the lilith repose, and find for herself a place
15 to rest. | There the hoot owl shall nest and lay eggs, hatch them
out and gather them in her shadow; there shall the kites
assemble, none shall be missing its mate.
16 Look in the book of the Lord and read: No one of these shall
be lacking, for the mouth of the Lord has ordered it, and his
17 spirit shall gather them there. | It is he who casts the lot for
them, and with his hand he marks off their shares of her; they
shall possess her forever, and dwell there from generation to
generation.

35

1 ***Israel's Deliverance*** The desert and the parched land will
2 exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. | They will bloom with
abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song. The glory of
Lebanon will be given to them, the splendor of Carmel and
Saron; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our
3 God. | Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees
4 that are weak, | say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be
strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication:
5 with divine recompense he comes to save you. | Then will the
eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared.

34, 11: *Satyrs:* see 13, 21 n.
34, 14: *Lilith:* a desert female demon, according to popular ideas.
34, 16: *Book of the Lord:* the list of God's creatures.
35, 4-6: These are not considered Messianic, but God's action is a poetic device of the joy of the newly returned exiles.

6 then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the dumb
will sing.
Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe.
7 | The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground,
springs of water; the abode where jackals lurk will be a marsh
8 for the reed and papyrus. | A highway will be there, called the
holy way; no one unclean may pass over it, nor fools go
9 astray on it. | No lion will be there, nor beast of prey go up to
be met upon it. It is for those with a journey to make, and on it
10 the redeemed will walk. | Those whom the Lord has ransomed
will return and enter Sion singing, crowned with everlasting
joy; they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning
will flee.

VII. HISTORICAL APPENDIX

36
1 ***Invasion of Sennacherib*** In the fourteenth year of king
Ezechia, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, went on an expedition
2 against all the fortified cities of Juda and captured them. | From
Lachis the king of Assyria sent his commander with a great
army to king Ezechia in Jerusalem. When he stopped at the
conduit of the upper pool, on the highway of the fuller's field,
3 | there came out to him the master of the place, Eliacim, son
of Helcia, and Sobna the scribe, and the herald Joahe, son of
4 Asaph. The commander said to them, "Tell King Ezechia: Thus
5 says the great king, the king of Assyria, 'On what do you base
this confidence of yours? Do you think mere words substi-
tute for strategy and might in war? On whom, then, do you
6 rely, that you rebel against me? This Egypt, the staff on which
you rely, is in fact a broken reed which pierces the hand of
anyone who leans on it. That is what Pharao, king of Egypt,
7 is to all who rely on him. But if you say to me: "We rely on the
Lord, our God," is not he the one whose high places and altars
Ezechia removed, commanding Juda and Jerusalem to worship
before this altar?'
8 "Now, make a wager with my lord the king of Assyria: 'I
will give you two thousand horses, if you can put riders on
9 them.' How then can you repulse even one of the least servants
of my lord? And yet you rely on Egypt for chariots and horse-

36—39: Except for 38, 9-20, these four chapters on Sennacherib's invasion and siege of Jerusalem find their parallel account in 4 Kgs 18, 13—20, 19. Both biblical accounts accord well with Sennacherib's cuneiform inscriptions.

10 men! 'Was it without the Lord's will that I have come up to
destroy this land? The Lord said to me, "Go up and destroy
that land!" ' "
11 Then Eliacim and Sobna and Joahe said to the commander:
"Please speak to your servants in Aramaic; we understand it.
Do not speak to us in Judean within earshot of the people who
are on the wall."
12 But the commander replied, "Was it to you and your master
that my lord sent me to speak these words? Was it not rather
to the men sitting on the wall, who, with you, will have to eat
13 their own excrement and drink their own urine?" Then the
commander stepped forward and cried out in a loud voice in
Judean, "Listen to the words of the great king, the king of
14 Assyria. | Thus says the king: 'Do not let Ezechia deceive you,
15 since he cannot deliver you. Let not Ezechia induce you to rely
on the Lord, saying, "The Lord will surely save us; this city will
16 not be handed over to the king of Assyria." ' Do not listen to
Ezechia, for the king of Assyria says: 'Make peace with me and
surrender! Then each of you will eat of his own vine and of
17 his own fig tree, and drink the water of his own cistern, | until
I come to take you to a land like your own, a land of grain and
18 wine, of bread and vineyards. Do not let Ezechia seduce you by
saying, "The Lord will save us." Has any of the gods of the
nations ever rescued his land from the hand of the king of
19 Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where
are the gods of Sepharvaim? Where are the gods of Samaria?
20 Have they saved Samaria from my hand? Which of all the gods
of these lands ever rescued his land from my hand? Will the
21 Lord then save Jerusalem from my hand?' " But they remained
silent and did not answer him one word, for the king had
ordered them not to answer him.
22 Then the master of the palace, Eliacim, son of Helcia, Sobna
the scribe, and the herald Joahe, son of Asaph, came to Ezechia
with their garments torn, and reported to him what the com-
mander had said.

37

1 When king Ezechia heard this, he tore his garments, wrapped
himself in sackcloth, and went into the temple of the Lord.
2 He sent Eliacim, the master of the palace, and Sobna the scribe,
and the elders of the priests, wrapped in sackcloth, to tell the
3 prophet Isaia, son of Amos: "Thus says Ezechia: 'This is a day

36, 19: *Hamath:* a city in Syria. Also "Emath" as in 4 Kgs 18, 34 and other places in 4 Kgs.

of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace. Children are at the point
4 of birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. Perhaps
the Lord, your God, will hear the words of the commander,
whom his master, the king of Assyria, sent to taunt the living
God, and will rebuke him for the words which the Lord, your
God, has heard. Send up a prayer for the remnant that is here.' "
5 When the servants of king Ezechia had come to Isaia,
6 | he said to them: "Tell this to your master: 'Thus says the
Lord: Do not be frightened by the words you have heard, with
which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed
7 me. I am about to put in him such a spirit that, when he hears
a certain report, he will return to his own land, and there I will
cause him to fall by the sword.' "
8 When the commander returned to Lachis and heard that the
king of Assyria had left there, he found him besieging Lobna.
9 The king of Assyria heard a report that Tharaca, king of
Ethiopia, had come out to fight against him. Again he sent
10 envoys to Ezechia with this message: "Thus shall you say to
Ezechia, king of Juda: 'Do not let your God on whom you rely
deceive you by saying that Jerusalem will not be handed over to
11 the king of Assyria. You yourself have heard what the kings of
Assyria have done to all the countries: They doomed them!
12 Will you, then, be saved? Did the gods of the nations whom my
fathers destroyed save them? Gozan, Haran, Reseph, and the
13 Edenites in Thalassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of
Arphad, or a king of the cities of Sepharvaim, Ana or Ava?' "
14 Ezechia took the letter from the hand of the messengers and
read it; then he went up to the temple of the Lord, and spread-
15.16 ing it out before him, | he prayed to the Lord: "O Lord of
hosts, God of Israel, enthroned upon the cherubim! You alone
are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made the
17 heavens and the earth. | Incline your ear, O Lord, and listen!
Open your eyes, O Lord, and see! Hear all the words of the
18 letter that Sennacherib sent to taunt the living God. Truly, O
Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and
19 their lands, | and cast their gods into the fire; they destroyed
them because they were not gods but the work of human hands,
20 wood and stone. Therefore, O Lord, our God, save us from his
hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O
Lord, alone are God."

21 ***Punishment of Sennacherib*** Then Isaia, son of Amos, sent
this message to Ezechia: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel:
In answer to your prayer for help against Sennacherib, king of
22 Assyria, | this is the word the Lord has spoken concerning him:

She despises you, laughs you to scorn, the virgin daughter
Sion; behind you she wags her head, daughter Jerusalem. |
23 Whom have you insulted and blasphemed, against whom have
you raised your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Against
24 the Holy One of Israel! | Through your servants you have
insulted the Lord: You said, "With my many chariots I
climbed the mountain heights, the recesses of Lebanon; I cut
down its lofty cedars, its choice cypresses; I reached the remotest
25 heights, its forest park. | I dug wells and drank water in
foreign lands; I dried up with the soles of my feet all the rivers
of Egypt.
26 Have you not heard? Long ago I prepared it, from days of
old I planned it, now I have brought it to pass: that you should
27 reduce fortified cities into heaps of ruins, | while their inhabi-
tants, shorn of power, are dismayed and ashamed, becoming
like the plants of the field, like the green growth, like the
28 scorched grass on the housetops. | I am aware whether you
stand or sit; I know whether you come or go, and also your
29 rage against me. | Because of your rage against me and your
fury which has reached my ears, I will put my hook in your
nose and my bit in your mouth, and make you return the way
you came.
30 This shall be a sign for you: this year you shall eat the after-
growth, next year, what grows of itself; but in the third year,
31 sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit! | The re-
maining survivors of the house of Juda shall again strike root
32 below and bear fruit above. | For out of Jerusalem shall come a
remnant, and from Mount Sion, survivors. The zeal of the
Lord of hosts shall do this.
33 Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the king of As-
syria: He shall not reach this city, nor shoot an arrow at it, nor
34 come before it with a shield, nor cast up siegeworks against it.
He shall return by the same way he came, without entering the
35 city, says the Lord. I will shield and save this city for my own
sake, and for the sake of my servant David.
36 The angel of the Lord went forth and struck down one hun-
dred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. Early the
37 next morning, there they were, all the corpses of the dead. So
Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, broke camp and went back
home to Nineve.
38 When he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nesroch,
his sons Adramelech and Sarasar slew him with the sword and
fled into the land of Ararat. His son Asarhaddon reigned in his
stead.

37, 30: *For you:* Ezechia. *Sign:* its meaning is uncertain here.

38

1 ***Sickness and Recovery of Ezechia*** In those days, when
Ezechia was mortally ill, the prophet Isaia, son of Amos, came
and said to him: "Thus says the Lord: Put your house in order,
2 for you are about to die; you shall not recover." Then Ezechia
3 turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord: "O Lord,
remember how faithfully and wholeheartedly I conducted my-
self in your presence, doing what was pleasing to you!" And
Ezechia wept bitterly.
4-5 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaia: "Go, tell Ezechia:
Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David: I have heard
your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you: in three days
you shall go up to the Lord's temple; I will add fifteen years to
6 your life. I will rescue you and this city from the hand of the
king of Assyria; I will be a shield to this city."
21 Isaia then ordered a poultice of figs to be taken and applied
22 to the boil, that he might recover. Then Ezechia asked, "What
is the sign that I shall go up to the temple of the Lord?"
7 [Isaia answered:] "This will be the sign for you from the
8 Lord that he will do what he has promised: See, I will make the
shadow cast by the sun on the stairway to the terrace of Achaz
go back the ten steps it has advanced." So the sun came back
the ten steps it had advanced.

9 ***Ezechia's Hymn of Thanksgiving*** The song of Ezechia,
king of Juda, after he had been sick and had recovered from his
illness:
10 Once I said, "In the noontime of life I must depart! To the
gates of the nether world I shall be consigned for the rest of my
11 years." | I said, "I shall see the Lord no more in the land of the
living. No longer shall I behold my fellow men among those
12 who dwell in the world." | My dwelling, like a shepherd's
tent, is struck down and borne away from me; you have folded
up my life, like a weaver who severs the last thread. Day and
13 night you give me over to torment; | I cry out until the dawn.
Like a lion he breaks all my bones; [day and night you give me
14 over to torment]. Like a swallow I utter shrill cries; I moan like

38, 8: *Stairway to the terrace of Achaz:* this interpretation is based on a reading of the Hebrew text revised according to the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaia. Many translate the phrase as "steps of Achaz" and understand this as referring to a sundial. See, for example, 4 Kgs 20, 11 n.
38, 9-20: For a similar hymn, see Jon 2, 3-10 n.
38, 11: *See the Lord:* in the temple service.
38, 12: An abrupt death is exemplified through these two metaphors.

a dove. My eyes grow weak, gazing heavenward: O Lord, I ar
in straits; be my surety!
15 What am I to say or tell him? He has done it! I shall go o
16 through all my years despite the bitterness of my soul. | Thos
live whom the Lord protects; yours . . . the life of my spiri
17 You have given me health and life; | thus is my bitterne
transformed into peace. You have preserved my life from th
pit of destruction, when you cast behind your back all my sin
18 | For it is not the nether world that gives you thanks, nc
death that praises you; neither do those who go down into th
19 pit await your kindness. | The living, the living give yo
thanks, as I do today. Fathers declare to their sons, O Goc
20 your faithfulness. | The Lord is our savior; we shall sing t
stringed instruments in the house of the Lord all the days of ou
life.

39

1 ***Embassy from Merodach-baladan*** At that time whe
Merodach-baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon, hear
that Ezechia had recovered from his sickness, he sent letters an
2 gifts to him. Ezechia was pleased at this, and therefore showe
the messengers his treasury, the silver and gold, the spices an
fine oil, his whole armory, and everything that was in his stor
rooms; there was nothing in his house or in his whole realr
that he did not show them.
3 Then Isaia the prophet came to king Ezechia and asked hin
"What did these men say to you? Where did they come from?
Ezechia answered, "They came to me from a distant land, fror
4 Babylon." "What did they see in your house?" he asked. Ezechi
replied, "They saw everything in my house; there is nothing i
my storerooms that I did not show them."
5 Then Isaia said to Ezechia, "Hear the word of the Lord o
6 hosts: Behold, the days shall come when all that is in you
house, and everything that your fathers have stored up unt
this day, shall be carried off to Babylon; nothing shall be lef
7 says the Lord. Some of your own bodily descendants shall b
taken and made servants in the palace of the king of Babylon.
8 | Ezechia replied to Isaia, "The word of the Lord which yo

38, 15: *What am I to say or tell him?:* a rhetorical question fc
something like: I'm lost for words of gratitude. *He has done it:* he ha
cured me.
38, 16: The Hebrew text is not complete.
38, 17: *You cast behind your back all my sins:* you forgive me m
ins.

have spoken is favorable." For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my lifetime."

B. THE BOOK OF CONSOLATION

I. THE LORD'S GLORY IN ISRAEL'S LIBERATION

40

1 ***Promise of Salvation*** Comfort, give comfort to my peo-
2 ple, says your God. | Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated; indeed, she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.

3 A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!
4 Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! | Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country,

40—66: Most modern scholars consider 40—66 not to be written by the eighth century Isaia but by an unknown prophet of the exile period. Hence, the name "Second Isaia" (or Deutero Isaia). It is referred to as 2 Is. Literary reasons for this opinion are the different style and vocabulary. An historical reason is that the background of 2 Is is sixth century Babylon just before the end of the exile in 538 B.C. Finally, from the nature of prophecy known in the rest of the Old Testament, it seems highly improbable that Isaia should be speaking so intimately to a sixth century Babylonian audience and still remain intelligible to the audience of his own eighth century. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls of 1947, one complete and one fragmentary Hebrew manuscript of Isaia have been found. These manuscripts differ from the current Hebrew text in spelling rather than in content. The fragmentary manuscript contains parts of chapters 38—66. See 56—66 n on Third Isaia.

Second Isaia develops the doctrine of monotheism by stressing God as "the Creator" and master of nature. God's power is illustrated through the fulfillment of the prophecies of past ages.

40—55: These chapters are known as the Book of Consolation from the opening theme of consolation in 40, 1. The poetic prophet offers oracles of consolation, for the end of the exile is fast approaching. Cyrus, the Persian king, is gaining victory after victory, and the end of the Babylonian empire is dawning.

40, 1: Hear Handel's "Messiah" ("comfort ye," on vv. 1-5) as an eloquent commentary upon the comfort which the exiles must have experienced from the words of the exilic poet-theologian.

40, 3-5: The poet dramatically pretends to hear the voice of God's herald. The background image is that of an oriental emperor who sends out a notice for "roads" to be built in preparation for his visit. God is graphically described as leading His people in a new Exodus from Babylon to Palestine. Mt 3, 3 and parallel Gospel texts accommodate these words to John the Baptist, the herald of Christ.

5 a broad valley. | Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed
and all mankind shall see it together; for the mouth of the
Lord has spoken.
6 A voice says, "Cry out!" I answer, "What shall I cry out?"
"All mankind is grass, and all their glory like the flower of the
7 field. | The grass withers, the flower wilts, when the breath of
the Lord blows upon it. [So then, the people is the grass.] |
8 Though the grass withers and the flower wilts, the word of our
God stands forever."
9 Go up onto a high mountain, Sion, herald of glad tidings;
cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good
news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Juda: Here is
10 your God! | Here comes with power the Lord God, who rules
by his strong arm; here is his reward with him, his recompense
11 before him. | Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he
gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the
ewes with care.

12 ***Power of the Creator to Save His People*** Who has
cupped in his hand the waters of the sea, and marked off the
heavens with a span? Who has held in a measure the dust of
the earth, weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a
13 balance? | Who has directed the spirit of the Lord, or has in-
14 structed him as his counselor? | Whom did he consult to gain
knowledge? Who taught him the path of judgment, or showed
him the way of understanding?
15 Behold the nations count as a drop of the bucket, as dust on
16 the scales; the coastlands weigh no more than powder. | Leba-
non would not suffice for fuel, nor its animals be enough for
17 holocausts. | Before him all the nations are as nought, as noth-
ing and void he accounts them.
18 To whom can you liken God? With what equal can you
19 confront him? | An idol, cast by a craftsman, which the smith
20 plates with gold and fits with silver chains? | Mulberry wood
the choice portion which a skilled craftsman picks out for him-
self, choosing timber that will not rot, to set up an idol that will
not be unsteady?
41,6 One man helps another, one says to the other, "Keep on!"

40, 6: The poet has another voice speak.
40, 7-8: For the same idea, see Za 1, 5-6 n.
40, 12: *Span:* of the hand.
40, 16: *Lebanon:* her cedars.
40, 18-20: See 44, 9-20 n.
41, 6-7: A mockery of idolatry. On verse displacement, see Za 4 4ff n.

7 The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, the one who beats
with the hammer, him who strikes on the anvil; he says the
soldering is good, and he fastens it with nails to steady it.
40,21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Was it not fore-
told you from the beginning? Have you not understood? Since
22 the earth was founded | he sits enthroned above the vault of the
earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; he stretches
out the heavens like a veil, spreads them out like a tent to dwell
23 in. | He brings princes to nought and makes the rulers of the
24 earth as nothing. | Scarcely are they planted or sown, scarcely
is their stem rooted in the earth, when he breathes upon them
and they wither, and the stormwind carries them away like
straw.
25 To whom can you liken me as an equal? says the Holy One.
26 | Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these: he
leads out their army and numbers them, calling them all by
name. By his great might and the strength of his power not one
27 of them is missing! | Why, O Jacob, do you say, and declare, O
Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is dis-
28 regarded by my God"? | Do you not know or have you not
heard? The Lord is the eternal God, creator of the ends of the
earth. He does not faint nor grow weary, and his knowledge is
29 beyond scrutiny. | He gives strength to the fainting; for the
30 weak he makes vigor abound. | Though young men faint and
31 grow weary, and youths stagger and fall, | they that hope in
the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles'
wings; they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow
faint.

41

1 ***The Liberator of Israel*** Keep silence before me, O coast-
lands; you peoples, wait for my words! Let them draw near and
speak; let us come together for judgment.
2 Who has stirred up from the East the champion of justice,
and summoned him to be his attendant? To him he delivers the
nations and subdues the kings; with his sword he reduces them
3 to dust, with his bow, to driven straw. | He pursues them, pass-
4 ing on without loss, by a path his feet do not even tread. | Who
has performed these deeds? He who has called forth the genera-
tions since the beginning. I, the Lord, am the first, and with the
5 last I will also be. | The coastlands see, and fear; the ends of

41, 1-4: Most experts understand that the poet is describing the vocation and victory of Cyrus as God's instrument. Cyrus is God's "champion" and "attendant" (v. 2).

the earth tremble: these things are near, they come to pass.
8 But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, off-
9 spring of Abraham my friend— | you whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and summoned from its far-off places, you whom I have called my servant, whom I have chosen and
10 will not cast off— | fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice.
11 Yes, all shall be put to shame and disgrace who vent their anger against you; those shall perish and come to nought who
12 offer resistance. | You shall seek out, but shall not find, those who strive against you; they shall be as nothing at all who do battle with you.
13 For I am the Lord, your God, who grasp your right hand; it
14 is I who say to you, "Fear not, I will help you." | Fear not, O worm Jacob, O maggot Israel; I will help you, says the Lord;
15 your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. | I will make of you a threshing sledge, sharp, new, and double-edged, to thresh the
16 mountains and crush them, to make the hills like chaff. | When you winnow them, the wind shall carry them off and the storm shall scatter them. But you shall rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel.
17 The afflicted and the needy seek water in vain, their tongues are parched with thirst. I, the Lord, will answer them; I, the
18 God of Israel, will not forsake them. | I will open up rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the broad valleys; I will turn the desert into a marshland, and the dry ground into springs of
19 water. | I will plant in the desert the cedar, acacia, myrtle, and olive; I will set in the wasteland the cypress, together with the
20 plane tree and the pine, | that all may see and know, observe and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.
21 Present your case, says the Lord; bring forward your reasons,
22 says the King of Jacob. | Let them come near and foretell to us what it is that shall happen! What are the things of long ago? Tell us, that we may reflect on them and know their outcome; or
23 declare to us the things to come! | Foretell the things that shall come afterward, that we may know that you are gods! Do some-
24 thing, good or evil, that will put us in awe and in fear. | Why, you are nothing and your work is nought! To choose you is an abomination.

41, 14: *Your redeemer:* the Hebrew "goel" here means that God will free His people from exile and obtain revenge for their suffering.
41, 21-24: A court trial of idolaters.

25 I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes; from the
east I summon him by name; he shall trample the rulers down
26 like mortar, as the potter treads the clay. | Who announced this
from the beginning, that we might know; beforehand, that we
might say it is true? Not one of you foretold it, not one spoke;
27 no one heard you say, | "The first news for Sion: they are com-
ing now," or, "For Jerusalem I will pick out a bearer of the glad
tidings."
28 When I look, there is not one, no one of them to give counsel,
29 to make an answer when I question them. | Ah, all of them are
nothing, their works are nought, their idols are empty wind!

42

1 ***The Servant of the Lord*** Here is my servant whom I up-
hold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I
have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, |
2 not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the
3 street. | A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering
4 wick he shall not quench, | until he establishes justice on the
earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching.
5 Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and
stretched them out, who spreads out the earth with its crops,
who gives breath to its people and spirit to those who walk on
6 it: | I, the Lord, have called you for the victory of justice, I have

41, 25: *One . . . he:* Cyrus.

42, 1-4: This is the first of four servant songs found in Second Isaia. The three others are: 49, 1-7; 50, 4-11; 52, 13—53, 12. One of the most difficult problems of the Old Testament is: who is the suffering servant? There is no majority opinion among scholars, Catholic and non-Catholic. Is he the author himself? The Israelite nation? An historical person (Jeremia? Zorobabel?); the ideal type of prophet or worshiper? Does the servant speak of the future Messia directly or does he speak of Him in ideal terms? The problem is further complicated by whether or not the servant is the same in all four songs. Secondary, but also unsolved, problems are the date, authorship, and unity of these songs. In all this dispute the most important fact is that in the New Testament Christ clearly identified Himself as the Suffering Servant of Isaia. See table: Prophetic and Apocalyptic Messianism, p. 1314-15.

42, 1: *Upon whom I have put my spirit:* God will empower him to execute his task of bringing forth "justice." The Hebrew word is variously interpreted as knowledge of the true God or religion, etc.

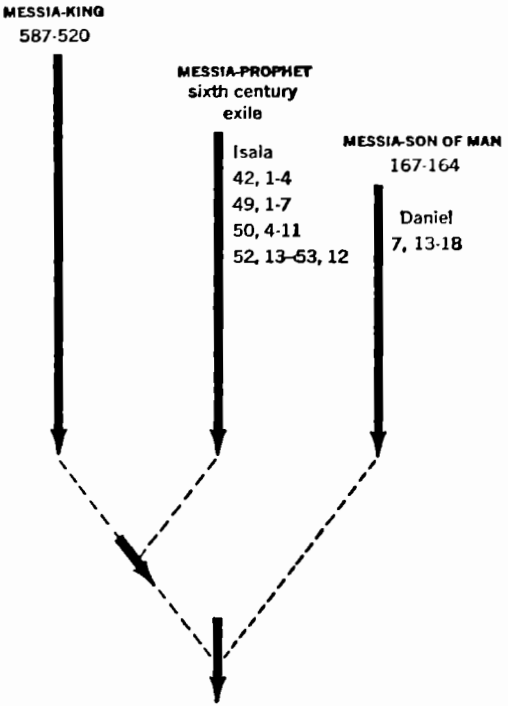
42, 2-3: The Servant's method of imparting the knowledge of God will be different. It is not clear with whom the comparison is made.

42, 4: *Coastlands:* the Gentile lands in the Mediterranean Basin.

42, 5-9: It is disputed whether these verses are part of the song of vv. 1-4. God now explains why He chose His people, namely, to teach knowledge of Himself ("justice," v. 6) to the Gentiles, whose conversion is figuratively described in v. 7.

PROPHETIC AND APOCALYPTIC MESSIANISM

The Origin of the Messia as a Prophet
and as the "Son of Man"



PROPHETIC MESSIANISM

The sixth century exiles believed that the line of prophets would continue as promised (see Dt 18, 15-20 n). Little did they suspect that in the following century they would look upon Malachia as their last prophet till the Messianic era. It is within this mental framework that we read the four Servant Songs. Regardless of their date, even if they were written about 350 B.C., they are found in the present Hebrew Bible as songs addressed to the Babylonian exiles. Furthermore, even though the Servant is not clearly identified (see Is 42, 1-4 n), he is described as having a prophetic mission of preaching that culminates in an expiatory death for the sins of others.

Scholars hold that these four Servant Songs constitute the prophetic strand of Messianism.

An unsolved problem is: did the Old Testament writers think the Messia would be both king and suffering prophet? Or were these two streams of Messianism thought of as completely separate? It is too difficult to arrive at a definite answer. The latter alternative seems preferable for the reason that the idea of deep humiliating sufferings marring the glorious ideal portrait of their Messia-king was repugnant to general Jewish thinking.

APOCALYPTIC MESSIANISM

After the return from the Babylonian exile the hope of the Jews for political independence dwindled. The nation's humiliation was renewed as the people passed from Persian to Greek domination. The physical sufferings of the small agricultural Judean nation, with its meager economic resources, were on the increase. Because of these physical sufferings the people began to look forward to a divine intervention, a final and universal intervention from which Juda would emerge as victor. Within this climate of thought grew the response of the author of the Book of Daniel: the "son of man" will soon come. The common opinion understands "son of man" here as the new Messianic community, the Jewish people. See Dn 7, 16-18 n.

Scholars refer to Dn 7 as the principal part of the apocalyptic strand of Messianism. By "apocalyptic" is here meant the "son of man" who will come at the "end of time." This "end of time" came to be what we now call the Messianic time of Christ. Other writings besides the Book of Daniel, biblical as well as extra-biblical, contributed to this apocalyptic Messianic stream.

The problem of scholars is: if the "son of man" was—after Daniel's time and before the time of Christ—no longer interpreted as the Jewish people but as an extraordinary individual, did the inspired writers think the future Messia would be the three in one: son of man, king, and prophet? It is yet unsolved, but the tendency is to believe that most Jews kept the three strands separate in their thinking. We had to wait for New Testament times, for Christ's emerging as the converging point of all three Messianic strands, in a manner far exceeding the most optimistic ideas and ideals of the inspired Old Testament writers.

grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a co
7 nant of the people, a light for the nations, | to open the eyes
the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from t
8 dungeon, those who live in darkness. | I am the Lord, this is
9 name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. | S
the earlier things have come to pass, new ones I now foreto
before they spring into being, I announce them to you.

10 ***The Salvation of Israel despite Its Sins*** Sing to
Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth: let
sea and what fills it resound, the coastlands, and those w
11 dwell in them. | Let the steppe and its cities cry out, the
lages where Cedar dwells; let the inhabitants of Sela exult, a
12 shout from the top of the mountains. | Let them give glory
the Lord, and utter his praise in the coastlands.
13 The Lord goes forth like a hero, like a warrior he stirs up
ardor; he shouts out his battle cry, against his enemies he sho
14 his might: | I have looked away, and kept silence, I have s
nothing, holding myself in; but now, I cry out as a woman
15 labor, gasping and panting. | I will lay waste mountains a
hills, all their herbage I will dry up; I will turn the rivers ir
16 marshes, and the marshes I will dry up. | I will lead the bli
on their journey; by paths unknown I will guide them. I w
turn darkness into light before them, and make crooked w
straight. These things I do for them, and I will not forsake the
17 They shall be turned back in utter shame who trust in idol
18 who say to molten images, "You are our gods." | You who
19 deaf, listen, you who are blind, look and see! | Who is blind b
20 my servant, or deaf like the messenger I send? | You see ma
things without taking note; your ears are open, but with
hearing.
21 Though it pleased the Lord in his justice to make his l
22 great and glorious, this is a people despoiled and plundered,
of them trapped in holes, hidden away in prisons. They
taken as booty, with no one to rescue them, as spoil, with
one to demand their return.
23 Who of you gives ear to this? Who listens and pays heed
24 the time to come? Who was it that gave Jacob to be plunder
Israel to the despoilers? Was it not the Lord, against whom

42, 10-25: This "new song" is like a psalm of praise and than
giving to God for a new display of His gifts. The Gentiles are invi
to join the Chosen People in this song. See Ps 32, 3 n.

42, 11: *Cedar:* an Arabian tribe. *Sela:* the capital of Edom. Th
two places may be symbolically used as the lands of the East in c
trast to the land of the West ("coastlands," v. 10).

have sinned? In his ways they refused to walk, his law they
25 disobeyed. | So he poured out wrath upon them, his anger, and
the fury of battle; it blazed round about them, yet they did not
realize, it burned them, but they took it not to heart.

43

1 ***Promises of Redemption and Restoration*** But now, thus
says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and formed you, O
Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by
name: you are mine. | When you pass through the water, I will
be with you; in the rivers you shall not drown. When you walk
through fire, you shall not be burned; the flames shall not con-
3 sume you. | For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of
Israel, your savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and
4 Saba in return for you. | Because you are precious in my eyes
and glorious, and because I love you, I give men in return for
5 you and peoples in exchange for your life. | Fear not, for I am
with you; from the east I will bring back your descendants, from
6 the west I will gather you. | I will say to the north: Give them
up! and to the south: Hold not back! Bring back my sons from
7 afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: | everyone
who is named as mine, whom I created for my glory, whom I
11 formed and made. | Lead out the people who are blind though
they have eyes, who are deaf though they have ears.
9 Let all the nations gather together, let the peoples assemble!
Who among them could have revealed this, or foretold to us the
earlier things? Let them produce witnesses to prove themselves
10 right, that one may hear and say, "It is true!" | You are my
witnesses, says the Lord, my servants whom I have chosen to
know and believe in me and understand that it is I. Before me
no god was formed, and after me there shall be none.
11.12 It is I, I the Lord; there is no savior but me. | It is I who
foretold, I who saved; I made it known, not any strange god
among you; you are my witnesses, says the Lord. I am God, |
13 yes, from eternity I am He; there is none who can deliver from
my hand: who can countermand what I do?
14 Thus says the Lord, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
For your sakes I send to Babylon; I will lower all the bars, and
15 the Chaldeans shall cry out in lamentation. | I am the Lord,
16 your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King. | Thus says

43, 3-4: God is poetically described as giving the Persians these countries in exchange for letting His people return from exile.
43, 16-17: The new Exodus from Babylon is described in terms of the old Exodus of Egypt.

the Lord, who opens a way in the sea and a path in the migh
17 waters, | who leads out chariots and horsemen, a powerf
army, till they lie prostrate together, never to rise, snuffed o
and quenched like a wick.
18 Remember not the events of the past, the things of long a
19 consider not; see, I am doing something new! Now it sprin
forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in t
20 wasteland, rivers. | Wild beasts honor me, jackals and ostrich
for I put water in the desert and rivers in the wasteland for r
21 chosen people to drink, | the people whom I formed for myse
that they might announce my praise.
22 Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob, for you grew wea
23 of me, O Israel. | You did not bring me sheep for your hol
causts, nor honor me with your sacrifices. I did not exact fr
you the service of offerings, nor weary you for frankincense
24 You did not buy me sweet cane for money, nor fill me with t
fat of your sacrifices; instead, you burdened me with your sin
25 and wearied me with your crimes. | It is I, I, who wipe out, f
my own sake, your offenses; your sins I remember no more
26 Would you have me remember, have us come to trial? Spe
27 up, prove your innocence! | Your first father sinned; yo
28 spokesmen rebelled against me till I repudiated the holy gat
put Jacob under the ban, and exposed Israel to scorn.

44

1 Hear then, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chose
2 | Thus says the Lord who made you, your help, who form
you from the womb: Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, the darli
3 whom I have chosen. | I will pour out water upon the thirs
ground, and streams upon the dry land; I will pour out my spi
upon your offspring, and my blessing upon your descendants
4 They shall spring up amid the verdure like poplars beside t
5 flowing waters. | One shall say, "I am the Lord's," another sh
be named after Jacob, and this one shall write on his hand, "I
Lord's," and Israel shall be his surname.

6 ***The True God and False Gods*** Thus says the Lord,
rael's King and redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the fi
7 and I am the last; there is no God but me. | Who is like m

43, 22-28: God's love, not their fidelity to Him, is the reason f
the forthcoming end of the exile.
43, 27: *First father:* Adam? Jacob? Ancestors? *Spokesmen:* leade
44, 1-5: A future of prosperity.
44, 5: *Write on his hand:* a reference to the Babylonian maste
who tattooed their name on the hand of their slaves.

Let him stand up and speak, make it evident, and confront me
with it. Who of old announced future events? Let them foretell
8 to us the things to come. | Fear not, be not troubled: did I not
announce and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses! Is
there a God or any Rock besides me?
9 Idol makers all amount to nothing, and their precious works
are of no avail, as they themselves give witness. To their shame,
they neither see nor know anything; and they are more deaf
10 than men are. Indeed, all the associates of anyone who forms a
11 god, or casts an idol to no purpose, will be put to shame; they
will all assemble and stand forth, to be reduced to fear and
shame.
12 The smith fashions an iron image, works it over the coals,
shapes it with hammers, and forges it with his strong arm. He is
hungry and weak, drinks no water and becomes exhausted.
13 The carpenter stretches a line and marks with a stylus the
outline of an idol. He shapes it with a plane and measures it
off with a compass, making it like a man in appearance and
14 dignity, to occupy a shrine. He cuts down cedars, takes a holm
or an oak, and lays hold of other trees of the forest, which the
15 Lord had planted and the rain made grow | to serve man for
fuel. With a part of their wood he warms himself, or makes a
fire for baking bread; but with another part he makes a god
16 which he adores, an idol which he worships. Half of it he burns
in the fire, and on its embers he roasts his meat; he eats what he
has roasted until he is full, and then warms himself and says,
17 "Ah! I am warm, I feel the fire." Of what remains he makes a
god, his idol, and prostrate before it in worship, he implores it,
"Rescue me, for you are my god."
18 The idols have neither knowledge nor reason; their eyes are
coated so that they cannot see, and their hearts so that they can-
19 not understand. Yet he does not reflect, nor have the intelligence
and sense to say, "Half of the wood I burned in the fire, and on
its embers I baked bread and roasted meat which I ate. Shall I
then make an abomination out of the rest, or worship a block
20 of wood?" He is chasing ashes—a thing that cannot save itself
when the flame consumes it; yet he does not say, "Is not this
thing in my right hand a fraud?"

44, 9-20: The sacred writers describe their contemporary polytheists as if they worshiped the image itself. In actual fact, the pagans worshiped a reality behind the image. But the inspired writers described polytheism this way because of their denial of any reality behind the image, and in this way must other polemic passages be understood, e.g., 40, 18-20; Jer 10, 2-9.

44, 20: *He is chasing ashes:* he is working fruitlessly.

21 Remember this, O Jacob, you, O Israel, who are my servar
I formed you to be a servant to me; O Israel, by me you sh
22 never be forgotten: | I have brushed away your offenses like
cloud, your sins like a mist; return to me, for I have redeem
you.
23 Raise a glad cry, you heavens: the Lord has done this; shou
you depths of the earth. Break forth, you mountains, into son
you forest, with all your trees. For the Lord has redeemed Jaco
and shows his glory through Israel.

24 *Cyrus, Anointed of the Lord, Liberator of Israel* Th
says the Lord, your redeemer, who formed you from the wom
I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched o
the heavens; when I spread out the earth, who was with me?
25 It is I who bring to nought the omens of liars, who make fo
of diviners; I turn wise men back and make their knowled
26 foolish. | It is I who confirm the words of my servants, I can
out the plan announced by my messengers; I say to Jerusalen
Be inhabited; to the cities of Juda: Be rebuilt; I will raise
27 their ruins. | It is I who said to the deep: Be dry; I will dry
28 your wellsprings. | I say of Cyrus: My shepherd, who fulfi
my every wish; he shall say of Jerusalem, "Let her be rebuil
and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."

45

1 Thus says the Lord to his anointed, Cyrus, whose right hai
I grasp, subduing nations before him, and disarming kin
opening doors before him and leaving the gates unbarred:
2 I will go before you and level the mountains; bronze doors
3 will shatter, and iron bars I will snap. | I will give you treasur
out of the darkness, and riches that have been hidden away, th
you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who ca
4 you by your name. | For the sake of Jacob, my servant, of Isra
my chosen one, I have called you by your name, giving you
5 title, though you knew me not. | I am the Lord and there is
other, there is no God besides me. It is I who arm you, thou

44, 28—45, 6: *Anointed:* in Hebrew, "meshiah," whence the wo
"Messia." The Greek translation is "Christos," whence the wo
"Christ." Anointed is usually used of kings but it is applied to Cyr
insofar as God chose him as His instrument, not directly but throu
the course of history, in freeing the Jews from exile in 538 B.C. S
45, 13.

45, 2: *Bronze doors:* this is reminiscent of Herodotus' descripti
of Babylon: ". . . a hundred gates, all of brass."

6 you know me not, | so that toward the rising and the setting of
the sun men may know that there is none besides me.
7 I am the Lord, there is no other; | I form the light, and create
the darkness, I make well-being and create woe; I, the Lord, do
8 all these things. | Let justice descend, O heavens, like dew from
above, like gentle rain let the skies drop it down. Let the earth
open and salvation bud forth; let justice also spring up! I, the
Lord, have created this.
9 Woe to him who contends with his Maker; a potsherd among
potsherds of the earth! Dare the clay say to its modeler, "What
are you doing?" or, "What you are making has no hands"? |
10 Woe to him who asks a father, "What are you begetting?" or a
11 woman, "What are you giving birth to?" | Thus says the Lord,
the Holy One of Israel, his maker: You question me about my
12 children, or prescribe the work of my hands for me! | It was I
who made the earth and created mankind upon it; it was my
hands that stretched out the heavens; I gave the order to all
13 their host. | It was I who stirred up one for the triumph of
justice; all his ways I make level. He shall rebuild my city and
let my exiles go free without price or ransom, says the Lord of
hosts.
14 Thus says the Lord: The earnings of Egypt, the gain of Ethi-
opia, and the Sabeans, tall of stature, shall come over to you and
belong to you; they shall follow you, coming in chains. Before
you they shall fall prostrate, saying in prayer: "With you only
15 is God, and nowhere else; the gods are nought. | Truly with
16 you God is hidden, the God of Israel, the savior! | Those are
put to shame and disgrace who vent their anger against him;
17 those go in disgrace who carve images. | Israel, you are saved
by the Lord, saved forever! You shall never be put to shame
18 or disgrace in future ages." | For thus says the Lord, the creator

45, 7: *Light . . . darkness:* the inspired writer's intention is to say (as in Gn 1—2) that God created everything.

45, 8: Although this is not a Messianic text, the Latin Bible and the Roman Advent liturgy "Messianize" the Hebrew "justice" to "just one" and "salvation" to "savior." With the metaphor of a garden scene the inspired writer represents God commanding the blessings of "justice" and "salvation" for the exiles in their period of restoration to the fatherland.

45, 14: *Over to you. . . . Before you:* Cyrus. The Gentiles conquered by Cyrus, symbolic of all Gentiles, will be converted because in the deliverance of God's people from exile they will see the power of Yahweh. This "universalism" is a frequent theme in Second Isaia and in some other prophets.

45, 15: *God is hidden:* the meaning is obscure. Hidden in the Holy of Holies of the temple?

45, 18: *Waste . . . lived in:* obscure meaning.

of the heavens, who is God, the designer and maker of the ear
who established it, not creating it to be a waste, but designir
19 it to be lived in: I am the Lord, and there is no other. | I ha
not spoken from hiding nor from some dark place of the eart
and I have not said to the descendants of Jacob, "Look for n
in an empty waste." I, the Lord, promise justice, I foretell wh
is right.
20 Come and assemble, gather together, you fugitives fro
among the gentiles! They are without knowledge who be
21 wooden idols and pray to gods that cannot save. | Come he
and declare in counsel together: Who announced this from t
beginning and foretold it from of old? Was it not I, the Lor
besides whom there is no other God? There is no just and savir
22 God but me. | Turn to me and be safe, all you ends of t
earth, for I am God; there is no other!
23 By myself I swear, uttering my just decree and my unalterab
word: To me every knee shall bend; by me every tongue sha
24 swear, | saying, "Only in the Lord are just deeds and powe
Before him in shame shall come all who vent their anger again
25 him. | In the Lord shall be the vindication and the glory of a
the descendants of Israel."

46

1 ***The Gods of Babylon*** Bel bows down, Nebo stoops, the
idols are upon beasts and cattle; they must be borne up c
2 shoulders, carried as burdens by the weary. | They stoop ar
bow down together; unable to save those who bear them, th
too go into captivity.
3 Hear me, O house of Jacob, all who remain of the house
Israel, my burden since your birth, whom I have carried fro
4 your infancy. | Even to your old age I am the same, even wh
your hair is gray I will bear you; it is I who have done this,
who will continue, and I who will carry you to safety.
5 Whom would you compare me with, as an equal, or mak
6 me against, as though we were alike? | There are those wl
pour out gold from a purse and weigh out silver on the scale
then they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god before whi

45, 19: *I have not spoken from hiding . . . dark place:* as t
pagan gods do.
45, 20: *Who bear wooden idols:* in religious processions.
45, 23: *Decree . . . word:* the conversion of the Gentiles, as t
rest of the verse explains. *To me every knee . . . swear:* see Ro
14, 11; Phil 2, 10.
46, 1-2: *Bel . . . Nebo:* a satire on the Babylonian gods as in v
6-7. See 44, 9-20 n.

7 they fall down in worship. | They lift it to their shoulders to
carry; when they set it in place again, it stays, and does not
move from the spot. Although they cry out to it, it cannot an-
swer; it delivers no one from distress.
8 Remember this and be firm, bear it well in mind, you rebels;
9 remember the former things, those long ago: | I am God, there
10 is no other; I am God, there is none like me. | At the beginning
I foretell the outcome; in advance, things not yet done. I say that
11 my plan shall stand, I accomplish my every purpose. | I call
from the east a bird of prey, from a distant land, one to carry
out my plan. Yes, I have spoken, I will accomplish it; I have
12 planned it, and I will do it. | Listen to me, you fainthearted,
13 you who seem far from the victory of justice: | I am bringing
on my justice, it is not far off, my salvation shall not tarry; I
will put salvation within Sion, and give to Israel my glory.

47

1 ***The Fall of Babylon*** Come down, sit in the dust, O virgin
daughter Babylon; sit on the ground, dethroned, O daughter
of the Chaldeans. No longer shall you be called dainty and
2 delicate. | Take the millstone and grind flour, remove your veil;
strip off your train, bare your legs, pass through the streams. |
3 Your nakedness shall be uncovered and your shame be seen; I
will take vengeance, I will yield to no entreaty, says our re-
4 deemer, | whose name is the Lord of hosts, the Holy One of
Israel.
5 Go into darkness and sit in silence, O daughter of the Chal-
deans, no longer shall you be called sovereign mistress of king-
6 doms. | Angry at my people, I profaned my inheritance, and I
gave them into your hand; but you showed them no mercy, and
7 upon old men you laid a very heavy yoke. | You said, "I shall
remain a sovereign mistress forever!" But you did not lay these
8 things to heart, you disregarded their outcome. | Now hear this,
voluptuous one, enthroned securely, saying to yourself, "I, and
no one else! I shall never be a widow, or suffer the loss of my
9 children"— | both these things shall come to you suddenly, in a
single day: complete bereavement and widowhood shall come
upon you for your many sorceries and the great number of your
10 spells. | You felt secure in your wickedness, "No one sees me,"
you said, your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and

46, 11: *I call from the east a bird of prey:* Cyrus. See 44, 28—45, 6 n.
46, 13: *Justice . . . salvation:* see 45, 8 n.
47, 1-15: A satirical dirge on Babylon compared to a queen dethroned and enslaved. Compare with the taunt-song in 14, 4-21.

11 you said to yourself, "I, and no one else!" | But upon you sha
come evil against which you know no charm; disaster shall be
fall you which you cannot allay. Suddenly there shall com
upon you ruin which you will not foresee.
12 Keep up your spells and your many sorceries, with which yo
toiled from your youth; perhaps you can make them avail, per
13 haps you can strike terror! | You wearied yourself with man
consultations; let the astrologers stand forth to save you, th
stargazers who forecast at each new moon what would happe
14 to you. | Lo, they are like stubble, fire consumes them; the
cannot save themselves from the spreading flames. This is n
15 warming ember, no fire to sit before. | Thus do they serve yo
through whom you have grown weary, your magicians sinc
your youth; each wanders his own way, with none to save you

48

1 ***Exhortations to the Exiles*** Hear this, O house of Jacc
called by the name Israel, sprung from the stock of Juda, yo
who swear by the name of the Lord and invoke the God c
2 Israel without sincerity or justice, | though you are named afte
the holy city and rely on the God of Israel, whose name is th
3 Lord of hosts. | Things of the past I foretold long ago, the
went forth from my mouth, I let you hear of them; then sud
4 denly I took action and they came to be. | Because I know thi
you are stubborn and that your neck is an iron sinew and you
5 forehead bronze, | I foretold them to you of old; before the
took place I let you hear of them, that you might not say, "My
idol did them, my statue, my molten image commanded them.
6 | Now that you have heard, look at all this; must you not adm
it?
From now on I announce new things to you, hidden events o
7 which you knew not. | Now, not long ago, they are brought int
being, and beforetime you did not hear of them, so that yo
8 cannot claim to have known them; | you neither heard nc
knew, they did not reach your ears beforehand. Yes, I know yo
are utterly treacherous, a rebel you were called from birth.
9 For the sake of my name I restrain my anger, for the sake of m
10 renown I hold it back from you, lest I should destroy you. | See
I have refined you like silver, tested you in the furnace of affli
11 tion. | For my sake, for my own sake, I do this; why shoul

48, 3-6: God predicted the exile through his prophets, e.g., Jeremia
Yahweh now predicts the end of the exile ("new things," v. 6).
48, 11: God, refracted through the inspired writer, is depicted a
ending the exile lest the pagans think Him unable to save His people.

I suffer profanation? My glory I will not give to another.
12 Listen to me, Jacob, Israel, whom I named! I, it is I who am
13 the first, and also the last am I. | Yes, my hand laid the foundations of the earth; my right hand spread out the heavens. When I call them, they stand forth at once.
14 All of you assemble and listen: Who among you foretold these things? The Lord's friend shall do his will against Babylon
15 and the progeny of Chaldea. | I myself have spoken, I have
16 called him, I have brought him, and his way succeeds! | Come near to me and hear this! Never from the beginning have I spoken in secret; at the time it comes to pass, I am present.
17 "Now the Lord God has sent me, and his spirit." | Thus says the Lord, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I, the Lord, your God, teach you what is for your good, and lead you on the
18 way you should go. | If you would hearken to my commandments, your prosperity would be like a river, and your vindica-
19 tion like the waves of the sea; | your descendants would be like the sand, and those born of your stock like its grains, their name never cut off or blotted out from my presence.
20 Go forth from Babylon, flee from Chaldea! With shouts of joy proclaim this, make it known; publish it to the ends of the earth, and say, "The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob. |
21 They did not thirst when he led them through dry lands; water from the rock he set flowing for them; he cleft the rock, and waters welled forth." [There is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord.]

II. EXPIATION OF SIN

SPIRITUAL LIBERATION OF ISRAEL

49

1 ***The Servant of the Lord*** Hear me, O coastlands, listen, O distant peoples. The Lord called me from birth, from my

48, 14: *The Lord's friend:* His instrument, Cyrus.

48, 16: *"Now the Lord God has sent me, and his spirit":* the inspired prophet puts these words on the lips of Cyrus. See v. 14.

48, 18-19: This difficult passage may mean that if the people had been faithful to God they would not have gone into exile and would now be prosperous.

48, 20-21: The prediction of the end of the exile.

48, 21: *There is no peace for the wicked:* a proverbial saying.

49, 1-7: The second servant song. See 42, 1-4 n. The Servant addresses the Gentiles ("coastlands," v. 1). *Called me . . . gave me my name:* appointed me to a special task.

2 mother's womb he gave me my name. | He made of me a sharp
edged sword and concealed me in the shadow of his arm. He
3 made me a polished arrow, is his quiver he hid me. | You are
my servant, he said to me, Israel, through whom I show my
glory.
4 Though I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, use
lessly, spent my strength, yet my reward is with the Lord, my
5 recompense is with my God. | For now the Lord has spoken
who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may
be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him; and I am
made glorious in the sight of the Lord, and my God is now my
6 strength! | It is too little, he says, for you to be my servant, to
raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel:
I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may
reach to the ends of the earth.
7 Thus says the Lord, the redeemer and the Holy One of Is
rael, to the one despised, whom the nations abhor, the slave of
rulers: When kings see you, they shall stand up, and princes
shall prostrate themselves because of the Lord who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you.

8 ***The Liberation and Restoration of Sion*** Thus says the
Lord: In a time of favor I answer you, on the day of salva
tion I help you, to restore the land and allot the desolate
9 heritages, | saying to the prisoners: Come out! To those in
darkness: Show yourselves! Along the ways they shall find
10 pasture, on every bare height shall their pastures be. | They
shall not hunger or thirst, nor shall the scorching wind or
the sun strike them; for he who pities them leads them and
11 guides them beside springs of water. | I will cut a road through
12 all my mountains, and make my highways level. | See, some
shall come from afar, others from the north and the west, and
some from the land of Syene.
13 Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, break forth into
song, you mountains. For the Lord comforts his people and
shows mercy to his afflicted.
14 But Sion said, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has for

49, 2: God made my message "conquer" people like a sword an
arrow under His protection.
49, 3: *Israel:* since vv. 5-6 seem to distinguish the Servant fro
Israel, some regard the word *Israel* here as a gloss.
49, 4: *Toiled in vain:* in preaching.
49, 6: The Servant is sent to the Jews and Gentiles. See Lk 2, 3
49, 7: *To the one despised:* the Servant.
49, 12: *Syene:* Aswan in southern Egypt.

15 gotten me." | Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I
16 will never forget you. | See, upon the palms of my hands I have
17 written your name; your walls are ever before me. | Your rebuilders make haste, as those who tore you down and laid you
18 waste go forth from you; | look about and see, they are all gathering and coming to you. As I live, says the Lord, you shall be arrayed with them all as with adornments, like a bride you shall fasten them on you.

19 Though you were waste and desolate, a land of ruins, now you shall be too small for your inhabitants, while those who
20 swallowed you up will be far away. | The children whom you had lost shall yet say to you, "This place is too small for me,
21 make room for me to live in." | You shall ask yourself: "Who has borne me these? I was bereft and barren [exiled and repudiated]; who has reared them? I was left all alone; where then do these come from?"

22 Thus says the Lord God: See, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on
23 their shoulders. | Kings shall be your foster fathers, their princesses your nurses; bowing to the ground, they shall worship you and lick the dust at your feet. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, and those who hope in me shall never be disappointed.

24 Thus says the Lord: Can booty be taken from a warrior?
25 or captives be rescued from a tyrant? | Yes, captives can be taken from a warrior, and booty be rescued from a tyrant; those
26 who oppose you I will oppose, and your sons I will save. | I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with the juice of the grape. All mankind shall know that I, the Lord, am your savior, your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

50

1 *Salvation only through the Lord's Servant* Thus says the Lord: Where is the bill of divorce with which I dismissed your mother? Or to which of my creditors have I sold you? It was for your sins that you were sold, for your crimes that your mother was dismissed.

2 Why was no one there when I came? Why did no one answer

49, 16: See 44, 5 n.

50, 2: *When I called?:* a reference to God's calling the people to a covenant with Him.

when I called? Is my hand too short to ransom? Have I not t
strength to deliver? Lo, with my rebuke I dry up the sea, I tu
rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water, and die
3 thirst. | I clothe the heavens in mourning, and make sackclo
their vesture.
4 The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that
might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rou
them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hea
5.6 | and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. | I gave r
back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked r
beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.
7 The Lord God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced;
have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put
8 shame. | He is near who upholds my right; if anyone wishes
oppose me, let us appear together. Who disputes my right? I
9 him confront me. | See, the Lord God is my help; who w
prove me wrong? Lo, they will all wear out like cloth, the mc
will eat them up.
10 Who among you fears the Lord, heeds his servant's voice, a
walks in darkness without any light, trusting in the name of t
11 Lord and relying on his God? | All of you kindle flames a
carry about you fiery darts; walk by the light of your own f
and by the flares you have burnt! This is your fate from r
hand: you shall lie down in a place of pain.

51

1 ***Exhortation to Trust in the Lord*** Listen to me, you w
pursue justice, who seek the Lord; look to the rock from whi
you were hewn, to the pit from which you were quarried
2 look to Abraham, your father, and to Sara, who gave you birt
when he was but one I called him, I blessed him and made h
3 many. | Yes, the Lord shall comfort Sion and have pity on
her ruins; her deserts he shall make like Eden, her wastela
like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found
her, thanksgiving and the sound of song.
4 Be attentive to me, my people; my folk, give ear to me. F
law shall go forth from my presence, and my judgment, as t
5 light of the peoples. | I will make my justice come speedily, r
salvation shall go forth [and my arm shall judge the nations

50, 4-11: The third servant song. See 42, 1-4 n. This song de
chiefly with the Servant's patience and resignation to God. The Serv
speaks in vv. 4-9. God reproves the people for adhering to their o
plans instead of obeying the Servant (10-11).

51, 1: *Rock . . . pit:* your illustrious forefathers.

51, 4-5: The conversion of the pagans.

in me shall the coastlands hope, and my arm they shall await.
6 Raise your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth below;
though the heavens grow thin like smoke, the earth wears out
like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies, my salvation
shall remain forever and my justice shall never be dismayed. |
7 Hear me, you who know justice, you people who have my teach-
ing at heart: fear not the reproach of men, be not dismayed at
8 their revilings. | They shall be like a garment eaten by moths,
like wool consumed by grubs; but my justice shall remain for-
ever and my salvation, for all generations.
9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake as
in the days of old, in ages long ago! Was it not you who crushed
10 Rahab, you who pierced the dragon? | Was it not you who
dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the
depths of the sea into a way for the redeemed to pass over? |
11 Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return and enter Sion
singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they will meet with joy
and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.
12 I, it is I who comfort you. Can you then fear mortal man, who
13 is human only, to be looked upon as grass, | and forget the
Lord, your maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the
foundations of the earth? All the day you are in constant dread
of the fury of the oppressor; but when he sets himself to destroy,
what is there of the oppressor's fury?
14 The oppressed shall soon be released; they shall not die and
15 go down into the pit, nor shall they want for bread. | For I am
the Lord, your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar;
16 the Lord of hosts by name. | I have put my words into your
mouth and shielded you in the shadow of my hand, I, who
stretched out the heavens, who laid the foundations of the earth,
who say to Sion: You are my people.

17 ***The Cup of the Lord*** Awake, awake! Arise, O Jerusalem,
you who drank at the Lord's hand the cup of his wrath; who
18 drained to the dregs the bowl of staggering! | She has no one to
guide her of all the sons she bore; she has no one to grasp her
19 by the hand, of all the sons she reared!— | Your misfortunes
are double; who is there to condole with you? Desolation and
destruction, famine and sword! Who is there to comfort you? |

51, 6: See the same thought in Mt 24, 35.
51, 9-10: *Rahab:* see 30, 7 n. *Dragon:* see 27, 1 n. *Great deep:* a reference to Gn 1, 22. *Sea . . . to pass over:* a reference to the crossing of the sea (Ex 14, 10ff).
51, 17: The "cup" and "bowl" are biblical images of the people's suffering.

20 Your sons lie helpless at every street corner like antelopes in
net. They are filled with the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke
your God.
21 But now, hear this, O afflicted one, drunk, but not with win
22 | thus says the Lord, your Master, your God, who defends h
people: See, I am taking from your hand the cup of staggerin
23 the bowl of my wrath you shall no longer drink. | I will put
into the hands of your tormentors, those who ordered you
bow down, that they might walk over you, while you offere
your back like the ground, like the street for them to walk o

52

1 ***Let Sion Rejoice*** Awake, awake! Put on your strength,
Sion; put on your glorious garments, O Jerusalem, holy city. N
2 longer shall the uncircumcised or the unclean enter you. | Shai
off the dust, ascend to the throne, Jerusalem; loose the bon
3 from your neck, O captive daughter Sion! | For thus says th
Lord: You were sold for nothing, and without money you sha
be redeemed.
4 Thus says the Lord God: To Egypt in the beginning my pe
ple went down, to sojourn there; Assyria, too, oppressed the
5 for nought. | But now, what am I to do here? says the Lor
My people have been taken away without redress; their rule
make a boast of it, says the Lord; all the day my name is co
6 stantly reviled. | Therefore on that day my people shall kno
7 my renown, that it is I who have foretold it. Here I am! | Ho
beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brin
glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcin
salvation, and saying to Sion, "Your God is King!"
8 Hark! Your watchmen raise a cry, together they shout f
joy, for they see directly, before their eyes, the Lord restorin
9 Sion. | Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! F

52, 2: *Loose the bonds from your neck:* archeologists have unearth representations of captives bound by a rope passing from neck to ne

52, 5: *My name is constantly reviled:* because, in pagan eyes, Yahw was powerless to free His people from exile.

52, 7: The poet describes a herald bringing the "glad tidings" fr Babylon concerning the end of the exile. It is for that reason that h feet are "beautiful." *"Your God is King":* Yahweh has shown H royal power once more in liberating His people. Paul in Rom 10, rereads this text as an announcement of the good news of the Gos as a new liberating message. Handel's "Messiah" ("How Beautiful A the Feet of Them") follows Romans more closely than Isaia.

52, 8: The poet depicts the "watchmen" on the Jerusalem wa who see Yahweh leading His people in a new exodus from Babylo See v. 12.

10 the Lord comforts his people, he redeems Jerusalem. | The Lord
has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; all the
ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God.
11 Depart, depart, come forth from there, touch nothing unclean!
Out from there! Purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of
12 the Lord. | Yet not in fearful haste will you come out, nor leave
in headlong flight, for the Lord comes before you, and your rear
guard is the God of Israel.

Suffering and Triumph of the Servant of the Lord

13 See my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly
14 exalted. | Even as many were amazed at him—so marred was
his look beyond that of man, and his appearance beyond that of
15 mortals— | so shall he startle many nations, because of him
kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told
shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.

53

1 Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the
2 arm of the Lord been revealed? | He grew up like a sapling
before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in
him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance
3 that would attract us to him. | He was spurned and avoided
by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those
from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in
no esteem.
4 Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he
endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by

52, 10: God's liberation of His people is figuratively described, alluding to a preparation for action by flipping back the cloak from the right shoulder.

52, 11: *From there:* from Babylon. *Vessels of the Lord:* a reference to Nabuchodonosor's looting the sacred furniture of the temple.

52, 13—53, 12: The fourth servant song. See 42, 1-4 n. Of the four servant songs, this is the most touching, mysterious, disputed, and the most poorly preserved in the Hebrew. Christ alone fulfilled this so closely in the Gospels that the poet of the fourth song has been called the "Evangelist of the Passion" and his song, "the fifth Gospel."

52, 13-15: The poet has God speak. His sufferings will disfigure him.

53, 1-12: This is the apex of the four songs because, for one reason, it is the only place in the Old Testament which speaks of expiatory suffering.

53, 2: *A sapling:* suggestive of his humble origins.

53, 3: Men also "hide their faces" from lepers.

53, 4-5: *Pierced:* not crucified. People thought that the Servant suffered because of his own sins (v. 3), but they found out that he was expiating the sins of the people themselves. The notion of his expiatory death runs through the rest of the song.

5 God and afflicted. | But he was pierced for our offenses, crush
for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes
6 whole, by his stripes we were healed. | We had all gone ast
like sheep, each following his own way; but the Lord laid u
him the guilt of us all.
7 Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and open
not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep bef
8 the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. | C
pressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who wo
have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut
from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his p
9 ple, | a grave was assigned him among the wicked and a bur
place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spol
10 any falsehood. | [But the Lord was pleased to crush him
infirmity.]
If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his
scendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be
11 complished through him. | Because of his affliction he shall
the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servi
12 shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. | Therefor
will give him his portion among the great, and he shall div
the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself
death and was counted among the wicked; and he shall t
away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.

54

1 ***The New Sion*** Raise a glad cry, you barren one who
not bear, break forth in jubilant song, you who were not
labor, for more numerous are the children of the deserted w
than the children of her who has a husband, says the Lord
2 Enlarge the space for your tent, spread out your tent cloths
3 sparingly; lengthen your ropes and make firm your stakes. | F
you shall spread abroad to the right and to the left; your
scendants shall dispossess the nations and shall people the de
late cities.

53, 7: See the eunuch and Philip in Acts 8, 32.

53, 8: In spite of the corrupted Hebrew text, and the obscurity the nature of his death, there seems to be a note of unjustness in it.

53, 10-12: Scholars are puzzled at the author's rapid passage fr the Servant's death to apparently his "resurrection," which is perhs better understood as a spiritual resurrection.

53, 11: *See the light:* be rewarded with happiness.

54, 1: Jerusalem, filled with the returning exiles, is compared to barren wife who begets many children.

4 Fear not, you shall not be put to shame; you need not blush,
for you shall not be disgraced. The shame of your youth you
shall forget, the reproach of your widowhood no longer remem-
5 ber. | For he who has become your husband is your Maker; his
name is the Lord of hosts; your redeemer is the Holy One of
Israel, called God of all the earth.
6 The Lord calls you back, like a wife forsaken and grieved in
spirit, a wife married in youth and then cast off, says your God.
7 | For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great tender-
8 ness I will take you back. | In an outburst of wrath, for a mo-
ment I hid my face from you; but with enduring love I take pity
on you, says the Lord, your redeemer.
9 This is for me like the days of Noe, when I swore that the
waters of Noe should never again deluge the earth; so I have
10 sworn not to be angry with you, or to rebuke you. | Though the
mountains leave their place and the hills be shaken, my love
shall never leave you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says
the Lord, who has mercy on you.
11 O afflicted one, storm-battered and unconsoled, I lay your
pavements in carnelians, and your foundations in sapphires; |
12 I will make your battlements of rubies, your gate of carbuncles,
13 and all your walls of precious stones. | All your sons shall be
taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your chil-
14 dren. | In justice shall you be established, far from the fear of
15 oppression, where destruction cannot come near you. | Should
there be any attack, it shall not be of my making; whoever at-
tacks you shall fall before you.
16 Lo, I have created the craftsman who blows on the burning
coals and forges weapons as his work; it is I also who have
17 created the destroyer to work havoc. | No weapon fashioned
against you shall prevail; every tongue you shall prove false that
launches an accusation against you. This is the lot of the serv-
ants of the Lord, their vindication from me, says the Lord.

55

1 ***An Invitation to Grace*** All you who are thirsty, come to
the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and
eat; come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and

54, 4b: A veiled allusion to the exile.
54, 5: *Redeemer:* "goel." See 41, 14 n.
54, 8: *Enduring love:* God's everlasting love for His people in spite of their rejection of Him is a frequent biblical theme. See v. 10.
54, 11: *Afflicted one:* of Jerusalem.
55, 1-2: The people in exile are compared to people who are thirsty and who need money.

2 milk! | Why spend your money for what is not bread; your
wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well,
3 you shall delight in rich fare. | Come to me heedfully, listen,
that you may have life. I will renew with you the everlasting
4 covenant, the benefits assured to David. | As I made him a
witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of nations, |
5 so shall you summon a nation you knew not, and nations that
knew you not shall run to you, because of the Lord, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.
6 Seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is
7 near. | Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked man
his thoughts; let him turn to the Lord for mercy; to our God,
8 who is generous in forgiving. | For my thoughts are not your
9 thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. | As high
as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above
your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.
10 For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down
and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making
it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to him who sows and bread to
11 him who eats, | so shall my word be that goes forth from my
mouth; it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will,
achieving the end for which I sent it.
12 Yes, in joy you shall depart, in peace you shall be brought
back; mountains and hills shall break out in song before you,
13 and all the trees of the countryside shall clap their hands. | In
place of the thornbush, the cypress shall grow, instead of nettles,
the myrtle. This shall be to the Lord's renown, an everlasting
imperishable sign.

III. RETURN OF THE FIRST CAPTIVES

56

1 ***The Lord's House Open to All*** Thus says the Lord: Ob-
serve what is right, do what is just; for my salvation is about to
2 come, my justice, about to be revealed. | Happy is the man who
does this, the son of man who holds to it; who keeps the Sab-
bath free from profanation, and his hand from any evildoing.
3 | Let not the foreigner say, when he would join himself to the

55, 3b: Quoted in Acts 13, 34.

56—66: A minority view distinguishes this section from Second Isaia (40—66 n) and calls it Third Isaia, but it is more common today to consider these last eleven chapters as a loose collection of oracles, not all of one period.

56, 1-8: A post-exilic prophet may have authored this poem in which Gentiles are invited to join Yahweh's religion.

56, 3: *Eunuch:* Dt 23, 2 forbade membership to eunuchs.

Lord, "The Lord will surely exclude me from his people"; nor
4 let the eunuch say, "See, I am a dry tree." | For thus says the
Lord: To the eunuchs who observe my Sabbaths and choose
what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant, | I will give,
5 in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name
better than sons and daughters; an eternal, imperishable
name will I give them.
6 And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, minister-
ing to him, loving the name of the Lord, and becoming his serv-
ants—all who keep the Sabbath free from profanation and hold
7 to my covenant, | them I will bring to my holy mountain and
make joyful in my house of prayer; their holocausts and sacri-
fices will be acceptable on my altar, for my house shall be called
8 a house of prayer for all peoples. | Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the dispersed of Israel: Others will I gather to him
besides those already gathered.

9 ***Blind Leaders*** All you wild beasts of the field, come and
10 eat, all you beasts in the forest! | My watchmen are blind, all of
them unaware; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dream-
11 ing as they lie there, loving their sleep. | They are relentless
dogs, they know not when they have enough. These are the
shepherds who know no discretion; each of them goes his own
12 way, every one of them to his own gain: | "Come, I will fetch
some wine; let us carouse with strong drink, and tomorrow will
be like today, or even greater."

57

1 The just man perishes, but no one takes it to heart; devout
men are swept away, with no one giving it a thought. Though
2 he is taken away from the presence of evil, the just man | enters
into peace; there is rest on his couch for the sincere, straight-
forward man.

3 ***Faithless People*** But you, draw near, you sons of a sorceress,
4 adulterous, wanton race! | Of whom do you make sport, at
whom do you open wide your mouth, and put out your tongue?
5 Are you not rebellious children, a worthless race; | you who are
in heat among the terebinths, under every green tree; you who
immolate children in the wadies, behind the crevices in the cliffs?

56, 7: See Mt 21, 13.

56, 9—57, 21: The general sense is the infidelity of the people. Moderns hold widely divergent views on the date and unity of this oracle.

6 Among the smooth stones of the wady is your portion, these
are your lot; to these you poured out libations, and brought
7 offerings. Should I decide not to punish these things? | Upon a
high and lofty mountain you made your bed, and there you went
8 up to offer sacrifice. | Behind the door and the doorpost you
placed your indecent symbol. Deserting me, you spread out your
high, wide bed; and of those whose embraces you love you
9 carved the symbol and gazed upon it | while you approached
the king with scented oil, and multiplied your perfumes; while
you sent your ambassadors far away, down even to the nether
10 world. | Though worn out by your many misdeeds, you never
said, "It is hopeless"; new strength you found, and so you did
11 not weaken. | Of whom were you afraid? Whom did you fear,
that you became false and did not remember me or give me any
thought? Was I to remain silent and unseeing, so that you would
12 not have me to fear? | I will expose your justice and your
13 works; they shall not help you when you cry out, nor save you
in your distress.

All these the wind shall carry off, the breeze shall bear away;
but he who takes refuge in me shall inherit the land, and possess
my holy mountain.

14 *Comfort for the Afflicted* Build up, build up, prepare the
15 way, remove the stumbling blocks from my people's path. | For
thus says he who is high and exalted, living eternally, whose
name is the Holy One: On high I dwell, and in holiness, and
with the crushed and dejected in spirit, to revive the spirits of
16 the dejected, to revive the hearts of the crushed. | I will not
accuse forever, nor always be angry; for their spirits would
17 faint before me, the souls that I have made. | Because of their
wicked avarice I was angry, and struck them, hiding myself in
18 wrath, as they went their own rebellious way. | I saw their
ways, but I will heal them and lead them; I will give full com-
19 fort to them and to those who mourn for them, | I, the Creator,
who gave them life.

Peace, peace to the far and near, says the Lord; and I will
20 heal them. | But the wicked are like the tossing sea which can-

57, 6: *Smooth . . . portion:* the Hebrew word for "smooth" has the same consonants as the word for "portion." In place of the Lord as their portion, the people made stone slabs, found in valley stream beds, into idols.

57, 9: *The king:* the pagan god Moloch. *Ambassadors:* sacrificed children.

57, 12: *Justice*: the poet uses this in a sarcastic sense.

57, 13: *All these*: the unfaithful of vv. 3-13.

21 not be calmed, and its waters cast up mud and filth. | No peace
for the wicked! says my God.

58

1 ***True Fasting*** Cry out full-throated and unsparingly, lift up
your voice like a trumpet blast; tell my people their wickedness,
2 and the house of Jacob their sins. | They seek me day after day,
and desire to know my ways, like a nation that has done what is
just and not abandoned the law of their God; they ask me to
declare what is due them, pleased to gain access to God. |
3 "Why do we fast, and you do not see it? afflict ourselves, and
you take no note of it?"
Lo, on your fast day you carry out your own pursuits, and
4 drive all your laborers. | Yes, your fast ends in quarreling and
fighting, striking with wicked fist. Would that today you might
5 fast so as to make your voice heard on high! | Is this the manner
of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: that a man bow
his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call
6 this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? | This, rather, is the
fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the
thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every
7 yoke; | sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the op-
pressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see
them, and not turning your back on your own.
8 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your
wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before
you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. |
9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for
help, and he will say: Here I am! If you remove from your
10 midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; | if
you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted;
then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall
11 become for you like midday; | then the Lord will guide you
always and give you plenty even on the parched land. He will
renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden,
12 like a spring whose water never fails. | The ancient ruins shall
be rebuilt for your sake, and the foundations from ages past
you shall raise up; "Repairer of the breach," they shall call you,
"Restorer of ruined homesteads."
13 If you hold back your foot on the Sabbath from following

57, 21: A popular phrase even today.

58, 1-14: This poem is ordinarily dated after the exile. The prophet seems to be answering the question: we pray and fast but Yahweh has not restored us to the prosperous pre-exilic times.

58, 1: God commands the prophet.

your own pursuits on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a
delight, and the Lord's holy day honorable; if you honor it by
not following your ways, seeking your own interests, or speaking
14 with malice— | then you shall delight in the Lord, and I will
make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will nourish you
with the heritage of Jacob, your father, for the mouth of the
Lord has spoken.

59

1 ***Sin and Confession*** Lo, the hand of the Lord is not too
2 short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. | Rather, it is your
crimes that separate you from your God, it is your sins that
3 make him hide his face so that he will not hear you. | For your
hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt; your lips
4 speak falsehood, and your tongue utters deceit. | No one brings
suit justly, no one pleads truthfully; they trust in emptiness and
5 tell lies; they conceive mischief and bring forth malice. | They
hatch adders' eggs, and weave spiders' webs: whoever eats their
eggs will die, if one of them is pressed, it will hatch as a viper;
6 | their webs cannot serve as clothing, nor can they cover them-
selves with their works. Their works are evil works, and deeds
7 of violence come from their hands. | Their feet run to evil,
and they are quick to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are
destructive thoughts, plunder and ruin are on their highways. |
8 The way of peace they know not, and there is nothing that is
right in their paths; their ways they have made crooked, who-
ever treads them knows no peace.
9 That is why right is far from us and justice does not reach us.
We look for light, and lo, darkness; for brightness, but we walk
10 in gloom! | Like blind men we grope along the wall, like people
without eyes we feel our way. We stumble at midday as at dusk,
11 in Stygian darkness, like the dead. | We all growl like bears,
like doves we moan without ceasing. We look for right, but it
12 is not there; for salvation, and it is far from us. | For our
offenses before you are many, our sins bear witness against us.
Yes, our offenses are present to us, and our crimes we know: |
13 transgressing, and denying the Lord, turning back from follow-
ing our God, threatening outrage, and apostasy, uttering words
14 of falsehood the heart has conceived. | Right is repelled, and
justice stands far off; for truth stumbles in the public square,

59, 1-21: The oracle on the guilt of the people is variously dated.
59, 5: *Adders' eggs . . . spiders' webs:* an expression for evil words.
59, 9-15a: The prophet is conveying the words of the people.

15 uprightness cannot enter. | Honesty is lacking, and the man who
turns from evil is despoiled.

The Redeemer in Sion The Lord saw this, and was
16 aggrieved that right did not exist. | He saw that there was no
one, and was appalled that there was none to intervene; so his
own arm brought about the victory, and his justice lent him its
17 support. | He put on justice as his breastplate, salvation, as
the helmet on his head; he clothed himself with garments of
18 vengeance, wrapped himself in a mantle of zeal. | He repays
his enemies their deserts, and requites his foes with wrath.
19 Those in the west shall fear the name of the Lord, and those
in the east, his glory; for it shall come like a pent-up river which
20 the breath of the Lord drives on. | He shall come to Sion a
redeemer to those of Jacob who turn from sin, says the Lord.
21 | This is the covenant with them which I myself have made,
says the Lord: My spirit which is upon you and my words that
I have put into your mouth shall never leave your mouth, nor
the mouths of your children nor the mouths of your children's
children from now on and forever, says the Lord.

60

1 ***Glory of the New Sion*** Rise up in splendor! Your light
2 has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. | See, darkness
covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon
3 you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory. | Nations
shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. |
4 Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to
you: your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms
of their nurses.
5 Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall
throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied
out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you. |
6 Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Madian and
Epha; all from Saba shall come bearing gold and frankincense,
7 and proclaiming the praises of the Lord. | All the flocks of
Cedar shall be gathered for you, the rams of Nabaioth shall be

59, 17: See Eph 6, 14; 1 Thes 5, 8.
59, 20: *Redeemer:* "goel." See 41, 14 n. Compare Rom 11, 26-27.
60, 1—63, 6: The majority view considers these chapters to have one common theme: the liberation of the Babylonian exiles and the renewal of Jerusalem as in prosperous pre-exilic days.
60, 1-6: The Roman liturgy applies these verses to the universality of the Church in the Epistle of the Feast of the Epiphany.
60, 7: *Nabaioth:* probably refers to the Nabateans.

your sacrifices; they will be acceptable offerings on my altar,
and I will enhance the splendor of my house.
8 What are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their
9 cotes? | All the vessels of the sea are assembled, with the
ships of Tharsis in the lead, to bring your children from afar
with their silver and gold, in the name of the Lord, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.
10 Foreigners shall rebuild your walls, and their kings shall be
your attendants; though I struck you in my wrath, yet in my
11 good will I have shown you mercy. | Your gates shall stand
open constantly; day and night they shall not be closed but
shall admit to you the wealth of nations, and their kings, in the
12 vanguard. | For the people or kingdom shall perish that does
13 not serve you; those nations shall be utterly destroyed. | The
glory of Lebanon shall come to you: the cypress, the plane and
the pine, to bring beauty to my sanctuary, and glory to the place
14 where I set my feet. | The children of your oppressors shall
come, bowing low before you; all those who despised you shall
fall prostrate at your feet. They shall call you "City of the
Lord," "Sion of the Holy One of Israel."
15 Once you were forsaken, hated and unvisited, now I will
make you the pride of the ages, a joy to generation after genera-
16 tion. | You shall suck the milk of nations, and be nursed at
royal breasts; you shall know that I, the Lord, am your savior,
17 your redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob. | In place of bronze I
will bring gold, instead of iron, silver; in place of wood, bronze,
instead of stones, iron; I will appoint peace your governor, and
justice your ruler.
18 No longer shall violence be heard of in your land, or plunder
and ruin within your boundaries. You shall call your walls
19 "Salvation" and your gates "Praise." | No longer shall the sun
be your light by day, nor the brightness of the moon shine upon
you at night; the Lord shall be your light forever, your God
20 shall be your glory. | No longer shall your sun go down, or your
moon withdraw, for the Lord will be your light forever, and
21 the days of your mourning shall be at an end. | Your people
shall all be just, they shall always possess the land, they, the
22 bud of my planting, my handiwork to show my glory. | The
smallest shall become a thousand, the youngest, a mighty nation;
I, the Lord, will swiftly accomplish these things when their
time comes.

60, 9: *Tharsis:* see 3 Kgs 10, 22 n. *Silver and gold:* see Ag 2, 7-9 n for a similar expression of the Gentiles bringing their wealth to God's people as a symbol of their conversion.

61

1 ***The Mission to the Afflicted*** The spirit of the Lord God
is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me
to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to
2 proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, | to
announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication
3 by our God, to comfort all who mourn; | to place on those who
mourn in Sion a diadem instead of ashes, to give them oil of
gladness in place of mourning, a glorious mantle instead of a
listless spirit. They will be called oaks of justice, planted by the
Lord to show his glory.

4 ***The Reward of Israel*** They shall rebuild the ancient
ruins, the former wastes they shall raise up and restore the
5 ruined cities, desolate now for generations. | Strangers shall
stand ready to pasture your flocks, foreigners shall be your
6 farmers and vinedressers. | You yourselves shall be named
priests of the Lord, ministers of our God you shall be called.
You shall eat the wealth of the nations and boast of riches from
them.
7 Since their shame was double and disgrace and spittle were
their portion, they shall have a double inheritance in their land,
8 everlasting joy shall be theirs. | For I, the Lord, love what is
right, I hate robbery and injustice; I will give them their
recompense faithfully, a lasting covenant I will make with them.
9 | Their descendants shall be renowned among the nations, and
their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall
acknowledge them as a race the Lord has blessed.
10 I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul;
for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation, and wrapped me
in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem,
11 like a bride bedecked with her jewels. | As the earth brings
forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so
will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all
the nations.

62

1 ***Jerusalem the Lord's Bride*** For Sion's sake I will not be
silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her vindica-

61, 1-2: The vast majority agrees that not the Messia but the prophet is speaking of Jerusalem's restoration to prosperity. As interpreted in Lk 4, 18f, Christ applied this passage to His own mission. According to one expert, if the Isaia Scroll from which Christ read this passage was of the same length as the one found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, He would have had to open it to the distance of twenty-one feet.

tion shines forth like the dawn and her victory like a burning torch.
2 Nations shall behold your vindication, and all kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name pronounced by the
3 mouth of the Lord. | You shall be a glorious crown in the hand
4 of the Lord, a royal diadem held by your God. | No more shall men call you "Forsaken," or your land "Desolate," but you shall be called "My Delight," and your land "Espoused." For the
5 Lord delights in you, and makes your land his spouse. | As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.

6 ***Restoration of Sion*** Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have stationed watchmen; never, by day or by night, shall they be
7 silent. O you who are to remind the Lord, take no rest | and give no rest to him, until he re-establishes Jerusalem and makes of it the pride of the earth.
8 The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: No more will I give your grain as food to your enemies; nor
9 shall foreigners drink your wine, for which you toiled. | But you who harvest the grain shall eat it, and you shall praise the Lord; you who gather the grapes shall drink the wine in the courts of my sanctuary.
10 Pass through, pass through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones, raise
11 up a standard over the nations. | See, the Lord proclaims to the ends of the earth: Say to daughter Sion, your savior comes!
12 Here is his reward with him, his recompense before him. | They shall be called the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, and you shall be called "Frequented," a city that is not forsaken.

63

1 ***Punishment of Edom*** Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments, from Bosra—this one arrayed in majesty, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, I who

62, 2: *New name:* new happiness.
62, 6: *O you who are to remind the Lord:* about His promises to Jerusalem.
62, 10: The laborers are advised to begin the reconstruction.
63, 1-6: In this fierce dramatic dialogue between God and the prophet, Yahweh is represented as the warrior God returning with blood-spattered garments from avenging Himself on His people's enemies (symbolized by "Edom"). The lesson is that God won the victory single-handed. The imagery delighted the people of those days, but to us it seems almost irreverent.

announce vindication, I who am mighty to save." | Why is
your apparel red, and your garments like those of the wine
presser?
"The wine press I have trodden alone, and of my people there
was no one with me. I trod them in my anger, and trampled
them down in my wrath; their blood spurted on my garments;
all my apparel I stained. | For the day of vengeance was in my
heart, my year for redeeming was at hand. | I looked about,
but there was no one to help, I was appalled that there was no
one to lend support; so my own arm brought about the victory
and my own wrath lent me its support. | I trampled down the
peoples in my anger, I crushed them in my wrath, and I let their
blood run out upon the ground."

Prayer for the Return of God's Favor The favors of
the Lord I will recall, the glorious deeds of the Lord, because of
all he has done for us; for he is good to the house of Israel,
he has favored us according to his mercy and his great kindness.
He said: They are indeed my people, children who are not
disloyal; so he became their savior | in their every affliction. It
was not a messenger or an angel, but he himself who saved them.
Because of his love and pity he redeemed them himself, lifting
them and carrying them all the days of old. | But they rebelled,
and grieved his holy spirit; so he turned on them like an enemy,
and fought against them.
Then they remembered the days of old and Moses, his
servant; where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherd
of his flock? Where is he who put his holy spirit in their midst;
| whose glorious arm was the guide at Moses' right; who divided
the waters before them, winning for himself eternal renown; |
who led them without stumbling through the depths like horses
in the open country, | like cattle going down into the plain,
the spirit of the Lord guiding them? Thus you led your people,
bringing glory to your name.
Look down from heaven and regard us from your holy and
glorious palace! Where is your zealous care and your might,

63, 7—66, 24: The theme is: the exile was a penalty for the infidelity of the people.

63, 7—64, 11: The majority view dates as exilic this prayer of the exiles asking when the exile will end.

63, 7-14: The prophet prayerfully reviews God's past deeds, stressing the Exodus.

63, 15—64, 3: The prophet pleads with God to help His people once more.

16 your surge of pity and your mercy? O Lord, hold not back, | for
you are our father. Were Abraham not to know us, nor Israel
to acknowledge us, you, Lord, are our father, our redeemer you
17 are named forever. | Why do you let us wander, O Lord, from
your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not?
Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage.
18 | Why have the wicked invaded your holy place, why have our
19 enemies trampled your sanctuary? | Too long have we been
like those you do not rule, who do not bear your name.

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with
the mountains quaking before you,

64

1 As when brushwood is set ablaze, or fire makes the water
boil! Thus your name would be made known to your enemies
2 and the nations would tremble before you, | while you wrought
3 awesome deeds we could not hope for, | such as they had not
heard of from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen,
any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him.
4 Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were
mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are
5 sinful; | all of us have become like unclean men, all our good
deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves,
6 and our guilt carries us away like the wind. | There is none who
calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you; for
you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to
our guilt.
7 Yet, O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the
8 potter: we are all the work of your hands. | Be not so very
angry, Lord, keep not our guilt forever in mind; look upon us,
9 who are all your people. | Your holy cities have become a desert,
10 Sion is a desert, Jerusalem a waste. | Our holy and glorious
temple in which our fathers praised you has been burned with
11 fire; all that was dear to us is laid waste. | Can you hold back,
O Lord, after all this? Can you remain silent, and afflict us so
severely?

65

1 *Necessity of Punishment* I was ready to respond to those

63, 16: Some prize this verse as the most beautiful in the Old Testament.

63, 17: *Harden our hearts:* the Hebrews did not distinguish between God's positive and permissive will.

64, 4-11: The people's confession of their sins.

65, 1-7: God's answer to the prayer of the people is probably exilic.

who asked me not, to be found by those who sought me not.
I said: Here I am! Here I am! to a nation that did not call upon
my name.
2 I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious
people, who walk in evil paths and follow their own thoughts, |
3 people who provoke me continually, to my face, offering sacri-
4 fices in the groves and burning incense on bricks, | living among
the graves and spending the night in caverns, eating swine's
5 flesh, with carrion broth in their dishes, | crying out, "Hold
back, do not touch me; I am too sacred for you!"
These things enkindle my wrath, a fire that burns all the day.
6 | Lo, before me it stands written; I will not be quiet until I have
7 paid in full | your crimes and the crimes of your fathers as
well, says the Lord. Since they burned incense on the mountains,
and disgraced me on the hills, I will at once pour out in full
measure their recompense into their laps.

8 ***Fate of the Good and the Bad in Israel*** Thus says the
Lord: When the juice is pressed from grapes, men say, "Do
not discard them, for there is still good in them"; thus will I
9 do with my servants: I will not discard them all; | from Jacob
I will save offspring, from Juda, those who are to inherit my
mountains; my chosen ones shall inherit the land, my servants
10 shall dwell there. | Saron shall be a pasture for the flocks and
the valley of Achor a resting place for the cattle of my people
who have sought me.
11 But you who forsake the Lord, forgetting my holy mountain,
you who spread a table for Fortune and fill cups of blended
12 wine for Destiny, | you I will destine for the sword; you shall
all go down in slaughter. Since I called and you did not answer,
I spoke and you did not listen, but did what was evil in my
13 sight and preferred things which displease me, therefore thus
says the Lord God: Lo, my servants shall eat, but you shall go
hungry; my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; my
14 servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; | my
servants shall shout for joy of heart, but you shall cry out for
15 grief of heart and howl for anguish of spirit. | The Lord God
shall slay you, and the name you leave shall be used by my
chosen ones for cursing; but my servants shall be called by
16 another name | by which he will be blessed on whom a blessing
is invoked in the land; he who takes an oath in the land shall

65, 8-25: Probably dating from the exile.
65, 8-10: The remnant doctrine is one of the doctrinal characteristics of the whole book of Isaia.

swear by the God of truth; for the hardships of the past shall be forgotten, and hidden from my eyes.

17 ***The World Renewed*** Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the things of the past shall not be remembered
18 or come to mind. | Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create; for I create Jerusalem to be a joy
19 and its people to be a delight; | I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult in my people. No longer shall the sound of weeping be
20 heard there, or the sound of crying; | no longer shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not round out his full lifetime; he dies a mere youth who reaches but a hundred years, and he who fails of a hundred shall be thought accursed.
21 They shall live in the houses they build, and eat the fruit of
22 the vineyards they plant; | they shall not build houses for others to live in, or plant for others to eat. As the years of a tree, so the years of my people; and my chosen ones shall long enjoy
23 the produce of their hands. | They shall not toil in vain, nor beget children for sudden destruction; for a race blessed by the
24 Lord are they and their offspring. | Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hearken to them. |
25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze alike, and the lion shall eat hay like the ox [but the serpent's food shall be dust]. None shall hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

66

1 ***True and False Worship*** Thus says the Lord: The heavens are my throne, the earth is my footstool; what kind of house can you build for me; what is to be my resting place? |
2 My hand made all these things when all of them came to be, says the Lord. This is the one whom I approve: the lowly and afflicted man who trembles at my word.
3 Merely slaughtering an ox is like slaying a man; sacrificing a lamb, like breaking a dog's neck; bringing a cereal offering, like offering swine's blood; burning incense, like paying homage to an idol. Since these have chosen their own ways and taken

65, 17-25: God will create a happy new life for His people returning from exile.

65, 25: For the same imagery, see 11, 6-9 n.

66, 1-24: This poem is usually dated between 516-444 B.C.

66, 1-2: The poor folk spirituality is resumed here with Yahweh's saying that the building of a temple for Him will not please Him as much as being "lowly" and obedient. See So 2, 3 n.

4 pleasure in their own abominations, | I in turn will choose
ruthless treatment for them and bring upon them what they
fear.
Because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no
one listened; because they did what was evil in my sight, and
5 chose what gave me displeasure, | hear the word of the Lord,
you who tremble at his word: Your brethren who, because of
my name, hate and reject you, say, "Let the Lord show his
glory that we may see your joy"; but they shall be put to shame.
6 | A sound of roaring from the city, a sound from the temple, the
sound of the Lord repaying his enemies their deserts!

7 ***Mother Sion*** Before she comes to labor, she gives birth;
before the pains come upon her, she safely delivers a male child.
8 | Who ever heard of such a thing, or saw the like? Can a
country be brought forth in one day, or a nation be born in a
single moment? Yet Sion is scarcely in labor when she gives
9 birth to her children. | Shall I bring a mother to the point of
birth, and yet not let her child be born? says the Lord; or shall
I who allow her to conceive, yet close her womb? says your God.
10 Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you
who love her; exult, exult with her, all you who were mourning
11 over her! | Oh, that you may suck fully of the milk of her
comfort, that you may nurse with delight at her abundant
12 breasts! | For thus says the Lord: Lo, I will spread prosperity
over her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an over-
flowing torrent. As nurslings, you shall be carried in her arms,
13 and fondled in her lap; | as a mother comforts her son, so will
I comfort you; in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.
14 When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bodies
flourish like the grass; the Lord's power shall be known to his
servants, but to his enemies, his wrath.
15 Lo, the Lord shall come in fire, his chariots like the whirlwind,
to wreak his wrath with burning heat and his punishment with
16 fiery flames. | For the Lord shall judge all mankind by fire and
sword, and many shall be slain by the Lord.
17 They who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the groves,
as followers of one who stands within, they who eat swine's
flesh, loathsome things and mice, shall all perish with their
deeds and their thoughts, says the Lord.

66, 4-5: God does not want external worship only, but a response of love ("no one answered").

66, 7-9: Jerusalem's lack of labor in child-bearing symbolizes God's giving birth to a new people.

18 ***Gathering of the Nations*** I come to gather nations of
19 every language; they shall come and see my glory. I will set a sign among them; from them I will send fugitives to the nations: to Tharsis, Phut and Lud, Mosoch, Thubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have never heard of my fame, or seen my glory; and they shall proclaim my glory among the nations.
20 They shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses and in chariots, in carts, upon mules and dromedaries, to Jerusalem, my holy mountain, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring their offering to the house
21 of the Lord in clean vessels. Some of these I will take as priests and Levites, says the Lord.

22 ***Lasting Reward and Punishment*** As the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall endure before me, says the Lord, so shall your race and your name endure. |
23 From one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind shall come to worship before me, says the
24 Lord. | They shall go out and see the corpses of the men who rebelled against me; their worm shall not die, nor their fire be extinguished; and they shall be abhorrent to all mankind.

66, 18-21: God assembles Jerusalem's neighboring nations and selects some of them to preach His glory to far-distant pagan nations.

66, 20: *Your brethren:* Jewish exiles.

66, 22: See 65, 17-25 n.

66, 24: The poet has God's enemies burning in the "town dump" outside the city walls.

THE BOOK OF JEREMIA

INTRODUCTION

Jeremia was born about 650 B.C. into a family of priests in Anathoth, an hour and a half walking distance from Jerusalem.

During his early phase, from approximately 627 to 609 B.C., Jeremia supported king Josia's religious reform which began in 622. After the king died in 609, Jeremia opposed the resurging idolatrous practices from 609 to 598. The prophet was resisted by the people and the priests, and by the king. He was imprisoned and humiliated. Then Nabuchodonosor captured Jerusalem in 598, and the first deportation took place.

Jeremia tried to advise king Sedecia during the latter's reign from 598 to 587. Sedecia discounted Jeremia's advice of neutrality and relied on Egyptian help in a revolt against Nabuchodonosor who, in consequence, destroyed Jerusalem in 587 and exiled its people. Jeremia later was kidnapped by fellow Jews and exiled into Egypt where he died.

There is no Old Testament prophet whose inner life is known so well. Jeremia was sensitive and fearful in accepting his vocation and in living up to it. He was a tragic but innocent sufferer and, therefore, a type of Christ. Of all the prophets, his life resembled most that of Christ. He was a celibate, a suffering servant in his own way, and a successful failure in a lifetime of preaching. In other words, his life was "Messianic."

The "Confessions" of Jeremia refer to several fragmentary passages that record prayers in "dialogue" between the prophet and Yahweh. Among different lists of confessions given by scholars, this is one: 12, 1-5; 15, 10-21; 17, 14-18; 20, 7-18. The confessions are mostly from the middle period of the prophet's life, his Gethsemani period. In these prayers, Jeremia pours out his most intimate complaints, his "jeremiads." Perhaps the best summary of the confessions is the often quoted description of Jeremia as "cast in brass, dissolving in tears." The brass reflects the strength of grace in helping him carry out God's will; the tears reflect his temperament, poorly suited for the leadership qualities of a prophet. It comes as no great surprise that Jeremia's special contribution and hallmark has been the preaching of an *interior* religion. Likewise, it is not surprising that his influence has been greater after his death than during his lifetime. Jeremia's influence is seen in Ezechiel, in some psalms, and in Second Isaia.

As with the other prophetical books, Jeremia's book is an anthology without chronological or logical sequences to which moderns are accustomed. His "book" was edited after the exile.

Main divisions of the Book of Jeremia are:

1. Oracles in the Days of Josia, 1—6
2. Oracles Mostly in the Days of Joakim, 7—20
3. Oracles in the Last Years of Jerusalem, 21—33
4. Fall of Jerusalem, 34—45
5. Oracles against the Nations, 46—51
6. Historical Appendix, 52, 1-34

I. ORACLES IN THE DAYS OF JOSIA

1

1 The words of Jeremia, son of Helcia, of a priestly family in
2 Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin. The word of the Lord first
came to him in the days of Josia, son of Amon, king of Juda, in
3 the thirteenth year of his reign, | and continued through the
reign of Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda, and until the down-
fall and exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month of the eleventh
year of Sedecia, son of Josia, king of Juda.

4 ***Call of Jeremia*** The word of the Lord came to me thus: |
5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were
born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.
6 | "Ah, Lord God!" I said, "I know not how to speak; I am too
young."
7 But the Lord answered me, Say not, "I am too young." To
whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you,
8 you shall speak. | Have no fear before them, because I am with
you to deliver you, says the Lord.
9 Then the Lord extended his hand and touched my mouth,
10 saying, See, I place my words in your mouth! | This day I set
you over nations and over kingdoms, to root up and to tear
down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant.
11 The word of the Lord came to me with the question: What do
you see, Jeremia? "I see a branch of the watching-tree," I replied.
12 | Then the Lord said to me: Well have you seen, for I am

1, 1-3: For the historical background, see Introduction to the Book of Jeremia.

1, 1: *Jeremia:* his name means "Yahweh establishes."

1, 2: *Thirteenth year of his reign:* Jeremia received his vocation as a prophet about 628 B.C.

1, 5: The common opinion is that God chose ("knew") and "dedicated" him to a prophetic mission before his birth. The text does not mean Jeremia was freed from original sin and filled with sanctifying grace before his birth.

1, 6: Jeremia was not yet thirty years old.

1, 9: It is not clear whether the prophet means this as a sensible or imaginative vision, but the important thing is that he was certain of a divine message.

1, 10: The meaning is that Jeremia's mission is to destroy evil and plant goodness.

1, 11-12: Just as the almond tree ("watching-tree") awakens from its winter sleep to blossom in the spring, so will God awaken from His calm to punish the infidel nations. There is a Hebrew pun on the words "watching-tree" and "I am watching."

watching to fulfill my word. A second time the word of the
Lord came to me with the question: What do you see? "I see a
boiling cauldron," I replied, "that appears from the north."
And from the north, said the Lord to me, evil will boil over
upon all who dwell in the land.
Lo, I am summoning all the kingdoms of the north, says the
Lord; each king shall come and set up his throne at the gateways
of Jerusalem, opposite her walls all around and opposite all the
cities of Juda. | I will pronounce my sentence against them
for all their wickedness in forsaking me, and in burning incense
to strange gods and adoring their own handiwork.
But do you gird your loins; stand up and tell them all that I
command you. Be not crushed on their account, as though I
would leave you crushed before them; | for it is I this day who
have made you a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of brass,
against the whole land: against Juda's kings and princes, against
its priests and people. | They will fight against you, but not
prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.

2

Infidelity of Israel This word of the Lord came to me:
Go, cry out this message for Jerusalem to hear! I remember the
devotion of your youth, how you loved me as a bride, following
me in the desert, in a land unsown. | Sacred to the Lord was
Israel, the first fruits of his harvest; should anyone presume
to partake of them, evil would befall him, says the Lord.
Listen to the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob! All you
clans of the house of Israel, | thus says the Lord: What fault
did your fathers find in me that they withdrew from me, went
after empty idols, and became empty themselves? | They did
not ask, "Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land
of Egypt, who led us through the desert, through a land of
wastes and gullies, through a land of drought and darkness,
through a land which no one crosses, where no man dwells?"
When I brought you into the garden land to eat its goodly
fruits, you entered and defiled my land, you made my heritage
loathsome. | The priests asked not, "Where is the Lord?" Those
who dealt with the law knew me not: the shepherds rebelled

1, 13-16: The meaning is: there will be an invasion from Babylon ("north") to punish the idolatrous Jews. The "northern" invasion theme continues in the following chapters. It cannot here be shown that Jeremia is thinking of an army of a definite foreign nation.

1, 17-19: The attacks against Jeremia will fail as if made against "a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of brass." See 15, 20

2, 8: *Shepherds:* kings and leaders.

against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, and went after
9 useless idols. | Therefore will I yet accuse you, says the Lord,
10 and even your children's children I will accuse. | Pass over to the coasts of the Chetthim and see, send to Cedar and carefully
11 inquire: Where has the like of this been done? | Does any other nation change its gods?—yet they are not gods at all! But my people have changed their glory for useless things. |
12 Be amazed at this, O heavens, and shudder with sheer horror,
13 says the Lord. | Two evils have my people done: they have forsaken me, the source of living waters; they have dug themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water.
14 Is Israel a slave, a bondman by birth? Why then has he
15 become booty? | Against him lions roar full-throated cries. They have made his land a waste; his cities are charred ruins, with-
16 out inhabitant. | Yes, the people of Memphis and Tahpanhes
17 shave the crown of your head. | Has not the forsaking of the
18 Lord, your God, done this to you? | And now, why go to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile? Why go to Assyria, to drink
19 the waters of the Euphrates? | Your own wickedness chastises you, your own infidelities punish you. Know then, and see, how evil and bitter is your forsaking the Lord, your God, and showing no fear of me, says the Lord, the God of hosts.
20 Long ago you broke your yoke, you tore off your bonds. "I will not serve," you said. On every high hill, under every green
21 tree, you gave yourself to harlotry. | I had planted you, a choice vine of fully tested stock; how could you turn out obnoxious to
22 me, a spurious vine? | Though you scour it with soap, and use much lye, the stain of your guilt is still before me, says the Lord
23 God. | How can you say, "I am not defiled, I have not gone after the Baals"? Consider your conduct in the Valley, recall what you have done: a frenzied she-camel, coursing near and
24 far, | breaking away toward the desert, snuffing the wind in her ardor—who can restrain her lust? No beasts need tire themselves seeking her; in her month they will meet her.

2, 10: *Chetthim:* perhaps the word is Cyprus which is used for the West. *Cedar:* a Syrian desert tribe used for the East.

2, 16: *Memphis and Tahpanhes:* both Egyptian cities symbolize the Egyptians who plunder Juda ("shave the crown of your head").

2, 18: One Judean party favored an alliance with Egypt; another party one with Assyria.

2, 20: *Harlotry:* a common prophetic idea spoke of the people's idolatry as harlotry because the people were considered God's bride, and because of the pagan sexual fertility rites. *High hill . . . green tree:* these were the favorite places to practice the idolatrous cult.

2, 23: *The Valley:* this was south of Jerusalem where children were sacrificed to Moloch. See 7, 31.

25 Stop wearing out your shoes and parching your throat! But
you say, "No use! no! I love these strangers, and after them I
26 must go." | As the thief is shamed when caught, so shall the
house of Israel be shamed: they, their kings and their princes,
27 their priests and their prophets; | they who say to a piece of
wood, "You are my father," and to a stone, "You gave me
birth." They turn to me their backs, not their faces; yet, in their
28 time of trouble they cry out, "Rise up and save us!" | Where are
the gods you made for yourselves? Let them rise up! Will they
save you in your time of trouble? For as numerous as your cities
are your gods, O Juda! And as many as the streets of Jerusalem
are the altars you have set up for Baal.
29 How dare you still plead with me? You have all rebelled
30 against me, says the Lord. | In vain I struck your children; the
correction they did not take. Your sword devoured your prophets
31 like a ravening lion. | You, of this generation, take note of the
word of the Lord: Have I been a desert to Israel, a land of
darkness? Why do my people say, "We have moved on, we will
32 come to you no more"? | Does a virgin forget her jewelry, a
bride her sash? Yet my people have forgotten me days without
number.
33 How well you pick your way when seeking love! You who, in
34 your wickedness, have gone by ways unclean! | You, on whose
clothing there is the life-blood of the innocent, whom you found
35 committing no burglary; yet withal you say, "I am innocent;
at least, his anger is turned away from me." Behold, I will judge
36 you on that word of yours, "I have not sinned." | How very
base you have become in changing your course! By Egypt will
37 you be shamed, as you were shamed by Assyria. | From there
also shall you go away with hands upon your head; for the Lord
has rejected those in whom you trust, with them you will have
no success.

3

1 If a man sends away his wife and, after leaving him, she
marries another man, does the first husband come back to her?
Would not the land be wholly defiled? But you have sinned with
many lovers, and yet you would return to me! says the Lord.
2 Lift your eyes to the heights, and see, where have men not lain
with you? By the waysides you waited for them like an Arab
in the desert. You defiled the land by your wicked harlotry. |
3 Therefore the showers were withheld, the spring rain failed.

3, 1: A reference to Dt 24, 1-4, forbidding such remarriage.
3, 2: *An Arab:* a raider of caravans.

But because you have a harlot's brow, you refused to blush.
4 Even now do you not call me, "My father, you who are the
5 bridegroom of my youth"? | "Will he keep his wrath forever,
will he hold his grudge to the end?" This is what you say; yet
you do all the evil you can.

6 ***Juda and Israel*** The Lord said to me in the days of king
Josia: See now what rebellious Israel has done! She has gone
up every high mountain, and under every green tree she has
7 played the harlot. And I thought, after she has done all this
she will return to me. But she did not return. Then, even though
8 her traitor sister Juda saw | that for all the adulteries rebellious
Israel had committed, I put her away and gave her a bill of
divorce, nevertheless her traitor sister Juda was not frightened;
9 she too went off and played the harlot. Eager to sin, she polluted
10 the land, committing adultery with stone and wood. With all
this, the traitor sister Juda did not return to me wholeheartedly,
but insincerely, says the Lord.

11 ***Restoration of Israel*** Then the Lord said to me: Rebel
12 Israel is inwardly more just than traitorous Juda. Go, proclaim
these words toward the north, and say: Return, rebel Israel,
says the Lord, I will not remain angry with you; for I am
merciful, says the Lord, I will not continue my wrath forever. |
13 Only know your guilt: how you rebelled against the Lord, your
God, how you ran hither and yon to strangers [under every
green tree] and would not listen to my voice, says the Lord.
14 Return, rebellious children, says the Lord, for I am your
Master; I will take you, one from a city, two from a clan, and
15 bring you to Sion. | I will appoint over you shepherds after
my own heart, who will shepherd you wisely and prudently. |
16 When you multiply and become fruitful in the land, says the
Lord, they will in those days no longer say, "The ark of the
covenant of the Lord!" They will no longer think of it, or
remember it, or miss it, or make another.
17 At that time they will call Jerusalem the Lord's throne:
there all nations will be gathered together to honor the name

3, 6-10: Jeremia bemoans the fact that the southern kingdom ("Juda") did not learn her lesson from the northern kingdom ("Israel") whose idolatry led to her fall in 722-21 B.C.

3, 9: *Stone:* see Is 57, 6 n.

3, 15: *Shepherds:* leaders.

3, 17-18: The poet hopefully looks forward to a reunion of the northern and southern kingdoms (v. 18). See Ez 37, 15-28 n. The poet also looks forward to the conversion of the Gentiles when the

of the Lord at Jerusalem, and they will walk no longer in their
18 hardhearted wickedness. In those days the house of Juda will
join the house of Israel; together they will come from the land
of the north to the land which I gave to your fathers as a
heritage.

19 ***Conditions for Forgiveness*** I had thought: How I should
like to treat you as sons, and give you a pleasant land, a heritage
most beautiful among the nations! You would call me, "My
20 Father," I thought, and never cease following me. | But like a
woman faithless to her lover, even so have you been faithless to
21 me, O house of Israel, says the Lord. | A cry is heard on the
heights! the plaintive weeping of Israel's children, because they
have perverted their ways and forgotten the Lord, their God. |
22 Return, rebellious children, and I will cure you of your rebelling.
"Here we are, we now come to you because you are the Lord,
23 our God. | Deceptive indeed are the hills, the thronging moun-
24 tains; in the Lord, our God, alone is the salvation of Israel. |
The shame-god has devoured our fathers' toil from our youth,
25 their sheep and their cattle, their sons and their daughters. | Let
us lie down in our shame, let our disgrace cover us, for we have
sinned against the Lord, our God, from our youth to this day,
we and our fathers also; we listened not to the voice of the Lord,
our God."

4

1 If you wish to return, O Israel, says the Lord, return to me.
If you put your detestable things out of my sight, and do not
2 stray, | then you can swear, "As the Lord lives," in truth, in
judgment, and in justice; then shall the nations use his name in
blessing, and glory in him.
3 For to the men of Juda and to Jerusalem, thus says the Lord:
4 Till your untilled ground, sow not among thorns. | For the sake
of the Lord, be circumcised, remove the foreskins of your hearts,
O men of Juda and citizens of Jerusalem; lest my anger break

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elementary cult ("The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord" v. 16) will be transformed into a more spiritual cult ("they will call Jerusalem the Lord's throne" v. 17). Some believe that this section (vv. 14-18) was written after the beginning of the exile in 587 B.C.

3, 24: *The shame-god:* the Chanaanite god Baal.

4, 2: *"As the Lord lives":* when this oath is made truthfully, it means that the person will return to God.

4, 4: *Foreskins of your hearts:* external circumcision is of no avail unless accompanied by internal conversion. *My anger:* it is common practice in the Bible to depict God as angry when the people sin.

out like fire, and burn till none can quench it, because of your evil deeds.

5 ***The Invasion from the North*** Proclaim it in Juda, make
it heard in Jerusalem; blow the trumpet through the land,
summon the recruits! Say, "Fall in, let us march to the fortified
6 cities." | Bear the standard to Sion, seek refuge without delay!
7 Evil I bring from the north, and great destruction. | Up comes
the lion from his lair, the destroyer of nations has set out, has
left his place, to turn your land into desolation, till your cities
8 lie waste and empty. | So gird yourselves with sackcloth, mourn
and wail: "The blazing wrath of the Lord is not turned away
from us."
9 In that day, says the Lord, the king will lose heart, and the
princes; the priests will be amazed, and the prophets stunned. |
10 "Alas! Lord God," they will say, "You only deceived us when
you said: Peace shall be yours; for the sword touches our very
11 soul." | At that time it will be said of this people and of Jeru-
salem, "From the glaring heights through the desert a wind
comes toward the daughter of my people." Not to winnow,
12 not to cleanse, | does this wind from the heights come at my
bidding; and I myself now pronounce sentence upon them.
13 See! like storm clouds he advances, like a hurricane his
chariots; swifter than eagles are his steeds: "Woe to us! we are
14 ruined." | Cleanse your heart of evil, O Jerusalem, that you
may be saved. How long must your pernicious thoughts lodge
15 within you? | Listen! They proclaim it from Dan, from Mount
16 Ephraim they announce destruction: | "Make this known to the
nations, announce it to Jerusalem: the besiegers are coming
from the distant land, shouting their war cry against the cities
17 of Juda." | Like watchmen of the fields they surround her,
18 for she has rebelled against me, says the Lord. | Your conduct,
your misdeeds, have done this to you; how bitter is this disaster
of yours, how it reaches to your very heart!
19 My breast! my breast! how I suffer! The walls of my heart!
My heart beats wildly, I cannot be still; for I have heard the
20 sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. | Ruin after ruin is
reported; the whole earth is laid waste. In an instant my tents
21 are ravaged; in a flash, my shelters. | How long must I see that
signal, hear that trumpet sound!
22 Fools my people are, they know me not; senseless children
they are, having no understanding; they are wise in evil, but
23 know not how to do good. | I looked at the earth, and it was
waste and void; at the heavens, and their light had gone out!
24 | I looked at the mountains, and they were trembling, and all

25 the hills were crumbling! | I looked and behold, there was no
26 man; even the birds of the air had flown away! | I looked and
behold, the garden land was a desert, with all its cities destroyed
before the Lord, before his blazing wrath.
27 For thus says the Lord: Waste shall the whole land be; I will
28 [not] wholly destroy it. | Because of this the earth shall mourn,
the heavens above shall darken; I have spoken, I will not repent,
29 I have resolved, I will not turn back. | At the shout of horseman
and bowman each city takes to flight; they shrink into the
thickets, they scale the rocks: all the cities are abandoned, and
30 no one dwells in them. | You now who are doomed, what do
you mean by putting on purple, bedecking yourself with gold,
shading your eyes with cosmetics, beautifying yourself in vain?
31 Your lovers spurn you, they seek your life. | Yes, I hear the
moaning, as of a woman in travail, like the anguish of a mother
with her first child—the cry of daughter Sion gasping, as she
stretches forth her hands: "Ah, woe is me! I sink exhausted
before the slayers!"

5

1 ***Universal Corruption*** Roam the streets of Jerusalem, look
about and observe, search through her public places, to find
even one who lives uprightly and seeks to be faithful, and I will
2 pardon her! | Though they say, "As the Lord lives," they swear
3 falsely. | O Lord, do your eyes not look for honesty? You
struck them, but they did not cringe; you laid them low, but
they refused correction; they set their faces harder than stone,
4 and refused to return to you. | It is only the lowly, I thought,
who are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, their
5 duty to their God. | I will go to the great ones and speak with
them; for they know the way of the Lord, their duty to their
God. But, one and all, they had broken the yoke, torn off the
6 harness. | Therefore lions from the forest slay them, wolves of
the desert ravage them, leopards keep watch round their cities:
all who come out are torn to pieces for their many crimes and
their numerous rebellions.
7 Why should I pardon you these things? Your sons have
forsaken me, they swear by gods that are not. I fed them, but
they committed adultery; to the harlot's house they throng. |
8 Lustful stallions they are, each neighs after another's wife. |
9 Shall I not punish them for these things? says the Lord; on a
10 nation such as this shall I not take vengeance? | Climb to her
terraces, and ravage them, destroy them [not] wholly. Tear away
11 her tendrils, they do not belong to the Lord. | For they have
openly rebelled against me, both the house of Israel and the

house of Juda, says the Lord. | They denied the Lord, saying,
"Not he—no evil shall befall us, neither sword nor famine shall
we see. | The prophets have become wind, and the word is not in
them. May their threats be carried out against themselves!"
Now, for this that you have said, says the Lord, the God of
hosts—behold, I make my words in your mouth, a fire, and this
people is the wood that it shall devour!— | Beware, I will bring
against you a nation from afar, O house of Israel, says the Lord;
a long-lived nation, an ancient nation, a people whose language
you know not, whose speech you cannot understand. | Their
quivers are like open graves; all of them are warriors. | They
will devour your harvest and your bread, devour your sons and
your daughters, devour your sheep and cattle, devour your
vines and fig trees; they will beat flat with the sword the fortified
city in which you trust.
Yet even in those days, says the Lord, I will not wholly
destroy you. | And when they ask, "Why has the Lord done
all these things to us?" say to them, "As you have forsaken
me to serve strange gods in your own land, so shall you serve
strangers in a land not your own."
Announce this to the house of Jacob, proclaim it in Juda: |
Pay attention to this, foolish and senseless people who have eyes
and see not, who have ears and hear not. | Should you not fear
me, says the Lord, should you not tremble before me? I made
the sandy shore the sea's limit, which by eternal decree it may
not overstep. Toss though it may, it is to no avail; though its
billows roar, they cannot pass. | But this people's heart is
stubborn and rebellious; they turn and go away, | and say not
in their hearts, "Let us fear the Lord, our God, who gives us
rain early and late, in its time; who watches for us over the
appointed weeks of harvest." | Your crimes have prevented
these things, your sins have turned back these blessings from
you. | For there are among my people criminals; like fowlers
they set traps, but it is men they catch. | Their houses are as
full of treachery as a bird-cage is of birds; therefore they grow
powerful and rich, | fat and sleek. They go their wicked way;
justice they do not defend by advancing the claim of the father-
less or judging the cause of the poor. | Shall I not punish these
things? says the Lord; on a nation such as this shall I not take
vengeance? | A shocking, horrible thing has happened in the

5, 12: *They denied the Lord:* such expressions in the Bible never mean a theoretical denial of God, but a practical one, namely, the people act as though God does not exist.

5, 24: *Appointed weeks of harvest:* it did not usually rain during the seven weeks between the Passover and Pentecost.

31 land: | the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests teach as
they wish; yet my people will have it so; what will you do when
the end comes?

6

1 ***The Enemy at the Gates*** Flee, sons of Benjamin, out of
Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Thecua, raise a signal over
Beth-haccharem; for evil threatens from the north, and mighty
destruction. | O lovely and delicate daughter Sion, you are
3 ruined! | Against her, shepherds come with their flocks; all
around, they pitch their tents, each one grazes his portion. |
4 "Prepare for war against her. Up! Let us rush upon her at
midday! Alas! the day is waning, evening shadows lengthen;
5 up! let us rush upon her by night, destroy her palaces!"
6 For thus says the Lord of hosts: Hew down her trees, throw
up a siege mound against Jerusalem. Woe to the city marked
7 for punishment; nought but oppression within her! | As the
well gushes out its waters, so she gushes out her wickedness.
Violence and destruction resound in her; ever before me are
8 wounds and blows. Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I be estranged
from you; lest I turn you into a desert, a land where no man
dwells.
9 Thus says the Lord of hosts: Glean, glean like a vine the
remnant of Israel; pass your hand, like a vintager, repeatedly
10 over the tendrils. | To whom shall I speak? whom shall I warn,
and be heard? See! their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot
give heed; see, the word of the Lord has become for them an
11 object of scorn, which they will not have. | Therefore my
wrath brims up within me, I am weary of holding it in; I will
pour it out upon the child in the street, upon the young men
gathered together. Yes, all will be taken, husband and wife,
12 graybeard with ancient. | Their houses will fall to strangers,
their fields and their wives as well; for I will stretch forth my
hand against those who dwell in this land, says the Lord. |
13 Small and great alike, all are greedy for gain; prophet and
14 priest, all practice fraud. | They would repair, as though it
were nought, the injury to my people: "Peace, peace!" they say,
15 though there is no peace. | They are odious; they have done
abominable things, yet they are not at all ashamed, they know

6, 1: *Thecua . . . Beth-haccharem:* the flight is directed southward toward the desert of Juda.

6, 3: *Shepherds come with their flocks:* foreign invaders with their armies.

6, 14: The prophets and priests falsely assure the people that all is well, although in reality crass materialism is rampant.

not bow to blush. Hence they shall be among those who fall;
in their time of punishment they shall go down, says the Lord.
16 Thus says the Lord: Stand beside the earliest roads, ask the
pathways of old which is the way to good, and walk it; thus
you will find rest for your souls. But they said, "We will not
17 walk it." | When I raised up watchmen for them: "Hearken to
the sound of the trumpet!" they said, "We will not hearken." |
18 Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O earth, what I will do
19 with them: | See, I bring evil upon this people, the fruit of their
own schemes, because they heeded not my words, because they
20 despised my law. | Of what use to me incense that comes from
Saba, or sweet cane from far-off lands? Your holocausts find
21 no favor with me, your sacrifices please me not. | Therefore,
thus says the Lord: See, I will place before this people obstacles
to bring them down; fathers and sons alike, neighbors and
friends shall perish.
22 Thus says the Lord: See, a people comes from the land of the
north, a great nation, roused from the ends of the earth. |
23 Bow and javelin they wield; cruel and pitiless are they. They
sound like the roaring sea as they ride forth on steeds, each in
24 his place, for battle against you, daughter Sion. | We hear the
report of them; helpless fall our hands, anguish takes hold of
25 us, throes like a mother's in childbirth. | Go not forth into the
field, step not into the street, beware of the enemy's sword;
26 terror on every side! | O daughter of my people, gird on sack-
cloth, roll in the ashes. Mourn as for an only child with bitter
wailing, for sudden upon us comes the destroyer.
27 A tester among my people I have appointed you, to search
28 and test their way. | Arch-rebels are they all, dealers in slander,
29 all of them corrupt. | The bellows roars, the lead is consumed
by the fire; in vain has the smelter refined, the wicked are not
30 drawn off. | "Silver rejected" they shall be called, for the Lord
has rejected them.

II. ORACLES MOSTLY IN THE DAYS OF JOAKIM

7
1 ***The Temple Sermon*** The following message came to
2 Jeremia from the Lord: Stand at the gate of the house of the
Lord, and there proclaim this message: Hear the word of the

6, 16: *Earliest roads . . . the pathways of old:* history and what can be learned from it.

6, 17: *Watchmen:* prophets indicating the way of God's law.

Lord, all you of Juda who enter these gates to worship the
3 Lord! Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Reform
your ways and your deeds, so that I may remain with you in
4 this place. Put not your trust in the deceitful words: "This is
the temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord! The temple of
5 the Lord!" | Only if you thoroughly reform your ways and
6 your deeds; if each of you deals justly with his neighbor; if you
no longer oppress the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow;
if you no longer shed innocent blood in this place, or follow
7 strange gods to your own harm, will I remain with you in this
place, in the land which I gave your fathers long ago and
forever.
8 But here you are, putting your trust in deceitful words to
9 your own loss! Are you to steal and murder, commit adultery
and perjury, burn incense to Baal, go after strange gods that
10 you know not, and yet come to stand before me in this house
which bears my name, and say: "We are safe; we can commit
11 all these abominations again"? Has this house which bears my
name become in your eyes a den of thieves? I too see what is
12 being done, says the Lord. You may go to Silo, which I made
the dwelling place of my name in the beginning. See what I did
13 to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. And now,
because you have committed all these misdeeds, says the Lord,
because you did not listen, though I spoke to you untiringly;
14 because you did not answer, though I called you, | I will do to
this house named after me, in which you trust, and to this
place which I gave to you and your fathers, just as I did to
15 Silo. I will cast you away from me, as I cast away all your
brethren, all the offspring of Ephraim.

16 ***Abuses in Worship*** You, now, do not intercede for this
17 people; raise not in their behalf a pleading prayer! Do not urge
me, for I will not listen to you. Do you not see what they are
18 doing in the cities of Juda, in the streets of Jerusalem? The
children gather wood, their fathers light the fire, and the
women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven,

7, 6: *The resident alien:* the Mosaic Law protected him. See, e.g., Ex 20, 10.

7, 11: *A den of thieves:* see Mt 21, 13.

7, 12: *Silo:* although this was a legitimate place of worship from Josue's time to Samuel's, it later became illegal.

7, 14: *As I did to Silo:* an allusion to the destruction of Silo by the Philistines. See 1 Sm 1, 9.

7, 15: Refers to the destruction of the northern kingdom 722-21 B.C.

7, 18: *Cakes:* since Ishtar was identified with the planet Venus, the

while libations are poured out to strange gods in order to hurt
19 me. Is it I whom they hurt, says the Lord; is it not rather them-
20 selves, to their own confusion? See now, says the Lord God,
my anger and my wrath will pour out upon this place, upon
man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruits of the
earth; it will burn without being quenched.
21 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Heap your
22 holocausts upon your sacrifices; eat up the flesh! In speaking
to your fathers on the day I brought them out of the land of
Egypt, I gave them no command concerning holocaust or
23 sacrifice. This rather is what I commanded them: Listen to my
voice; then I will be your God and you shall be my people. Walk
in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper.
24 But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed. They walked
in the hardness of their evil hearts and turned their backs, not
25 their faces, to me. From the day that your fathers left the land
of Egypt even to this day, I have sent you untiringly all my
servants the prophets. Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid
26 heed; they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their
27 fathers. When you speak all these words to them, they will not
28 listen to you either; when you call to them, they will not answer
you. Say to them: This is the nation which does not listen to
the voice of the Lord, its God, or take correction. Faithfulness
has disappeared; the word itself is banished from their speech.
29 Cut off your dedicated hair and throw it away! on the heights
intone an elegy; for the Lord has rejected and cast off the
generation that draws down his wrath.
30 The people of Juda have done what is evil in my eyes, says
the Lord. They have defiled the house which bears my name
31 by setting up in it their abominable idols. In the Valley of
Ben-Hinnom they have built the high place of Thopheth to
immolate in fire their sons and their daughters, such a thing as
32 I never commanded or had in mind. | Therefore, beware! days
will come, says the Lord, when Thopheth and the Valley of
Ben-Hinnom will no longer be called such, but rather the Valley
of Slaughter. For lack of space, Thopheth will be a burial place.

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cakes were shaped in the form of stars. *Queen of heaven:* Ishtar, the Assyro-Babylonian goddess of fertility.

7, 22: *I gave them no command:* God demanded not purely external cult, but correct living (see v. 23).

7, 29: Jerusalem is personified as a woman cutting her hair as a sign of mourning because God rejected her.

7, 31: *Valley of Ben-Hinnom:* see 2, 23 n.

7, 32: *Days will come:* a favorite expression of Jeremia used fifteen times.

33 The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the sky
34 and for the beasts of the field, which no one will drive away. In the cities of Juda and in the streets of Jerusalem I will silence the cry of joy, the cry of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land will be turned to rubble.

8

1 At that time, says the Lord, the bones of the kings and princes of Juda, the bones of the priests and the prophets, and the bones of the citizens of Jerusalem will be emptied out of their
2 graves | and spread out before the sun and the moon and the whole army of heaven, which they loved and served, which they followed, consulted, and worshiped. They will not be gathered
3 up for burial, but will lie like dung upon the ground. Death will be preferred to life by all the survivors of this wicked race who remain in any of the places to which I banish them, says the Lord of hosts.

4 ***Israel's Conduct Incomprehensible*** Tell them: Thus says the Lord: When someone falls, does he not rise again? if he goes
5 astray, does he not turn back? | Why do these people rebel with obstinate resistance? Why do they cling to deceptive idols,
6 refuse to turn back? | I listen closely: they speak what is not true; no one repents of his wickedness, saying "What have I done!" Everyone keeps on running his course, like a steed dash-
7 ing into battle. | Even the stork in the air knows its seasons; turtledove, swallow and thrush observe their time of return, but my people do not know the ordinance of the Lord.
8 How can you say, "We are wise, we have the law of the Lord"? Why, that has been changed into falsehood by the
9 lying pen of the scribes! | The wise are confounded, dismayed and ensnared; since they have rejected the word of the Lord, of what avail is their wisdom?

10 ***Shameless in Their Crimes*** Therefore, I will give their wives to strangers, their fields to spoilers. Small and great alike, all are greedy for gain, prophet and priest, all practice

8, 1-3: Jeremia may be speaking ironically here by making their bones appear as offerings to the sun and moon. This is the idolatry they practiced during their lifetime.

8, 2: *Army of heaven:* the stars which the people worshiped.

8, 8-9: *Lying pen:* the pen of the scribes lied because their interpretations contradicted "the word of the Lord."

11 fraud. | They would repair, as though it were nought, the
injury to the daughter of my people: "Peace, peace!" they say,
12 though there is no peace. | They are odious; they have done
abominable things, yet they are not at all ashamed, they know
not how to blush. Hence they shall be among those who fall; in
their time of punishment they shall go down, says the Lord.

13 ***Threats of Punishment*** I will gather them all in, says
the Lord: no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig trees, foliage
14 withered! | Why do we remain here? Let us form ranks and
enter the walled cities, to perish there; for the Lord has wrought
our destruction, he has given us poison to drink, because we
15 have sinned against the Lord. | We wait for peace to no avail;
16 for a time of healing, but terror comes instead. | From Dan is
heard the snorting of his steeds; the neighing of his stallions
shakes the whole land. They come devouring the land and all it
17 contains, the city and those who dwell in it. | Yes, I will send
against you poisonous snakes, against which no charm will
work when they bite you, says the Lord.

18 ***The Prophet's Grief over the People's Suffering*** My
19 grief is incurable, my heart within me is faint. | Listen! the cry
of the daughter of my people, far and wide in the land! Is the
Lord no longer in Sion, is her King no longer in her midst?
[Why do they provoke me with their idols, with their foreign
20 nonentities?] | "The harvest has passed, the summer is at an
21 end, and yet we are not safe!" | I am broken by the ruin of the
daughter of my people. I am disconsolate; horror has seized me
22 | Is there no balm in Galaad, no physician there? Why grows
not new flesh over the wound of the daughter of my people? |
23 Oh, that my head were a spring of water, my eyes a fountain
of tears, that I might weep day and night over the slain of the
daughter of my people!

9

1 ***The Corruption of the People*** Would that I had in the
desert a travelers' lodge! That I might leave my people and de-
2 part from them. They are all adulterers, a faithless band. | They
ready their tongues like a drawn bow; with lying, and not with
truth, they hold forth in the land. They go from evil to evil, but

8, 11: *Daughter of my people:* the personification of the people. This expression occurs four more times in this chapter.
8, 22: *Balm in Galaad:* a highly prized and famous balm.

me they know not, says the Lord. | Be on your guard, everyone
against his neighbor; put no trust in any brother. Every brother
apes Jacob, the supplanter, every friend is guilty of slander. |
Each one deceives the other, no one speaks the truth. They have
accustomed their tongues to lying, and are perverse, and cannot
repent. | Violence upon violence, deceit upon deceit: they re-
fuse to recognize me, says the Lord.
Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: I will smelt them and
test them; how else should I deal with their wickedness? | A
murderous arrow is his tongue, his mouth utters deceit; he
speaks cordially with his friends, but in his heart he lays an
ambush! | For these things, says the Lord, shall I not punish
them? On a nation such as this shall I not take vengeance?

Dirge over the Ravaged Land Over the mountains, break
out in cries of lamentation, over the pasture lands, intone a
dirge: they are scorched, and no man crosses them, unheard is
the bleat of the flock; birds of the air as well as beasts, all have
fled, and are gone. | I will turn Jerusalem into a heap of ruins,
a haunt of jackals; the cities of Juda I will make into a waste,
where no one dwells.
Who is so wise that he can understand this? Let him to
whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken make it known: Why
is the land ravaged, scorched like a wasteland untraversed?
The Lord answered: Because they have abandoned my law,
which I set before them, and have not followed it or listened to
my voice, but followed rather the hardness of their hearts and
the Baals, as their fathers had taught them; | therefore, thus
says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: See now, I will give
them wormwood to eat and poison to drink. I will scatter them
among nations whom neither they nor their fathers have known;
I will send the sword to pursue them until I have completely
destroyed them.
Thus says the Lord of hosts: Attention! tell the wailing
women to come, summon the best of them; | let them come
quickly and intone a dirge for us, that our eyes may be wet with
weeping, our cheeks run with tears. | The dirge is heard from
Sion: Ruined we are, and greatly ashamed; we must leave the
land, give up our homes! | Hear, you women, the word of the
Lord, let your ears receive his message. Teach your daughters
this dirge, and each other this lament. | Death has come up
through our windows, has entered our palaces; it cuts down the

9, 3: *Apes Jacob, the supplanter:* Jacob (meaning "he supplants") took his brother's birthright away. See Gn 25, 26.

21 children in the street, young people in the squares. | The corpses
of the slain lie like dung on a field, like sheaves behind the har-
vester, with no one to gather them.

22 ***True Glory*** Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man glory
in his wisdom, nor the strong man glory in his strength, nor
23 the rich man glory in his riches; | but rather, let him who
glories, glory in this, that in his prudence he knows me, knows
that I, the Lord, bring about kindness, justice and uprightness
on the earth; for with such am I pleased, says the Lord.

24 ***Circumcision Worthless*** See, days are coming, says the
Lord, when I will demand an account of all those circumcised
25 in their flesh: Egypt and Juda, Edom and the Ammonites, Moab
and the desert dwellers who shave their temples. For all these
nations, like the whole house of Israel, are uncircumcised in
heart.

10

1 ***The Folly of Idolatry*** Hear the word which the Lord
2 speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: Learn
not the customs of the nations, and have no fear of the signs
3 of the heavens, though the nations fear them. | For the cult
idols of the nations are nothing, wood cut from the forest,
4 wrought by craftsmen with the adze, | adorned with silver and
gold. With nails and hammers they are fastened, that they may
5 not totter. | Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, they
cannot speak; they must be carried about, for they cannot walk.
Fear them not, they can do no harm, neither is it in their power
6 to do good. | No one is like you, O Lord, great are you, great
7 and mighty is your name. | Who would not fear you, King of
the nations, for it is your due!
Among all the wisest of the nations, and in all their domain,
there is none like you.
8 One and all they are dumb and senseless, these idols they
9 teach about are wooden: | silver strips brought from Tharsis,
and gold from Ophir, the work of the craftsman and the handi-
work of the smelter, clothed with violet and purple—all of them
the work of artisans.

9, 25: *Desert dwellers who shave their temples:* Arabs who shave their temples in honor of Bacchus. Lv 19, 27 forbids it.

10, 1-9: On the understanding of polytheism, see Is 44, 9-20 n.

10, 2: *Signs of the heavens:* pagans interpreted the heavens superstitiously.

11 Thus shall you say of them: Let the gods that did not make
heaven and earth perish from the earth, and from beneath these
heavens!
10 The Lord is true God, he is the living God, the eternal King,
before whose anger the earth quakes, whose wrath the nations
12 cannot endure: | he who made the earth by his power, estab-
lished the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens
13 by his skill. | When he thunders, the waters in the heavens
roar, and he brings up clouds from the end of the earth; he
makes the lightning flash in the rain, and releases stormwinds
14 from their chambers. | Every man is stupid, ignorant; every
artisan is put to shame by his idol: he has molded a fraud, with-
15 out breath of life. | Nothingness are they, a ridiculous work;
16 they will perish in their time of punishment. | Not like these is
the portion of Jacob: he is the creator of all things; Israel is his
very own tribe, Lord of hosts is his name.

17 ***Abandonment of Juda*** Lift your bundle and leave the
18 land, O city living in a stage of siege! | For thus says the Lord:
Behold, this time I will sling away the inhabitants of the land;
19 I will hem them in, that they may be taken. | Woe is me! I am
undone, my wound is incurable; yet I had thought: if I make
20 light of my wound, I can bear it. | My tent is ruined, all its
cords are severed. My sons have left me, they are no more: no
21 one to pitch my tent, no one to raise its curtains. | Yes, the
shepherds were stupid as cattle, the Lord they sought not; there-
fore they had no success, and all their flocks were scattered. |
22 Listen! a noise! it comes closer, a great uproar from the northern
land: to turn the cities of Juda into a desert haunt of jackals.

23 ***Prayer of Jeremia*** You know, O Lord, that man is not
master of his way; man's course is not within his choice, nor
24 is it for him to direct his step. | Punish us, O Lord, but with
25 equity, not in anger, lest you have us dwindle away. | Pour
out your wrath on the nations that know you not, on the tribes
that call not upon your name; for they have devoured Jacob
utterly, and laid waste his dwelling.

11

1 ***Plea for Fidelity to the Covenant*** The following mes-
2 sage came to Jeremia from the Lord: Speak to the men of Juda
3 and to the citizens of Jerusalem, saying to them: Thus says the

10, 11: On verse displacement, see Za 4, 4ff n.
10, 21: *The shepherds:* the leaders of the people.

Lord, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not ob-
4 serve the terms of this covenant, which I enjoined upon your
fathers the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that
iron foundry, saying: Listen to my voice and do all that I com-
mand you. Then you shall be my people, and I will be your
5 God. Thus I will fulfill the oath which I swore to your fathers,
to give them a land flowing with milk and honey: the one you
have today. "Amen, Lord," I answered.
6 Then the Lord said to me: Proclaim all these words in the
cities of Juda and in the streets of Jerusalem: Hear the words
7 of this covenant and obey them. Urgently and constantly I
warned your fathers to obey my voice, from the day I brought
8 them up out of the land of Egypt even to this day. | But they
did not listen or give ear. Each one followed the hardness of his
evil heart, till I brought upon them all the threats of this cove-
nant which they had failed to observe as I commanded them.
9 A conspiracy has been found, the Lord said to me, among
10 the men of Juda and the citizens of Jerusalem. They have re-
turned to the crimes of their forefathers who refused to obey my
words. They also have followed and served strange gods; the
covenant which I had made with their fathers, the house of
11 Israel and the house of Juda have broken. | Therefore, thus
says the Lord: See, I bring upon them misfortune which they
cannot escape. Though they cry out to me, I will not listen to
12 them. Then the cities of Juda and the citizens of Jerusalem will
go and cry out to the gods to which they have been offering in-
cense. But these gods will give them no help whatever when
misfortune strikes.
13 For as numerous as your cities are your gods, O Juda! And as
many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars for offering sacri-
fice to Baal.
14 Do not intercede on behalf of this people, nor utter a plea for
them. I will not listen when they call to me at the time of their
misfortune.

15 *Sacrifices of No Avail* What right has my beloved in my
house, while she prepares her plots? Can vows and sacred meat
turn away your misfortune from you? Will you still be jubilant
16 | when you hear the great invasion? A spreading olive tree,
goodly to behold, the Lord has named you; now he sets fire to
it, its branches burn.
17 The Lord of hosts who planted you has decreed misfortune

11, 4: *Egypt, that iron foundry:* see Dt 4, 20 n for the explanation.
11, 13: A repetition of 2, 28b.

for you because of the evil done by the house of Israel and by the house of Juda, who provoked me by sacrificing to Baal.

18 ***The Plot against Jeremia*** I knew it because the Lord informed me; at that time you, O Lord, showed me their doings.

12

1 You would be in the right, O Lord, if I should dispute with you; even so, I must discuss the case with you. Why does the way of the godless prosper, why live all the treacherous in con-
2 tentment? | You planted them; they have taken root, they keep on growing and bearing fruit. You are upon their lips,
3 but far from their inmost thoughts. | You, O Lord, know me, you see me, you have found that at heart I am with you. Pick them out like sheep for the slaughter, set them apart for the day
4 of carnage. | How long must the earth mourn, the green of the whole countryside wither? For the wickedness of those who dwell in it beasts and birds disappear, because they say, "God does not see our ways."
5 If running against men has wearied you, how will you race against horses? And if in a land of peace you fall headlong, what will you do in the thickets of the Jordan?
6 For even your own brothers, the members of your father's house, betray you; they have recruited a force against you. Do not believe them, even if they are friendly to you in their words.
11,19 Yet I, like a trusting lamb led to slaughter, had not realized that they were hatching plots against me: "Let us destroy the tree in its vigor; let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will be spoken no more."
20 But, you, O Lord of hosts, O just Judge, searcher of mind and heart, let me witness the vengeance you take on them, for to you I have entrusted my cause!
21 Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the men of Ana-
22 thoth who seek your life, saying, "Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord; else you shall die by our hand." | Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: I am going to punish them. The young

12, 1-5: See "Confessions" in the Introduction to the Book of Jeremia.

12, 3: Jeremia knew only about temporal (not eternal) retribution as the means of executing God's justice. It is God's justice that he desires more than personal satisfaction.

12, 5: Yahweh "answers" Jeremia that in dealing with men the prophet must prepare to meet greater trials in the future and even more evil than before.

11, 19: On the rearrangement of verses, see Za 4, 4ff n.

11, 20: See 12, 3 n.

men shall die by the sword; their sons and daughters shall die
23 by famine. None shall be spared among them, for I will bring misfortune upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment.

12,7 ***The Lord's Complaint*** I abandon my house, cast off my heritage; the beloved of my soul I deliver into the hand of
8 her foes. | My heritage has turned on me like a lion in the jungle; because she has roared against me, I treat her as an
9 enemy. | My heritage is a prey for hyenas, is surrounded by vultures; come, gather together, all you beasts of the field,
10 come and eat! | Many shepherds have ravaged my vineyard, have trodden my heritage underfoot; the portion that delighted
11 me they have turned into a desert waste. | They have made it a mournful waste, desolate it lies before me, desolate, all the
12 land, because no one takes it to heart. | Upon every desert height brigands have come up. The Lord has a sword which consumes the land, from end to end: no peace for all mankind.
13 | They have sown wheat and reaped thorns, they have tired themselves out to no purpose; they recoil before their harvest, the flaming anger of the Lord.

14 ***Juda's Neighbors*** Thus says the Lord against all my evil neighbors who plunder the heritage which I gave my people Israel as their own: See, I will pluck them up from their land;
15 the house of Juda I will pluck up in their midst. But after plucking them up, I will pity them again and bring them back,
16 each to his heritage, each to his land. And if they carefully learn my people's custom of swearing by my name, "As the Lord lives," they who formerly taught my people to swear by
17 Baal shall be built up in the midst of my people. But if they do not obey, I will uproot and destroy that nation entirely, says the Lord.

13

1 ***Juda's Corruption*** The Lord said to me: Go buy yourself a linen loincloth; wear it on your loins, but do not put it in water.
2 I bought the loincloth, as the Lord commanded, and put it on.

12, 14: *My evil neighbors:* Israel's pagan neighbors.

13, 1-11: The loincloth represents the people, the body represents God. Just as the loincloth is close to the body, so are the people close to God. But "Pharat" (the Euphrates river symbolizing Babylon) corrupts the loincloth (the people) through the policy of a foreign alliance. This passage may not necessarily be interpreted as an action which

3-4 A second time the word of the Lord came to me thus: Take the
loincloth which you bought and are wearing, and go now to the
5 Pharat; there hide it in a cleft of the rock. Obedient to the Lord's
6 command, I went to the Pharat and buried the loincloth. After
a long interval, he said to me: Go now to the Pharat and fetch
7 the loincloth which I told you to hide there. Again I went to
the Pharat, sought out and took the loincloth from the place
8 where I had hid it. But it was rotted, good for nothing! Then
9 the message came to me from the Lord: | Thus says the Lord:
So also I will allow the pride of Juda to rot, the great pride of
10 Jerusalem. This wicked people who refuse to obey my words,
who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts, and follow strange
gods to serve and adore them, shall be like this loincloth which
11 is good for nothing. For, as close as the loincloth clings to a
man's loins, so had I made the whole house of Israel and the
whole house of Juda cling to me, says the Lord; to be my people,
my renown, my praise, my beauty. But they did not listen.

12 ***The Broken Wineflask*** Now speak to them this word:
Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Every wineflask is meant
to be filled with wine. If they reply, "Do we not know that
13 every wineflask is meant to be filled with wine?" | say to them:
Thus says the Lord: Beware! I am filling with drunkenness all
the inhabitants of this land, the kings who succeed to David's
throne, the priests and prophets, and all the citizens of Jeru-
14 salem. I will dash them against each other, fathers and sons
together, says the Lord; I will show no compassion, I will not
spare or pity, but will destroy them.

15 ***A Last Warning*** Give ear, listen humbly, for the Lord
16 speaks. | Give glory to the Lord, your God, before it grows
dark; before your feet stumble on darkening mountains; before
the light you look for turns to darkness, changes into black
17 clouds. | If you do not listen to this in your pride, I will weep
in secret many tears; my eyes will run with tears for the Lord's
flock, led away to exile.

Jeremia carried out by two trips to the Euphrates or to a nearby stream. Jeremia could have seen this symbolism in his mind through a divine inspiration and it is here expressed as an external action. The same explanation may hold true for his other symbolic acts. See "symbolic acts" in the Introduction to the Prophetical Books.

13, 12-14: God will turn the wineflask of merriment into one of wrath.

13, 15-17: Jeremia warns the people on the forthcoming exile.

18 ***Exile*** Say to the king and to the queen mother: come down
from your throne; from your heads fall your magnificent
19 crowns. | The cities of the Negeb are besieged, with no one to
relieve them; all Juda is banished in universal exile.

20 ***Jerusalem's Disgrace*** Lift up your eyes and see men coming
from the north. Where is the flock entrusted to you, the sheep
21 that were your glory? | What will you say when they place as
rulers over you those whom you taught to be your lovers? Will
22 not pangs seize you like those of a woman giving birth? | If you
ask in your heart why these things befall you: for your great
23 guilt your skirts are stripped away and you are violated. | Can
the Ethiopian change his skin? the leopard his spots? As easily
would you be able to do good, accustomed to evil as you are. |
24 I will scatter them like chaff that flies when the desert wind
25 blows. | This is your lot, the portion measured out to you from
me, says the Lord. Because you have forgotten me, and trusted
26 in the lying idol, | I now will strip off your skirts from you, so
27 that your shame will appear. | Your adulteries, your neighings,
your shameless prostitutions: on the hills in the highlands I see
these horrible crimes of yours. Woe to you, Jerusalem, how
long will it yet be before you become clean!

14

1 ***The Great Drought*** The word of the Lord that came to
2 Jeremia concerning the drought: | Juda mourns, her gates are
lifeless; her people sink down in mourning: from Jerusalem
3 ascends a cry of anguish. | The nobles send their servants for
water, but when they come to the cisterns they find no water
and return with empty jars. Ashamed, despairing, they cover
4 their heads | because of the stricken soil; because there is no
rain in the land the farmers are ashamed, they cover their
5 heads. | Even the hind in the field deserts her offspring because
6 there is no grass. | The wild asses stand on the bare heights,

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13, 18-19: Jeremia refers to king Joakin who was deported to Babylon after a three-months' rule, following the death of his father Joakim.

13, 20-27: After the Babylonians defeated the Egyptians in 605, (See 25, 1 n) Jeremia warns the Jerusalemites that the Babylonians, their former allies ("lovers") will become their rulers (v. 21).

13, 23: It is as difficult for the people to do good as it would be for the Ethiopians and leopards to change their skins.

14, 1—15, 5: A drought occurred during the reign of Joakim.

14, 2-3: The drought in Jerusalem and the cities ("gates") of Juda (vv. 2-3), in the countryside (v. 4), and the drought affecting the animals (vv. 5-6).

gasping for breath like jackals; their eyes grow dim, because there is no vegetation to be seen.

7 Even though our crimes bear witness against us, take action,
O Lord, for the honor of your name—even though our rebellions
8 are many, though we have sinned against you. | O Hope of
Israel, O Lord, our savior in time of need! Why should you be
a stranger in this land, like a traveler who has stopped but for
9 a night? | Why are you like a man dumbfounded, a champion
who cannot save? You are in our midst, O Lord, your name we
bear: do not forsake us!

10 Thus says the Lord of this people: They so love to wander
that they do not spare their feet. The Lord has no pleasure in
them; now he remembers their guilt, and will punish their sins.

11 Then the Lord said to me: Do not intercede for this people.
12 If they fast, I will not listen to their supplication. If they offer
holocausts or cereal offerings, I will not accept them. Rather, I
will destroy them with the sword, famine, and pestilence.

13 Ah! Lord God, I replied, it is the prophets who say to them,
"You shall not see the sword; famine shall not befall you. In-
deed, I will give you lasting peace in this place."

14 Lies these prophets utter in my name, the Lord said to me. I
did not send them; I gave them no command nor did I speak
to them. Lying visions, foolish divination, dreams of their own
15 imagination, they prophesy to you. | Therefore, thus says the
Lord: Concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name,
though I did not send them; who say, "Sword and famine shall
not befall this land": by the sword and famine shall these proph-
16 ets meet their end. The people to whom they prophesy shall be
cast out into the streets of Jerusalem by famine and the sword.
No one shall bury them, their wives, their sons, or their daugh-
17 ters, for I will pour out upon them their own wickedness. Speak
to them this word:

Let my eyes stream with tears day and night, without rest,
over the great destruction which overwhelms the virgin daugh-
18 ter of my people, over her incurable wound. | If I walk out into
the field, look! those slain by the sword; if I enter the city, look!
those consumed by hunger. Even the prophet and the priest
forage in a land they know not.

19 Have you cast Juda off completely? Is Sion loathsome to you?
Why have you struck us a blow that cannot be healed? We wait
for peace, to no avail; for a time of healing, but terror comes
20 instead. | We recognize, O Lord, our wickedness, the guilt of
21 our fathers; that we have sinned against you. | For your name's

14, 21: *For your name's sake:* Jeremia means: if God does not rescue the people from disaster, the pagans will think that Yahweh is

sake spurn us not, disgrace not the throne of your glory; re-
22 member your covenant with us, and break it not. | Among the nations' idols is there any that gives rain? Or can the mere heavens send showers? Is it not you alone, O Lord, our God, to whom we look? You alone have done all these things.

15

1 The Lord said to me: Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me, my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them
2 away from me. | If they ask you where they should go, tell them, Thus says the Lord: Whoever is marked for death, to death; whoever is marked for the sword, to the sword; whoever is marked for famine, to famine; whoever is marked for cap-
3 tivity, to captivity. Four kinds of scourge I have decreed against them, says the Lord: the sword to slay them; dogs to drag them about; the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth to devour
4 and destroy them. And I will make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasse, son of Ezechia, king of Juda, did in Jerusalem.

5 *Scene of Tragedy* Who will pity you, Jerusalem, who will
6 console you? Who will stop to ask about your welfare? | You have disowned me, says the Lord, turned your back upon me; and so I stretched out my hand to destroy you; I was weary of
7 sparing you. | I winnowed them with the fan in every city gate. I destroyed my people through bereavement; they returned not
8 from their evil ways. | Their widows were more numerous before me than the sands of the sea. I brought against the mother of youths the spoiler at midday; suddenly I struck her
9 with anguish and terror. | The mother of seven swoons away, gasping out her life; her sun sets in full day, she is disgraced, despairing. Their survivors I will give to the sword before their enemies, says the Lord.

10 *Jeremia's Complaint* Woe to me, mother, that you gave me birth! a man of strife and contention to all the land! I neither
11 borrow nor lend, yet all curse me. | Tell me, Lord, have I not served you well? Have I not interceded with you for my ene-

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powerless to save His people. This expression is commonly found in Lenten Masses of the Roman Liturgy.

15, 1-4: God's reply to Jeremia's plea in ch. 14.

15, 4: A reference to king Manasse's immoral reign. See 4 Kgs 23, 26.

15, 10-21: See "Confessions" in the Introduction to the Book of Jeremia.

mies in the time of their misfortune and anguish? You know I
15 have. | Remember me, Lord, visit me, and avenge me on my
persecutors. Because of your long-suffering banish me not; know
16 that for you I have borne insult. | When I found your words, I
devoured them; they became my joy and the happiness of my
17 heart, because I bore your name, O Lord, God of hosts. | I did
not sit celebrating in the circle of merrymakers; under the
weight of your hand I sat alone because you filled me with in-
18 dignation. | Why is my pain continuous, my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed? You have indeed become for me a
19 treacherous brook, whose waters do not abide! | Thus the Lord
answered me: If you repent, so that I restore you, in my presence
you shall stand; if you bring forth the precious without the
vile, you shall be my mouthpiece. Then it shall be they who
20 turn to you, and you shall not turn to them; | and I will make
you toward this people a solid wall of brass. Though they fight
against you, they shall not prevail, for I am with you, to de-
21 liver and rescue you, says the Lord. | I will free you from the
hand of the wicked, and rescue you from the grasp of the
violent.

16

1 ***Jeremia's Life a Warning*** This message came to me from
2 the Lord: Do not marry any woman; you shall not have sons
3 or daughters in this place, for thus says the Lord concerning
the sons and daughters who will be born in this place, the
mothers who will give them birth, the fathers who will beget
4 them in this land: Of deadly disease they shall die. Unlamented
and unburied they will lie like dung on the ground. Sword and
famine will make an end of them, and their corpses will be-
come food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.
5 Go not into a house of mourning, the Lord continued: go not
there to lament or offer sympathy. For I have withdrawn my
friendship from this people, says the Lord, my kindness and my
6 pity. They shall die, the great and the lowly, in this land, and
shall go unburied and unlamented. No one will gash himself or
7 shave his head for them. They will not break bread with the
bereaved to console them in their bereavement; they will not give

15, 15: See 12, 3 n concerning Jeremia's revenge.

15, 18: *A treacherous brook:* just as a brook "disappoints" a thirsty man when it is dry, so does God "disappoint" Jeremia when he is thirsting for divine help.

16, 1ff: Less dramatic than Osee, Jeremia's celibate and mournful life symbolized the sorrowful future of Juda.

16, 6-7: The mourning customs were contaminated with pagan ones.

them the cup of consolation to drink over the death of father or
mother.
8 Enter not a house where people are celebrating, to sit with
9 them eating and drinking. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the
God of Israel: Before your very eyes and during your lifetime I
will silence from this place the cry of joy and the cry of glad-
ness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.
10 When you proclaim all these words to this people and they
ask you: "Why has the Lord pronounced all these great evils
against us? What is our crime? What sin have we committed
11 against the Lord, our God?"—you shall answer them: It is be-
cause your fathers have forsaken me, says the Lord, and fol-
lowed strange gods, which they served and worshiped; but me
12 they have forsaken, and my law they have not observed. And
you have done worse than your fathers. Here you are, every one
of you, walking in the hardness of his evil heart instead of lis-
13 tening to me. I will cast you out of this land into a land that
neither you nor your fathers have known; there you can serve
strange gods day and night, because I will not grant you my
mercy.

14 ***Return from Exile*** However, days will surely come, says
the Lord, when it will no longer be said, "As the Lord lives
15 who brought the Israelites out of Egypt"; | but rather, "As the
Lord lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of the
north and out of all the countries to which he had banished
them." I will bring them back to the land which I gave their
fathers.

16 ***Double Punishment*** Look! I will send many fishermen,
says the Lord, to catch them. After that, I will send many hunt-
ers to hunt them out from every mountain and hill and from
17 the clefts of the rocks. For my eyes are upon all their ways; they
are not hidden from me, nor does their guilt escape my view.
18 I will at once repay them double for their crime and their sin,
of profaning my land with their detestable corpses of idols
and filling my heritage with their abominations.

19 ***Conversion of the Heathen*** O Lord, my strength, my
fortress, my refuge in the day of distress! To you will the na-
tions come from the ends of the earth, and say, "Mere fraud
20 are the heritage of our fathers, empty idols of no use." | Can
21 man make for himself gods? These are not gods. | Look, then,
I will give them knowledge; this time I will leave them in no

doubt of my strength and my power: they shall know that my name is Lord.

17

1 ***The Sin of Juda and Its Punishment*** The sin of Juda is written with an iron stylus, engraved with a diamond point upon the tablets of their hearts.

2 [And the horns of their altars, | when their sons remember
3 their altars and their sacred poles, | beside the green trees, on the high hills, the peaks in the highland.]

Your wealth and all your treasures I will give as spoil. In
4 recompense for all your sins throughout your borders, | you will relinquish your hold on your heritage which I have given you. I will enslave you to your enemies in a land that you know not: for a fire has been kindled by my wrath that will burn forever.

5 ***True Wisdom*** Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the man who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose
6 heart turns away from the Lord. | He is like a barren bush in the desert that enjoys no change of season, but stands in a lava
7 waste, a salt and empty earth. | Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: |
8 it fears not the heat when it comes, its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit. |
9 More tortuous than all else is the human heart, beyond remedy;
10 who can understand it? | I, the Lord, alone probe the mind and test the heart, to reward everyone according to his ways, ac-
11 cording to the merit of his deeds. | A partridge that mothers a brood not her own is the man who acquires wealth unjustly: in midlife it will desert him; in the end he is only a fool.

12 ***The Source of Life*** A throne of glory, exalted from the
13 beginning, such is our holy place. | O hope of Israel, O Lord! all who forsake you shall be in disgrace; the rebels in the land

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17, 1: *Diamond point:* Pliny's "Natural History" mentions such a use.

17, 2-3: *Sacred poles . . . green trees . . . high hills . . . peaks:* favorite spots for idolatrous shrines.

17, 4: *In a land that you know not:* this may be alluding to the deportation of 598 B.C.

17, 5-8: In the manner of a wisdom saying, "The man who trusts in human beings" (vv. 5-6) is contrasted with the man who trusts in God (vv. 7-8).

shall be put to shame; they have forsaken the source of living waters [the Lord].

14 ***Prayer for Vengeance*** Heal me, Lord, that I may be healed; save me, that I may be saved, for it is you whom I praise.
15 | See how they say to me, "Where is the word of the Lord? Let
16 it come to pass!" | Yet I did not press you to send calamity; the day without remedy I have not desired. You know what passed
17 my lips; it is present before you. | Do not be my ruin, you, my
18 refuge in the day of misfortune. | Let my persecutors, not me, be confounded; let them, not me, be broken. Bring upon them the day of misfortune, crush them with repeated destruction.

19 ***Observance of the Sabbath*** Thus said the Lord to me: Go, stand at the Gate of Benjamin, where the kings of Juda
20 enter and leave, and at the other gates of Jerusalem. | There say to them: Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Juda, and all Juda, and all you citizens of Jerusalem who enter these gates!
21 | Thus says the Lord: As you love your lives, take care not to carry burdens on the Sabbath day, to bring them in through the
22 gates of Jerusalem. Bring no burden from your homes on the Sabbath. Do no work whatever, but keep holy the Sabbath, as
23 I commanded your fathers, | though they did not listen or give ear, but stiffened their necks so as not to hear or take correction.
24 If you obey me wholeheartedly, says the Lord, and carry no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, keeping the
25 Sabbath holy and abstaining from all work on it, | then, through the gates of this city, kings who sit upon the throne of David will continue to enter, riding in their chariots or upon their horses, along with their princes, and the men of Juda, and the citizens of Jerusalem. This city will remain inhabited for-
26 ever. To it people will come from the cities of Juda and the neighborhood of Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the foothills, from the hill country and the Negeb, to bring holocausts and sacrifices, cereal offerings and incense and thank
27 offerings to the house of the Lord. But if you do not obey me and keep holy the Sabbath, if you carry burdens and come

17, 14-18: See "Confessions" in Introduction to the Book of Jeremia.
17, 15: Jeremia is mocked because his prediction of doom has not come true. See 17, 4 n.
17, 18: See 12, 3 n on Jeremia's revenge.
17, 19-27: Many believe this comes from a later hand after Jeremia's day, preferably after the exile of 538 when the Sabbath observance was stressed.

through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath, I will set unquenchable fire to its gates, which will consume the palaces of Jerusalem.

18

1 ***The Potter's Vessel*** This word came to Jeremia from the
2.3 Lord: Rise up, be off to the potter's house; there I will give you
my message. I went down to the potter's house and there he
4 was, working at the wheel. Whenever the object of clay which
he was making turned out badly in his hand, he tried again,
making of the clay another object of whatever sort he pleased.
5.6 Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do to you,
house of Israel, as this potter has done? says the Lord. Indeed,
like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house
7 of Israel. Sometimes I threaten to uproot and tear down and
8 destroy a nation or a kingdom. But if that nation which I have
threatened turns from its evil, I also repent of the evil which I
9 threatened to do. Sometimes, again, I promise to build up and
10 plant a nation or a kingdom. But if that nation does what is evil
in my eyes, refusing to obey my voice, I repent of the good with
which I promised to bless it.

11 And now, tell this to the men of Juda and the citizens of
Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord: Take care! I am fashioning
evil against you and making a plan. Return, each of you, from
12 his evil way; reform your ways and your deeds. | But they will
say, "No use! We will follow our own devices; each one of us
will behave according to the stubbornness of his evil heart!"

13 ***Juda's Apostasy Unnatural*** Therefore thus says the Lord:
Ask among the nations—who has ever heard the like? Truly
14 horrible things has virgin Israel done! | Does the snow of
Lebanon desert the rocky heights? Do the gushing waters dry
15 up that flow fresh down the mountains? | Yet my people have
forgotten me: they burn incense to a thing that does not exist.
They stumble out of their ways, the paths of old, to travel on
16 bypaths, not the beaten track. | Their land shall be turned into
a desert, an object of lasting ridicule: all passers-by will be
17 amazed, will shake their heads. | Like the east wind, I will scatter them before their enemies; I will show them my back, not my face, in their day of disaster.

18—20: The historical background is about 600 B.C.

18, 1-12: The lesson is that God, within the limits of His mercy, can destroy the unworthy.

18 ***Another Prayer for Vengeance*** "Come," they said, "let us
contrive a plot against Jeremia. It will not mean the loss of in
struction from the priests, nor of counsel from the wise, nor o
messages from the prophets. And so, let us destroy him by his
own tongue; let us carefully note his every word."
19 Heed me, O Lord, and listen to what my adversaries say.
20 Must good be repaid with evil that they should dig a pit to take
my life? Remember that I stood before you to speak in their be
21 half, to turn away your wrath from them. | So now, deliver
their children to famine, do away with them by the sword. Le
their wives be made childless and widows; let their men die o
pestilence, their young men be slain by the sword in battle.
22 May cries be heard from their homes, when suddenly you send
plunderers against them. For they have dug a pit to capture me
23 they have hid snares for my feet; | but you, O Lord, know all
their plans to slay me. Forgive not their crime, blot not out thei
sin in your sight! Let them go down before you, proceed against
them in the time of your anger.

19

1 ***Symbol of the Potter's Flask*** Thus said the Lord: Go
buy a potter's earthen flask. Take along some of the elders of th
2 people and of the priests, and go out toward the Valley of Ben
Hinnom, at the entrance of the Potsherd Gate; there proclaim
3 the words which I will speak to you: Listen to the word of th
Lord, kings of Juda and citizens of Jerusalem: Thus says th
Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to bring such evi
upon this place that all who hear of it will feel their ears tingle
4 This is because they have forsaken me and alienated this plac
by burning in it incense to strange gods which neither they no
their fathers knew; and the kings of Juda have filled this plac
5 with the blood of the innocent. They have built high place
for Baal to immolate their sons in fire as holocausts to Baal
such a thing as I neither commanded nor spoke of, nor did i
6 ever enter my mind. Therefore, days will come, says the Lord
when this place will no longer be called Thopheth, or the Valle
7 of Ben-Hinnom, but rather, the Valley of Slaughter. In thi
place I will foil the plan of Juda and Jerusalem; I will mak
them fall by the sword before their enemies, by the hand o
those that seek their lives. Their corpses I will give as food t
8 the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field. I will make thi

18, 18-23: For Jeremia's revenge see 12, 3 n.
19, 2: *Potsherd Gate:* in Jerusalem's south wall.
19, 3-9: A rough repetition of 7, 30-33.

city an object of amazement and derision. Because of all its
9 wounds, every passer-by will be amazed and will hiss. Moreover, I will have them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters;
they shall eat one another's flesh during the strict siege by which
their enemies and those who seek their lives will confine them.
10 And you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who
11 went with you, | and say to them: Thus says the Lord of hosts:
Thus will I smash this people and this city, as one smashes a
clay pot so that it cannot be repaired. And Thopheth shall be a
12 burial place, for lack of place to bury elsewhere. Thus I will
do to this place and to its inhabitants, says the Lord; I will make
13 this city like Thopheth. And the houses of Jerusalem and the
palaces of the kings of Juda shall be defiled like the place of
Thopheth, all the houses upon whose roofs they burnt incense
to the whole host of heaven and poured out libations to strange
gods.
14 When Jeremia returned from Thopheth, where the Lord had
sent him to prophesy, he stood in the court of the house of God
15 and said to all the people: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God
of Israel: I will surely bring upon this city all the evil with
which I threatened it, because they have stiffened their necks
and have not obeyed my words.

20

1 Jeremia was heard prophesying these things by the priest
2 Phassur, son of Emmer, chief officer in the house of the Lord. So
he had the prophet scourged and placed in the stocks at the
3 upper Gate of Benjamin in the house of the Lord. The next
morning, after Phassur had released Jeremia from the stocks,
the prophet said to him: Instead of Phassur, the Lord will
4 name you "Terror on every side." | For thus says the Lord: Indeed, I will deliver you to terror, you and all your friends. Your
own eyes shall see them fall by the sword of their enemies. All
Juda I will deliver to the king of Babylon, who shall take them
5 captive to Babylon or slay them with the sword. All the wealth
of this city, all it has toiled for and holds dear, all the treasures
of the kings of Juda, I will give as plunder into the hands of
6 their foes, who shall seize it and carry it away to Babylon. You
Phassur, and all the members of your household shall go into
exile. To Babylon you shall go, you and all your friends; there

20, 1: *Phassur:* the chief of the temple police. See 19, 14.
20, 3: *"Terror on every side":* Phassur was to share all the disasters of Jerusalem.
20, 4: This is the first mention of Babylon as the land of exile.

you shall die and be buried, because you have prophesied lies t
them.

7 ***Jeremia's Interior Crisis*** You duped me, O Lord, and
let myself be duped; you were too strong for me, and you tr
umphed. All the day I am an object of laughter; everyor
8 mocks me. | Whenever I speak, I must cry out, violence an
outrage is my message; the word of the Lord has brought m
9 derision and reproach all the day. I say to myself, I will n
mention him, I will speak in his name no more. But then
becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bone
10 I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it. | Yes, I hear th
whisperings of many: "Terror on every side! Denounce! L
us denounce him!" All those who were my friends are on th
watch for any misstep of mine. "Perhaps he will be trapped
11 then we can prevail, and take our vengeance on him." | But th
Lord is with me, like a mighty champion: my persecutors wi
stumble, they will not triumph. In their failure they will be pu
12 to utter shame, to lasting, unforgettable confusion. | O Lord o
hosts, you who test the just, who probe mind and heart, let m
witness the vengeance you take on them, for to you I have en
13 trusted my cause. | Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, for he h
rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked!
14 Cursed be the day on which I was born! May the day m
15 mother gave me birth never be blessed! | Cursed be the ma
who brought the news to my father, saying, "A child, a son, h
16 been born to you!" filling him with great joy. | Let that man b
like the cities which the Lord relentlessly overthrew; let hi
17 hear war cries in the morning, battle alarms at noonday, | b
cause he did not dispatch me in the womb! Then my moth
would have been my grave, her womb confining me forever.
18 Why did I come forth from the womb, to see sorrow and pai
to end my days in shame?

III. ORACLES IN THE LAST YEARS OF JERUSALEM

21

1 ***Fate of Sedecia and Jerusalem*** The message which can

20, 7-18: The "dark night" of Jeremia's soul. See "Confessions" Introduction to the Book of Jeremia.

21—24: Oracles delivered by Jeremia about 588, dealing with thos Judean kings and others who were responsible for the first deportatio of Judeans in 598. The oracles were arranged chronologically by a editor.

to Jeremia from the Lord when king Sedecia sent him Phassur,
son of Melchia, and the priest Sophonia, son of Maasia, with
2 this request: Inquire for us of the Lord, because Nabuchodono-
sor, king of Babylon, is attacking us. Perhaps the Lord will deal
with us according to all his wonderful works, so that he will
3 withdraw from us. | But Jeremia answered them: This is what
4 you shall report to Sedecia: | Thus says the Lord, the God of
Israel: I will turn back in your hands the weapons with which
you intend to fight the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who
besiege you outside the walls. These weapons I will pile up in
5 the midst of this city, and I myself will fight against you with
outstretched hand and mighty arm, in anger, and wrath, and
6 great rage! I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man
7 and beast; they shall die in a great pestilence. After that, says
the Lord, I will hand over Sedecia, king of Juda, and his minis-
ters and the people in this city who survive pestilence, sword,
and famine, into the hand of Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon,
into the hands of their enemies and those who seek their lives.
He shall strike them with the edge of the sword, without quarter,
8 without pity or mercy. | And to this people you shall say: Thus
says the Lord: See, I am giving you a choice between life and
9 death. Whoever remains in this city shall die by the sword or
10 famine or pestilence. But whoever leaves and surrenders to the
besieging Chaldeans shall live and have his life as booty. For I
have turned against this city, for its woe and not for its good,
says the Lord. It shall be given into the power of the king of
Babylon who shall burn it with fire.

11 ***Oracles regarding the Kings*** To the royal house of Juda:
12 Hear the word of the Lord, | O house of David! Thus says the
Lord: Each morning dispense justice, rescue the oppressed from
the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury break out like fire which
burns without being quenched, because of the evil of your deeds.
13 | Beware! I am against you, Valley-site, Rock of the Plain, says
the Lord. You who say, "Who will attack us, who can pene-

21, 1: Nabuchodonosor exiled Joachin, and appointed Sedecia king. See 4 Kgs 24, 17. *Phassur:* not the one in 20, 1ff.

21, 10: With political acumen, Jeremia pointed out the folly of resisting the Babylonians ("Chaldeans") and was thereby accused as a traitor in 37, 13-14.

21, 13: *Valley-site, Rock of the Plain:* Jerusalem was naturally fortified, but it is mockingly described as "Rock of the Plain" because it is vulnerable to God's wrath.

14 trate our retreats?" | I will punish you, says the Lord, as your
deeds deserve! I will kindle a fire in its forest that shall devour
all its surroundings.

22

1 The Lord told me this: Go down to the palace of the king of
2 Juda and there deliver this message: You shall say: Listen to
the word of the Lord, king of Juda, who sit on the throne of
David, you, your ministers, and your people that enter by these
3 gates! | Thus says the Lord: Do what is right and just. Rescue
the victim from the hand of his oppressor. Do not wrong or
oppress the resident alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not
4 shed innocent blood in this place. If you carry out these com-
mands, kings who succeed to the throne of David will con-
tinue to enter the gates of this palace, riding in chariots or
5 mounted on horses, with their ministers, and their people. But
if you do not obey these commands, I swear by myself, says the
6 Lord: this palace shall become rubble. For thus says the Lord
concerning the palace of the king of Juda: Though you be to me
like Galaad, like the peak of Lebanon, I will turn you into a
7 waste, a city uninhabited. | Against you I will send destroyers,
each with his axe: they shall cut down your choice cedars, and
cast them into the fire.
8 Many people will pass by this city and ask one another:
9 "Why has the Lord done this to so great a city?" | And the
answer will be given: "Because they have deserted their cove-
nant with the Lord, their God, by worshiping and serving
strange gods."

10 ***Joachaz*** Weep not for him who is dead, mourn not for him!
Weep rather for him who is going away; never again will he
see the land of his birth.
11 Thus says the Lord concerning Sellum, son of Josia, king of
Juda, who succeeded his father as king. He has left this place
12 never to return. Rather, he shall die in the place where they
exiled him; this land he shall not see again.

13 ***Joakim*** Woe to him who builds his house on wrong, his

21, 14: *Forest:* a probable allusion to Solomon's palace, called "house of the forest."

22, 6: *Galaad . . . Lebanon:* famous for their "choice cedars" (v. 7).

22, 10: *For him who is dead:* king Josia. Pharao Necho exiled Joachaz ("him who is going away") to Egypt. See 4 Kgs 23, 33-34.

22, 11: *Sellum:* his royal name was Joachaz.

22, 13-15: Joakim initiated a considerable building program in Jeru-

terraces on injustice; who works his neighbor without pay, and
14 gives him no wages. | Who says, "I will build myself a spacious
house, with airy rooms," who cuts out windows for it, panels it
15 with cedar, and paints it with vermillion. | Must you prove
your rank among kings by competing with them in cedar? Did
not your father eat and drink? He did what was right and just,
16 and it went well with him. | Because he dispensed justice to the
weak and the poor, it went well with him. Is this not true knowl-
17 edge of me? says the Lord. | But your eyes and heart are set on
nothing except on your own gain, on shedding innocent blood,
on practicing oppression and extortion.
18 Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning Joakim, son of Josia,
king of Juda: They shall not lament him, "Alas! my brother";
"Alas! sister." They shall not lament him, "Alas, Lord! alas,
19 Majesty!" | The burial of an ass shall he be given, dragged
forth and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

20 ***Jechonia*** Scale Lebanon and cry out, in Bashan lift up your
voice; cry out from Abarim, for all your lovers are crushed. |
21 I spoke to you when you were secure, but you answered, "I will
not listen." This has been your way from your youth, not to
22 listen to my voice. | The wind shall shepherd all your shep-
herds, your lovers shall go into exile. Surely then you shall be
ashamed and confounded because of all your wickedness. |
23 You who dwell on Lebanon, who nest in the cedars, how you
shall groan when pains come upon you, like the pangs of a
woman in travail!
24 As I live, says the Lord, if you, Conia, son of Joakim, king of
Juda, are a signet ring on my right hand, I will snatch you from
25 it. I will deliver you into the hands of those who seek your life;

salem, either by forced labor or low wages. Josia ("your father" v. 15) prospered ("eat and drink") without practicing social injustice.

22, 18: Jeremia cites some of the stereotyped mourning expressions.

22, 19: How was this prediction fulfilled since 4 Kgs 24, 5 states that the king was given the ordinary royal burial? The common hypothesis is that Nabuchodonosor may have disgracefully profaned his tomb. Another hypothesis is: Jeremia meant that the joy of the people for the death of this cruel king was equivalent to "the burial of an ass."

22, 20-22: Jeremia poetically addresses Jerusalem to scale the highest peaks and gaze on Juda's leaders ("lovers," "shepherds").

22, 23: *Lebanon:* Jerusalem still stands as stoutly as Lebanon in 598 B.C., but its ruin is near (see vv. 6-7).

22, 24-30: This passage is dated from Joachin's three-months' reign. Nabuchodonosor exiled him to Babylon where he died.

22, 24: *Conia:* short form for Jechonia whom the Bible calls Joachin. Even if the king were God's most valuable possession ("signet ring"), He would repudiate him.

the hands of those whom you fear; the hands of Nabuchodono
26 sor, king of Babylon, and the Chaldeans. I will cast you out
you and the mother who bore you, into a different land from th
27 one you were born in; and there you shall die. Neither of them
shall come back to the land for which they yearn.
28 Is this man Conia a vessel despised, to be broken up, an in
strument that no one wants? Why are he and his descendant
29 cast out, why thrown into a land they know not? | O land, land
30 land, hear the word of the Lord— | thus says the Lord: Writ
this man down as one childless, who will never thrive in hi
lifetime! No descendant of his shall achieve a seat on the throu
of David as ruler again over Juda.

23

1 ***Messianic Reign*** Woe to the shepherds who mislead an
2 scatter the flock of my pasture, says the Lord. Therefore, thu
says the Lord, the God of Israel, against the shepherds wh
shepherd my people: You have scattered my sheep and drive
them away. You have not cared for them, but I will tak
3 care to punish your evil deeds. I myself will gather the remnan
of my flock from all the lands to which I have driven them an
bring them back to their meadow; there they shall increase an
4 multiply. I will appoint shepherds for them who will shepher
them so that they need no longer fear and tremble; and non
shall be missing, says the Lord.
5 Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I wil
raise up a righteous shoot to David; as king he shall reign an
govern wisely, he shall do what is just and right in the land.
6 In his days Juda shall be saved, Israel shall dwell in security
This is the name they give him: "The Lord our justice."
7 Therefore, the days will come, says the Lord, when they shal
no longer say, "As the Lord lives, who brought the Israelite
8 out of the land of Egypt"; | but rather, "As the Lord lives, wh
brought the descendants of the house of Israel up from the lan

22, 30: *Childless:* Joakin had seven sons born in Babylon, but non ever became king. Zorobabel, his grandson, became head, but not king of Jerusalem after the exile.

23, 1-8: Jeremia's first Messianic message.

23, 3: *Remnant:* for the basic meaning, see Am 5, 15 n.

23, 5-6: *A righteous shoot to David:* since Jeremia sees the dynast ending just before or just after 587, he is here most probably speakin directly and literally of a personal Messia to come in the indefinit future. The Messia will be a true king ("The Lord our justice" v. 6) Christ's *spiritual* kingship went beyond the pen of Jeremia.

23, 7-8: Dated from the period of the exile 587-538 B.C.

of the north"—and from all the lands to which I banished them; they shall again live on their own land.

9 ***The False Prophets*** Concerning the prophets: My heart within me is broken, my bones all tremble; I am like a man who is drunk, overcome by wine, because of the Lord, because of his
10 holy words. | With adulterers the land is filled; on their account the land mourns, the pasture ranges are seared. Theirs is an evil
11 course, theirs is unjust power. | Both prophet and priest are godless! In my very house I find their wickedness, says the Lord.
12 | Hence their way shall become for them slippery ground. In the darkness they shall lose their footing, and fall headlong; evil I will bring upon them: the year of their punishment, says
13 the Lord. | Among Samaria's prophets I saw unseemly deeds: they prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray. |
14 But among Jerusalem's prophets I saw deeds still more shocking: adultery, living in lies, siding with the wicked, so that no one turns from evil: to me they are all like Sodom, its citizens like Gomorra.

15 Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts against the prophets: Behold, I will give them wormwood to eat, and poison to drink; for from Jerusalem's prophets ungodliness has gone forth into the whole land.

16 Thus says the Lord of hosts: Listen not to the words of your prophets, who fill you with emptiness; visions of their own fancy
17 they speak, not from the mouth of the Lord. | They say to those who despise the word of the Lord, "Peace shall be yours"; and to everyone who walks in hardness of heart, "No evil shall over-
18 take you." | Now, who has stood in the council of the Lord, to see him and to hear his word? Who has heeded his word, so as
19 to announce it? | See, the storm of the Lord! His wrath breaks forth in a whirling storm that bursts upon the heads of the
20 wicked. | The anger of the Lord shall not abate until he has done and fulfilled what he has determined in his heart. When
21 the time comes, you shall fully understand. | I did not send these prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they proph-
22 esied. | Had they stood in my council, and did they but proclaim to my people my words, they would have brought them back
23 from evil ways and from their wicked deeds. | Am I a God
24 near at hand only, says the Lord, and not a God far off? | Can

23, 9-40: Oracles against false prophets and priests commonly dated at the time of Joakim and Sedecia.

23, 23: This enigmatic verse may mean that God is present everywhere, or that He knows the present and the future.

a man hide in secret without my seeing him? says the Lord. Do
I not fill both heaven and earth? says the Lord.
25 I have heard the prophets who prophesy lies in my name
26 say, "I had a dream! I had a dream!" | How long will this con-
tinue? Is my name in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy
27 lies and their own deceitful fancies? By their dreams which
they recount to each other, they think to make my people forget
28 my name, just as their fathers forgot my name for Baal. Let the
prophet who has a dream recount his dream; let him who has
my word speak my word truthfully!
29 What has straw to do with the wheat? says the Lord. | Is not
my word like fire, says the Lord, like a hammer shattering rocks.
30 Therefore I am against the prophets, says the Lord, who steal
31 my words from each other. Yes, I am against the prophets, says
32 the Lord, who borrow speeches to pronounce oracles. Yes, I am
against the prophets who prophesy lying dreams, says the Lord
and who lead my people astray by recounting their lies and by
their empty boasting. From me they have no mission or com-
mand, and they do this people no good at all, says the Lord.
33 And when this people, or a prophet or a priest asks you,
"What is the burden of the Lord?" you shall answer, "You are
34 the burden, and I cast you off, says the Lord." If a prophet or a
priest or anyone else mentions "the burden of the Lord," I will
35 punish that man and his house. | Thus you shall ask, when
speaking to one another, "What answer did the Lord give?" or
36 "What did the Lord say?" But the burden of the Lord you shall
mention no more. For each man his own word becomes the
burden so that you pervert the words of the living God, the
37 Lord of hosts, our God. | Thus shall you ask the prophet:
"What answer did the Lord give?" or, "What did the Lord
38 say?" | But if you ask about "the burden of the Lord," then
thus says the Lord: Because you use this phrase, "the burden of
39 the Lord," though I forbade you to use it, | therefore I will lift
you on high and cast you from my presence, you and the city
40 which I gave to you and your fathers. And I will bring upon you
eternal reproach, eternal, unforgettable shame.

24

1 ***The Two Baskets of Figs*** The Lord showed me two bas-
kets of figs placed before the temple of the Lord.—This was

24, 1-10: The main point of the parable is: God's loyal remnant will be the people purified of their faults in the exile of 598 ("the good figs"), but those remaining in Juda with Sedecia and those going to Egypt will be the rejected ones ("the bad figs").

after Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, had exiled from Jerusalem Jechonia, son of Joakim, king of Juda, and the princes of Juda, the artisans and the skilled workers, and brought
2 them to Babylon.—One basket contained excellent figs, the early-ripening kind. But the other basket contained very bad
3 figs, so bad they could not be eaten. Then the Lord said to me: What do you see, Jeremia? "Figs," I replied; "the good ones are very good, but the bad ones very bad, so bad they cannot be
4 eaten." Thereupon this word of the Lord came to me: Thus says
5 the Lord, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, even so will I regard with favor Juda's exiles whom I sent away from this
6 place into the land of the Chaldeans. I will look after them for their good, and bring them back to this land, to build them up, not to tear them down; to plant them, not to pluck them out.
7 I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they
8 shall return to me with their whole heart. And like the figs that are bad, so bad they cannot be eaten—yes, thus says the Lord—even so will I treat Sedecia, king of Juda, and his princes, the remnant of Jerusalem remaining in this land and those who
9 have settled in the land of Egypt. I will make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach and a by-word, a taunt and a curse, in all the places to which I will drive
10 them. I will send upon them the sword, famine, and pestilence, until they have disappeared from the land which I gave them and their fathers.

25

1 ***Seventy Years of Exile*** The word that came to Jeremia concerning all the people of Juda, in the fourth year of Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda (the first year of Nabuchodonosor,
2 king of Babylon). This word the prophet Jeremia spoke to all
3 the people of Juda and all the citizens of Jerusalem: Since the thirteenth year of Josia, son of Amon, king of Juda, to this day —these three and twenty years—the word of the Lord has come to me and I spoke to you untiringly, but you would not listen.
4 Though you refused to listen or pay heed, the Lord has sent you
5 without fail all his servants the prophets | with this message: Turn back, each of you, from your evil way and from your evil deeds; then you shall remain in the land which the Lord gave
6 you and your fathers, from of old and forever. Do not follow strange gods to serve and adore them, lest you provoke me with

25, 1: Nabuchodonosor's victory over the Egyptians at Carchemish in 605 B.C. made him master of the Middle East.

7 your handiwork, and I bring evil upon you. But you would not
listen to me, says the Lord, and so you provoked me with your
8 handiwork to your own harm. | Hence, thus says the Lord of
9 hosts: Since you would not listen to my words, | lo! I will send
for and fetch all the tribes of the north, says the Lord (and I
will send to Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, my servant); I
will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and
against all these neighboring nations. I will doom them, making
them an object of horror, of ridicule, of everlasting reproach.
10 Among them I will bring to an end the song of joy and the song
of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the
11 bride, the sound of the millstone and the light of the lamp. This
whole land shall be a ruin and a desert. Seventy years these
12 nations shall be enslaved to the king of Babylon; but when the
seventy years have elapsed, I will punish the king of Babylon
and the nation and the land of the Chaldeans for their guilt,
says the Lord. Their land I will turn into everlasting desert.
13 Against that land I will fulfill all the words I have spoken
against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremia proph-
14 esied against all the nations. They also shall be enslaved to
great nations and mighty kings, and thus I will repay them ac-
cording to their own deeds and according to their own handi-
work.

15 ***The Cup of Judgment on the Nations*** For thus said the
Lord, the God of Israel, to me: Take this cup of foaming wine
from my hand, and have all the nations to whom I will send you
16 drink it. They shall drink, and be convulsed, and go mad, be-
17 cause of the sword I will send among them. I took the cup from
the hand of the Lord and gave drink to all the nations to which
18 the Lord sent me: [Jerusalem, the cities of Juda, her kings and
her princes, to make them a ruin and a desert, an object of ridi-
19 cule and cursing, as they are today;] Pharao, king of Egypt, and
20 his servants, his princes, all the people under him, native | and
foreign; all the kings of the land of Us; all the kings of the
land of the Philistines: Ascalon, Gaza, Accaron, and the rem-

25, 10: The silencing of the "voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride" is one of Jeremia's favorite expressions.

25, 11: *Seventy years:* the first prediction of the exile (587-538) is here given in round numbers of the passing away in exile of the present generation. See Esd 1, 1 n.

25, 15ff: The pagan nations will be punished by Yahweh. This notion is expressed through the metaphor of drinking wine from the cup.

25, 19-26: These nations reappear in the oracles against the nations in chs. 46—51.

21.22 nant of Azotus; Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites; all the
23 kings of Tyre, of Sidon, and of the shores beyond the sea; Dedan
and Thema and Buz, all the desert dwellers who shave their
24.25 temples; [all the kings of Arabia;] all the kings of Zamri, of
26 Elam, of the Medes; all the kings of the north, near and far, one
after the other; all the kingdoms upon the face of the earth [and
after them the king of Sesach shall drink].
27 Tell them: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:
Drink! become drunk and vomit; fall, never to rise, before the
28 sword that I will send among you! If they refuse to take the cup
from your hand and drink, say to them: Thus says the Lord of
29 hosts: You must drink! | For since with this city, which is
called by my name, I begin to inflict evil, how can you possibly
be spared? You shall not be spared! I will call down the sword
upon all who inhabit the earth, says the Lord of hosts.
30 Prophesy against them all these things and say to them: The
Lord roars from on high, from his holy dwelling he raises his
voice; mightily he roars over the range, a shout like that of
31 vintagers over the grapes. | To all who inhabit the earth to its
very ends the uproar spreads; for the Lord has an indictment
against the nations, he is to pass judgment upon all mankind:
32 the godless shall be given to the sword, says the Lord. | Thus
says the Lord of hosts: Lo! calamity stalks from nation to na-
tion; a great storm is unleashed from the ends of the earth.
33 On that day, those whom the Lord has slain will be strewn
from one end of the earth to the other. None will mourn them,
none will gather them for burial; they shall lie like dung on the
field.
34 Howl, you shepherds, and wail! roll in the dust, leaders of the
flock! The time for your slaughter has come; like choice rams
35 you shall fall. | There is no flight for the shepherds, no escape
36 for the leaders of the flock. | Listen! Wailing from the shep-
herds, howling by the leaders of the flock! For the Lord lays
37 waste their grazing place, | desolate lie the peaceful pastures;
38 | the lion leaves his lair, and their land is made desolate by
the sweeping sword, by the burning wrath of the Lord.

26

1 ***Jeremia Threatened with Death*** In the beginning of the reign of Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda, this message came

25, 26: *Sesach:* Babylon.

26, 1: *The beginning of the reign:* a technical expression for the time between a king's accession to the throne and the beginning of his first official (calendar) year as king. Joakim's first regnal year was 608 B.C.

2 from the Lord: Thus says the Lord: Stand in the court of the
house of the Lord and speak to the people of all the cities of
Juda who come to worship in the house of the Lord; whatever
3 I command you, tell them, and omit nothing. Perhaps they will
listen and turn back, each from his evil way, so that I may
repent of the evil I have planned to inflict upon them for their
4 evil deeds. Say to them: Thus says the Lord: If you disobey
5 me, not living according to the law I placed before you | and
not listening to the words of my servants the prophets, whom
6 I send you constantly though you do not obey them, I will treat
this house like Silo, and make this the city which all nations
of the earth shall refer to when cursing another.
7 Now the priests, the prophets, and all the people heard
8 Jeremia speak these words in the house of the Lord. When
Jeremia finished speaking all that the Lord bade him speak
to all the people, the priests and prophets laid hold of him,
9 crying, "You must be put to death! | Why do you prophesy
in the name of the Lord: 'This house shall be like Silo,' and
'This city shall be desolate and deserted'?" And all the people
gathered about Jeremia in the house of the Lord.
10 When the princes of Juda were informed of these things,
they came up from the king's palace to the house of the Lord
11 and held court at the New Gate of the house of the Lord. The
priests and prophets said to the princes and to all the people,
"This man deserves death; he has prophesied against this city,
12 as you have heard with your own ears." Jeremia gave this
answer to the princes and all the people: "It was the Lord who
sent me to prophesy against this house and city all that you have
13 heard. Now, therefore, reform your ways and your deeds;
listen to the voice of the Lord your God, so that the Lord will
14 repent of the evil with which he threatens you. As for me, I am
in your hands; do with me what you think good and right.
15 But mark well: if you put me to death, it is innocent blood you
bring on yourselves, on this city and its citizens. For in truth
it was the Lord who sent me to you, to speak all these things
for you to hear.
16 Thereupon the princes and all the people said to the priests
and the prophets, "This man does not deserve death; it is in
17 the name of the Lord, our God, that he speaks to us." At this,
some of the elders of the land came forward and said to all the
18 people assembled, "Michea of Moreseth used to prophesy in the
days of Ezechia, king of Juda, and he told all the people of
Juda: Thus says the Lord of hosts:

26, 18: The quotation is from Mi 3, 12.

Sion shall become a plowed field, Jerusalem a heap of ruins,
and the temple mount a forest ridge.
19 Did Ezechia, king of Juda, and all Juda condemn him to
death? Did they not rather fear the Lord and entreat the favor
of the Lord, so that he repented of the evil with which he had
threatened them? But we are on the point of committing this
great evil to our own undoing."

20 ***The Fate of Uria*** There was another man who prophesied
in the name of the Lord, Uria, son of Semeia, from Cariath-
jarim; he prophesied the same things against this city and land
21 as Jeremia did. When king Joakim and all his officers and
princes were informed of his words, the king sought to kill
22 him. But Uria heard of it and fled in fear to Egypt. Thereupon
king Joakim sent Elnathan, son of Achobor, and others with
23 him into Egypt | to bring Uria back to the king, who had him
slain by the sword and his corpse cast into the common grave.
24 But Ahicam, son of Saphan, protected Jeremia, so that he was
not handed over to the people to be put to death.

27

1 ***Serve Babylon or Perish*** [In the beginning of the reign
of Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda,] . . . this message came
2 to Jeremia from the Lord: | Thus said the Lord to me: Make
for yourself bands and yoke bars and put them over your
3 shoulders. Send to the kings of Edom, of Moab, of the
Ammonites, of Tyre, and of Sidon, through the ambassadors
4 who have come to Jerusalem to Sedecia, king of Juda, | and
charge them thus: Tell your masters: Thus says the Lord of
5 hosts, the God of Israel: It was I who made the earth, and man
and beast on the face of the earth, by my great power, with my
outstretched arm; and I can give them to whomever I think fit.
6 Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nabu-
chodonosor, king of Babylon, my servant; even the beasts of
7 the field I have given him for his use. All nations shall serve
him and his son and his grandson, until the time of his land,
too, shall come. Then it in turn shall serve great nations and
8 mighty kings. Meanwhile, if any nation or kingdom will not
serve Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, or will not bend its
neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that

26, 24: *Ahicam:* one of king Josia's officials.
27, 1: There are different opinions among experts on the readings of this verse and 28, 1.
27, 3: The ambassadors came to plot against Nabuchodonosor.
27, 6: *Even the beasts:* a hyperbole.

nation with sword, famine, and pestilence, says the Lord, until I give them into his hand.

9 You, however, must not listen to your prophets, to your diviners and dreamers, to your soothsayers and sorcerers, who
10 say to you, "You need not serve the king of Babylon." For they prophesy lies to you, in order to drive you far from your
11 land, to make me banish you so that you will perish. The people that submits its neck to the yoke of the king of Babylon to serve him I will leave in peace on its own land, says the Lord, to till it and dwell in it.

12 To Sedecia, king of Juda, I spoke the same words: Submit your necks to the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his
13 people, so that you may live. Why should you and your people die by sword, famine, and pestilence, with which the Lord has threatened the nation that will not serve the king of Baby-
14 lon? Do not listen to the words of those prophets who say, "You need not serve the king of Babylon," for they prophesy
15 lies to you. I did not send them, says the Lord, but they prophesy falsely in my name, with the result that I must banish you, and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.

16 To the priests and to all the people I spoke as follows: Thus says the Lord: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you: "The vessels of the house of the Lord will be brought back from Babylon soon now," for they prophesy
17 lies to you. | Do not listen to them! Serve the king of Babylon
18 that you may live; else this city will become a heap of ruins. If they were prophets, if the word of the Lord were with them, they would intercede with the Lord of hosts, that the vessels which remain in the house of the Lord and in the palace of the king of Juda and in Jerusalem might not be taken to Babylon.
19 For thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the pillars, the bronze sea, the stands, and the rest of the vessels that remain in
20 this city, | which Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, did not take when he exiled Jechonia, son of Joakim, king of Juda, from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with all the nobles of Juda
21 and Jerusalem— | yes, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the
22 Lord, in the palace of the king of Juda, and in Jerusalem: To Babylon they shall be brought, and there they shall remain until the day I look for them, says the Lord; then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.

27, 9: The pagan kings also had "prophets."

28

1 ***The Two Yokes*** That same year, in [the beginning of] the
reign of Sedecia, king of Juda, in the fifth month of the fourth
year, the prophet Anania, son of Azzur, from Gabaon, said to
me in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priests and
2 all the people: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:
3 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two
years I will restore to this place all the vessels of the temple of
the Lord which Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, took away
4 from this place to Babylon. And I will bring back to this place
Jechonia, son of Joakim, king of Juda, and all the exiles of
Juda who went to Babylon,' says the Lord, 'for I will break
the yoke of the king of Babylon.' "

5 The prophet Jeremia answered the prophet Anania in the
presence of the priests and all the people assembled in the
6 house of the Lord, | and said: Amen! thus may the Lord do!
May he fulfill the things you have prophesied by bringing the
vessels of the house of the Lord and all the exiles back from
7 Babylon to this place! But now, listen to what I am about to
8 state in your hearing and the hearing of all the people. From
of old, the prophets who were before you and me prophesied
war, woe, and pestilence against many lands and mighty
9 kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace is recognized
as truly sent by the Lord only when his prophetic prediction is
fulfilled.

10 Thereupon the prophet Anania took the yoke from the neck
11 of the prophet Jeremia, broke it, | and said in the presence
of all the people: "Thus says the Lord: 'Even so, within two
years I will break the yoke of Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon,
from off the neck of all the nations.' " At that, the prophet
Jeremia went away.

12 Some time after the prophet Anania had broken the yoke
from off the neck of the prophet Jeremia, the word of the Lord
13 came to Jeremia: | Go tell Anania this: Thus says the Lord:
14 By breaking a wooden yoke, you forge an iron yoke! For thus
says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: A yoke of iron I will
place on the necks of all these nations serving Nabuchodonosor,
king of Babylon, and they shall serve him; even the beasts of
the field I give him.

15 To the prophet Anania the prophet Jeremia said: Hear this,
Anania! The Lord has not sent you, and you have raised false
16 confidence in this people. For this, says the Lord, I will dispatch
you from the face of the earth; this very year you shall die,
17 because you have preached rebellion against the Lord. That
same year, in the seventh month, Anania the prophet died.

29

1 ***Letter to the Exiles in Babylon*** This is the contents of
the letter which the prophet Jeremia sent from Jerusalem to the
remaining elders among the exiles, to the priests, the prophets,
and all the people who were exiled by Nabuchodonosor from
2 Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after king Jechonia and the
queen mother, the courtiers, the princes of Juda and Jerusalem,
the artisans and the skilled workmen had left Jerusalem.
3 Delivered in Babylon by Elasa, son of Saphan, and by Gamaria,
son of Helcia, whom Sedecia, king of Juda, sent to the king of
Babylon, the letter read:
4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles
5 whom I exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses to dwell
6 in; plant gardens, and eat their fruits. Take wives and beget sons
and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters
husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters. There you
7 must increase in number, not decrease. Promote the welfare of
the city to which I have exiled you; pray for it to the Lord, for
upon its welfare depends your own.
10 Thus says the Lord: Only after seventy years have elapsed for
Babylon will I visit you and fulfill for you my promise to bring
11 you back to this place. For I know well the plans I have in mind
for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe!
12 plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when
13 you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me,
you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, |
14 you will find me with you, says the Lord, and I will change your
lot; I will gather you together from all the nations and all the
places to which I have banished you, says the Lord, and bring
you back to the place from which I have exiled you.
16 Thus says the Lord concerning the king who sits on David's
throne, and all the people who remain in this city, your brethren
17 who did not go with you into exile; thus says the Lord of hosts:
18 I am sending against them sword, famine and pestilence. I will
make them like rotten figs, too bad to be eaten. I will pursue
them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and make them an
object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, of malediction,
astonishment, ridicule, and reproach to all the nations among
19 which I will banish them. For they did not listen to my words,

29, 3: *Elasa:* brother of Ahicam (26, 24)? Jeremia sent a letter to the deportees of 598 through messengers whom king Sedecia dispatched from Jerusalem to Babylon, perhaps to pay tribute.

29, 10: *Seventy years:* see 25, 11 n.

says the Lord, though I kept sending them my servants the prophets, only to have them go unheeded, says the Lord.

20 You, now, listen to the word of the Lord, all you exiles
15 whom I sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon. As for your saying, "The Lord has raised up for us prophets here in Baby-
8 lon"—thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let yourselves be deceived by the prophets and diviners who are among you; do not listen to those among you who dream
9 dreams. For they prophesy lies to you in my name; I did not send
21 them, says the Lord. This is what the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, has to say about those who prophesy lies to you in my name, Achab, son of Colia, and Sedecia, son of Maasia: I am handing them over to Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, who
22 will slay them before your eyes. All the exiles of Juda in Babylon will pattern a curse after them: "May the Lord make you like Sedecia and Achab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the
23 flames." For they are criminals in Israel, committing adultery with their neighbors' wives, and alleging in my name things I did not command. I know, I am witness, says the Lord.

24 ***The False Prophet Semeia*** Say this to Semeia, the Ne-
25 helamite: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Because you sent letters on your own authority to all the people of Jerusalem, to all the priests and to Sophonia, the priest, son
26 of Maasia, with this message: "The Lord has appointed you priest in place of the priest Joiada, so that there may be police officers in the house of the Lord, to take action against all madmen and those who pose as prophets, by putting them into
27 the stocks or the pillory. Why, then, do you not rebuke Jeremia
28 of Anathoth who poses as a prophet among you? For he sent us in Babylon this message: It will be a long time; build houses to live in; plant gardens and eat their fruits. . . ."

29 When the priest Sophonia read this letter to the prophet,
30.31 | the word of the Lord came to Jeremia: Send the message to all the exiles: Thus says the Lord concerning Semeia, the Nehelamite: Because Semeia prophesies to you without a mis-
32 sion from me, and raises false confidence, | says the Lord, I will therefore punish Semeia, the Nehelamite, and his offspring. None of them shall survive among this people to see the good I will do to this people, says the Lord, because he preached rebellion against the Lord.

29, 26-29: The words of Jeremia to the false prophet Semeia are not fully preserved in the current Hebrew text, as is seen in the incomplete sentence of this translation (vv. 25-28).

30

1 ***The Restoration*** The following message came to Jeremia
2 from the Lord: | Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write
3 all the words I have spoken to you in a book. For behold, the
days will come, says the Lord, when I will change the lot of my
people (of Israel and Juda, says the Lord), and bring them back
to the land which I gave to their fathers; they shall have it as
their possession.
4 These are the words which the Lord spoke to Israel and to
5 Juda: thus says the Lord: A cry of dismay we hear; fear reigns,
6 not peace. | Inquire, and see: since when do men bear children?
Why, then, do I see all these men, with their hands on their
loins like women in childbirth? Why have all their faces turned
7 deathly pale? | How mighty is that day—none like it! A time
of distress for Jacob, though he shall be saved from it.
8 On that day, says the Lord of hosts, "I will break his yoke
from off your necks and snap your bonds." Strangers shall no
9 longer enslave them; instead, they shall serve the Lord, their
God, and David, their king, whom I will raise up for them.
10 But you, my servant Jacob, fear not, says the Lord, be not
dismayed, O Israel! Behold, I will deliver you from the far-off
land, your descendants, from their land of exile; Jacob shall
11 again find rest, shall be tranquil and undisturbed, | for I am
with you, says the Lord, to deliver you. I will make an end of
all the nations among which I have scattered you; but of you
I will not make an end. I will chastise you as you deserve, I will
not let you go unpunished.
12 For thus says the Lord: Incurable is your wound, grievous
13 your bruise; | there is none to plead your cause, no remedy for
14 your running sore, no healing for you. | All your lovers have
forgotten you, they do not seek you. I struck you as an enemy
15 would strike, punished you cruelly; | why cry out over your
wound? your pain is without relief. Because of your great guilt,
your numerous sins, I have done this to you.
16 Yet all who devour you shall be devoured, all your enemies
shall go into exile. All who plunder you shall be plundered, all

30, 1—31, 22: Scholars call this section Jeremia's "book of consolation." While king Josia of Juda was trying to conquer the northern kingdom, hope ran high for the end of their exile which began in 722-21. Jeremia is delivering this oracle in the first phase of his ministry, i.e., between 627 and 609, but closer to the latter date.

30, 9: Most experts attribute this Messianic text to Jeremia. This passage may be interpreted as Jeremia directly and literally speaking of the future Messia with the name of David. But others believe that this was immediately fulfilled in Zorobabel after the exile, and then in the Messia. Christ.

17 who pillage you I will hand over to pillage. | For I will restore
you to health; of your wounds I will heal you, says the Lord.
"The outcast" they have called you, "with no avenger."
18 Thus says the Lord: See! I will restore the tents of Jacob,
his dwellings I will pity; city shall be rebuilt upon hill, and
19 palace restored as it was. | From them will resound songs of
praise, the laughter of happy men. I will make them not few,
20 but many; they will not be tiny, for I will glorify them. | His
sons shall be as of old, his assembly before me shall stand firm;
21 I will punish all his oppressors. | His leader shall be one of his
own, and his rulers shall come from his kin. When I summon
him, he shall approach me; how else should one take the deadly
22 risk of approaching me? says the Lord. | You shall be my
people, and I will be your God.
23 See, the storm of the Lord! His wrath breaks forth in a
24 whirling storm that bursts upon the heads of the wicked. | The
anger of the Lord will not abate until he has done and fulfilled
what he has determined in his heart. When the time comes, you
will fully understand.

31

1 ***Good News of the Return*** At that time, says the Lord,
I will be the God of all the tribes of Israel, and they shall be
2 my people. | Thus says the Lord: The people that escaped the
sword have found favor in the desert. As Israel comes forward
3 to be given his rest, | the Lord appears to him from afar: with
age-old love I have loved you; so I have kept my mercy toward
4 you. | Again I will restore you, and you shall be rebuilt, O
virgin Israel; carrying your festive tambourines, you shall go
5 forth dancing with the merrymakers. | Again you shall plant
vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; those who plant them
6 shall enjoy the fruits. | Yes, a day will come when the watch-
men will call out on Mount Ephraim: "Rise up, let us go to Sion,
to the Lord, our God."

7 ***The Road of Return*** For thus says the Lord: Shout with
joy for Jacob, exult at the head of the nations; proclaim your
praise and say: The Lord has delivered his people, the remnant
8 of Israel. | Behold, I will bring them back from the land of the

30, 21: One of the future rulers of the restored kingdom. This is not a Messianic text.

31, 2: *The people that escaped the sword:* exiles who were not killed but deported; they have "found favor in the desert." The prophet alludes to the first desert wandering of Israel (Ex 16ff) in which the people found the Lord. *His rest:* the land of promise.

north; I will gather them from the ends of the world, with the
blind and the lame in their midst, the mothers and those with
9 child; they shall return as an immense throng. | They departed
in tears, but I will console them and guide them; I will lead them
to brooks of water, on a level road, so that none shall stumble.
10 For I am a father to Israel, Ephraim is my first-born. | Hear the
word of the Lord, O nations, proclaim it on distant coasts, and
say: He who scattered Israel, now gathers them together, he
11 guards them as a shepherd his flock. | The Lord shall ransom
Jacob, he shall redeem him from the hand of his conqueror. |
12 Shouting, they shall mount the heights of Sion, they shall come
streaming to the Lord's blessings: the grain, the wine, and the
oil, the sheep and the oxen; they themselves shall be like watered
13 gardens, never again shall they languish. | Then the virgins
shall make merry and dance, and young men and old as well.
I will turn their mourning into joy, I will console and gladden
14 them after their sorrows. | I will lavish choice portions upon
the priests, and my people shall be filled with my blessings,
says the Lord.

15 *End of Rachel's Mourning* Thus says the Lord: In Ra-
ma is heard the sound of moaning, of bitter weeping! Rachel
mourns her children, she refuses to be consoled because her
children are no more.
16 Thus says the Lord: Cease your cries of mourning, wipe the
tears from your eyes. The sorrow you have shown shall have
its reward, says the Lord, they shall return from the enemy's
17 land. | There is hope for your future, says the Lord; your sons
shall return to their own borders.
18 I hear, I hear Ephraim pleading: You chastised me, and I am
chastened; I was an untamed calf. If you allow me, I will return,
19 for you are the Lord, my God. | I turn in repentance; I have
come to myself, I strike my breast; I blush with shame, I bear
20 the disgrace of my youth. | Is Ephraim not my favored son,
the child in whom I delight? Often as I threaten him, I still
remember him with favor; my heart stirs for him, I must show
him mercy, says the Lord.

21 *Summons to Return Home* Set up road markers, put up
guideposts; turn your attention to the highway, the road by

31, 15: Jeremia poetically expresses sorrow for the exiled northern kingdom by the description of Rachel, the ancestress of Ephraim (the principal northern tribe), weeping for "her children" at her tomb at Rama. Mt 2, 18 sees in this verse the same psychological situation repeated in the slaughter of the innocents.

which you went. Turn back, O virgin Israel, turn back to these
22 your cities. | How long will you continue to stray, rebellious
daughter? The Lord has created a new thing upon the earth:
the woman must encompass the man with devotion.
23 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: When I
change their lot in the land of Juda and her cities, they shall
again repeat this greeting: "May the Lord bless you, holy
24 mountain, abode of justice!" Juda and all her cities, the farmers
25 and those who lead the flock, shall dwell there together. For I
will refresh the weary soul; every soul that languishes I will
26 replenish. Upon this I awoke and opened my eyes; but my sleep
was sweet to me.
27 The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will seed the
house of Israel and the house of Juda with the seed of man and
28 the seed of beast. As I once watched over them to uproot and
pull down, to destroy, to ruin, and to harm, so I will watch over
29 them to build and to plant, says the Lord. In those days they
shall no longer say, "The fathers ate unripe grapes, and the
30 children's teeth are set on edge," | but through his own fault
only shall anyone die: the teeth of him who eats the unripe
grapes shall be set on edge.

31 *The New Covenant* The days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and
32 the house of Juda. It will not be like the covenant I made with
their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth
from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant, and I
33 had to show myself their master, says the Lord. But this is
the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after
those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them,

31, 22: *The woman must encompass the man:* the northern kingdom, about which the text has been speaking since 30, 1, is personified as "the woman" who will return from exile to love Yahweh ("the man"). This conversion will be "a new thing" in comparison with Israel's past history. There are other less widely held opinions. Although the precise translation is still disputed, the Hebrew text does not speak of a virginal conception as the Vg. does. *With devotion:* these words are not in the Hebrew text, but added to bring out the sense.

31, 23-40: These verses have the Judean exiles in mind, and were probably written when they began their exile in 587 B.C.

31, 29: This proverb expressed the traditional teaching on collective responsibility, i.e., children suffer for the sins of their parents or of their tribe or nation. But the new covenant between God and the newly restored Israel of the future will stress personal or individual responsibility (vv. 30-34). Ezechiel will continue and stress *individual* responsibility. See Ez 18, 1-32 n.

and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they
34 shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their
friends and kinsmen how to know the Lord. All, from least to
greatest, shall know me, says the Lord, for I will forgive their
evildoing and remember their sin no more.

35 ***Certainty of God's Promise*** Thus says the Lord, | He
who gives the sun to light the day, moon and stars to light the
night; who stirs up the sea till its waves roar, whose name is
36 Lord of hosts: | If ever these natural laws give way in spite of
me, says the Lord, then shall the race of Israel cease as a nation
37 before me forever. | Thus says the Lord: If the heavens on
high can be measured, or the foundations below the earth be
sounded, then will I cast off the whole race of Israel because of
all they have done, says the Lord.

38 ***Rebuilding of Jerusalem*** The days are coming, says the
Lord, when the city shall be rebuilt as the Lord's, from the
39 Tower of Hananeel to the Corner Gate. The measuring line
shall be stretched from there straight to the hill Garbe and then
40 turn to Goa. The whole valley of corpses and ashes, all the
slopes toward the Cedron Valley, as far as the corner of the
Horse Gate at the east, shall be holy to the Lord. Never again
shall the city be rooted up or thrown down.

32

1 ***Pledge of Restoration*** This message came to Jeremia
from the Lord in the tenth year of Sedecia, king of Juda, the
2 eighteenth year of Nabuchodonosor. At that time the army of
the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet
Jeremia was imprisoned in the quarters of the guard, at the
3 king's palace. Sedecia, king of Juda, had imprisoned him there,
remonstrating: "How dare you prophesy: Thus says the Lord:
I am handing over this city to the king of Babylon, who will

31, 33: *Write it upon their hearts:* the new covenant will stress the *interior* rather than the exterior aspects of man's relations with God. The "new covenant" (Lk 22, 20) was more of an intimate relationship than Jeremia ever suspected.

31, 34: *I will forgive:* another hallmark of the new covenant will be the stress on God's eagerness to forgive sins.

31, 35-37: The new covenant will last forever. See 32, 40, an "eternal covenant."

32—33: These autobiographical events took place during the siege of Jerusalem about 588.

32, 1-44: Jeremia's purchase of the land in the face of an imminent Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, symbolized the future restoration of the city.

4 capture it. Neither shall Sedecia, king of Juda, escape the hands
of the Chaldeans; rather shall he be handed over to the king of
5 Babylon. They shall meet and speak face to face, and Sedecia
shall be taken to Babylon. There he shall remain, until I attend
to him, says the Lord; in fighting the Chaldeans, you cannot
win!"
6 This message came to me from the Lord, said Jeremia:
7 Hanameel, son of your uncle Sellum, will come to you with
the offer: "Buy for yourself my field in Anathoth, since you,
8 as nearest relative, have the first right of purchase." Then, as
the Lord foretold, Hanameel, my uncle's son, came to me to
the quarters of the guard and said, "Please buy my field in
Anathoth, in the district of Benjamin; as nearest relative, you
have the first claim to possess it; make it yours." I knew this was
9 what the Lord meant, | so I bought the field in Anathoth from
my cousin Hanameel, paying him the money, seventeen silver
shekels.
10 When I had written and sealed the deed, called witnesses and
11 weighed out the silver on the scales, I accepted the deed of
purchase, both the sealed copy, containing title and conditions,
12 and the open one. This deed of purchase I gave to Baruch, son
of Neria, son of Maasia, in the presence of my cousin Hanameel
and of the witnesses who had signed the deed, and before all
the men of Juda who happened to be in the quarters of the
guard.
13.14 In their presence I gave Baruch this charge: Thus says
the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both the
sealed and the open deed of purchase, and put them in an
15 earthen jar, so that they can be kept there a long time. For thus
says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields
and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.
16 After giving the deed of purchase to Baruch, son of Neria,
17 I prayed thus to the Lord: Ah, Lord God, you have made
heaven and earth by your great might, with your outstretched
18 arm; nothing is impossible to you. You continue your kindness
through a thousand generations; and you repay the fathers'
guilt, even into the lap of their sons who follow them. O God,
19 great and mighty, whose name is Lord of hosts, | great in
counsel, mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of
men, giving to each according to his ways, according to the fruit

32, 6-9: Jeremia was allowed a certain amount of freedom to go in and out the city to Anathoth.

32, 14: The custom of putting manuscripts in "earthen jars," was evidenced by the discovery of many Dead Sea Scrolls similarly found in earthen jars.

20 of his deeds: you have wrought signs and wonders in the land
of Egypt and to this day, both in Israel and among all other
21 men, until now you have gained renown. With strong hand and
outstretched arm you brought your people Israel out of the
22 land of Egypt amid signs and wonders and great terror. This
land you gave them, as you had promised their fathers under
23 oath, a land flowing with milk and honey. They entered and
took possession of it, but they did not listen to your voice; by
your law they did not live, and what you commanded they
24 failed to do. Hence you let all these evils befall them. See, the
siegeworks have arrived at this city to breach it; the city will be
handed over to the Chaldeans who are attacking it, amid sword
famine, and pestilence. What you threatened has happened, you
25 see it yourself; | and yet you tell me, O Lord God: Buy the field
with money, call in witnesses. But the city has already been
handed over to the Chaldeans!
26.27 Then this word of the Lord came to Jeremia: I am the
Lord, the God of all mankind! Is anything impossible to me.
28 | This now is what the Lord says: I will hand over this city to
the Chaldeans, for Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, to take
29 The Chaldeans who are attacking it shall enter this city and
set fire to it, burning it and its houses, on the roofs of which
incense was burned to Baal and libations were poured out to
30 strange gods as a provocation to me. The Israelites and the
Judeans from their youth have done only what is evil in my eyes
the Israelites did nothing but provoke me with the works of
31 their hands, says the Lord. From the day it was built to this
32 day, this city has excited my anger and wrath, so that I must
put it out of my sight for all the wickedness the Israelites and
Judeans, with their kings and their princes, their priests and
their prophets, the men of Juda and the citizens of Jerusalem
33 have done to provoke me. They turned their backs to me, not
their faces; though I kept teaching them, they would not listen
34 to my correction. They defiled the house named after me by the
35 horrid idols they set up in it. They built high places to Baal in
the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, and immolated their sons and
daughters to Moloch, bringing sin upon Juda; this I never
commanded them, nor did it ever enter my mind that they
should practice such abominations.
36 Now, therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, con-
cerning this city, which as you say is handed over to the king of
37 Babylon amid sword, famine, and pestilence: Behold, I will
gather them together from all the lands to which in anger

32, 35: *Valley of Ben-Hinnom:* see 2, 23 n.

wrath, and great rage I banish them; I will bring them back to this place and settle them here in safety. They shall be my
38 people, and I will be their God. | One heart and one way I will
39 give them, that they may fear me always, to their own good and
40 that of their children after them. I will make with them an eternal covenant, never to cease doing good to them; into their hearts I will put the fear of me, that they may never depart from
41 me. I will take delight in doing good to them: I will replant them firmly in this land, with all my heart and soul.

42 For thus says the Lord: Just as I brought upon this people all this great evil, so I will bring upon them all the good I
43 promise them. Fields shall again be bought in this land, which you call a desert, without man or beast, handed over to the
44 Chaldeans. Fields shall be bought with money, deeds written and sealed, and witnesses shall be used in the land of Benjamin, in the suburbs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Juda and of the hill country, in the cities of the foothills and of the Negeb, when I change their lot, says the Lord.

33

1 ***Restoration of Jerusalem*** The word of the Lord came to Jeremia a second time while he was still imprisoned in the
2 quarters of the guard: Thus says the Lord who made the earth
3 and gave it form and firmness, whose name is Lord: | Call to me, and I will answer you; I will tell to you things great beyond
4 reach of your knowledge. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the palaces of Juda's kings, which are being destroyed in the face of siegeworks and
5 the sword: men come to battle the Chaldeans, and these houses will be filled with the corpses of those whom I slay in my anger and wrath, when I hide my face from this city for all their wickedness.

6 Behold, I will treat and assuage the city's wounds; I will
7 heal them, and reveal to them an abundance of lasting peace. I will change the lot of Juda and the lot of Israel, and rebuild
8 them as of old. I will cleanse them of all the guilt they incurred by sinning against me; all their offenses by which they sinned
9 and rebelled against me, I will forgive. Then Jerusalem shall be my joy, my praise, my glory, before all the nations of the earth, as they hear of all the good I will do among them. They shall be in fear and trembling over all the peaceful benefits I will give her.

32, 42: Everything is attributed to God according to biblical thought patterns.

10 Thus says the Lord: In this place of which you say, "How
desolate it is, without man, without beast!" and in the cities
of Juda, in the streets of Jerusalem that are now deserted, with-
out man, without citizen, without beast, there shall yet be heard
11 | the cry of joy, the cry of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom,
the voice of the bride, the sound of those who bring thank
offerings to the house of the Lord, singing, "Give thanks to the
Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good; his mercy endures forever."
For I will restore this country as of old, says the Lord.
12 Thus says the Lord of hosts: In this place, now desolate,
without man or beast, and in all its cities there shall again be
13 sheepfolds for the shepherds to couch their flocks. In the cities
of the hill country, of the foothills, and of the Negeb, in the
land of Benjamin and the suburbs of Jerusalem, and in the cities
of Juda, flocks will again pass under the hands of the one who
counts them, says the Lord.
14 The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the
15 promise I made to the house of Israel and Juda. In those days,
in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot; he shall do
16 what is right and just in the land. In those days Juda shall be
safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall
17 call her: "The Lord our justice." | For thus says the Lord: Never
shall David lack a successor on the throne of the house of
18 Israel, nor shall priests of Levi ever be lacking, to offer holo-
causts before me, to burn cereal offerings, and to sacrifice
victims.
19 This word of the Lord also came to Jeremia: | Thus says
20 the Lord: If you can break my covenant with day, and my
covenant with night, so that day and night no longer alternate
21 in sequence, then can my covenant with my servant David also
be broken, so that he will not have a son to be king upon his
throne, and my covenant with the priests of Levi who minister
22 to me. Like the host of heaven which cannot be numbered, and
the sands of the sea which cannot be counted, I will multiply
the descendants of my servant David and the Levites who
minister to me.

33, 14-26: This is the longest continuous passage in the Book of Jeremia that is lacking in the Greek. It is by an inspired postexilic writer.

33, 14-16: A repetition. See 23, 5-6 n.

33, 21-22: It was not clear in the Old Testament whether the Messia was to be a priest as well as a king. See Ps 109, 4 n. The "Manual of Discipline," one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, mentions that there would be the standard royal Davidic Messia and the priestly Aaronic Messia.

23.24 This word of the Lord came to Jeremia: Have you not
noticed what these people are saying: "The Lord has rejected
the two tribes which he had chosen"? They spurn my people
25 as if it were no longer a nation in their eyes. | Thus says the
Lord: When I have no covenant with day and night, and have
26 given no laws to heaven and earth, | then too will I reject the
descendants of Jacob and of my servant David, so as not to
take from his descendants rulers for the race of Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob. For I will change their lot and show them mercy.

IV. FALL OF JERUSALEM

34

1 ***Fate of Sedecia*** This word came to Jeremia from the Lord
while Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, and his armies and
the earth's kingdoms subject to him, as well as the other
2 peoples, were all attacking Jerusalem and all her cities: | Thus
says the Lord, the God of Israel: Go to Sedecia, king of Juda,
and tell him: Thus says the Lord: I am handing this city over
3 to the king of Babylon; he will destroy it with fire. Neither
shall you escape his hand; rather you will be captured and fall
into his hands. You shall see the king of Babylon and speak
to him face to face. Then you shall be taken to Babylon.
4 But if you obey the word of the Lord, Sedecia, king of Juda,
5 then, says the Lord to you, you shall not die by the sword. You
shall die in peace, and they will lament you as their lord, and
burn spices for your burial as they did for your fathers, the
kings who preceded you from the first; it is I who make this
promise, says the Lord.
6 The prophet Jeremia told all these things to Sedecia, king of
7 Juda, in Jerusalem, | while the armies of the king of Babylon
were attacking Jerusalem and the remaining cities of Juda,
Lachis, and Azeca, since these alone were left of the fortified
cities of Juda.

8 ***The Pact Broken*** This is the word that came to Jeremia

34, 7: Nabuchodonosor was besieging Lachis and Azeca, the last of the fortified towns southwest of Jerusalem lest, through these cities, Egyptian aid come to Jerusalem. Between 1932 and 1938 archeologists found the famous "Lachish Ostraca," i.e., twenty-one letters written on pieces of pottery dated 598 to 588 B.C. The letters are largely correspondence between an officer and his superior officer. Both Lachis and Azeca are mentioned.

34, 8-22: During the Babylonian siege, the slaves were freed, most likely because of needed manpower in accordance with the law (Dt 15, 12-15). V. 11 says that they went back on their word.

from the Lord after king Sedecia had made an agreement with
all the people in Jerusalem to issue an edict of emancipation.
9 Everyone was to free his Hebrew slaves, male and female, so
that no one should hold a man of Juda, his brother, in slavery.
10 All the princes and the others who entered the agreement con-
sented to set free their male and female servants, so that they
should be slaves no longer. But though they agreed and freed
11 them, | afterward they took back their male and female slaves
whom they had set free and again forced them into service.
12.13 Then this word of the Lord came to Jeremia: Thus says
the Lord, the God of Israel: The day I brought your fathers
out of the land of Egypt, out of the place where they were
14 slaves, I made this covenant with them: Every seventh year
each of you shall set free his Hebrew brother who has sold
himself to you; six years he shall serve you, but then you shall
let him go free. Your fathers, however, did not heed me or obey
15 me. Today you indeed repented and did what is right in my
eyes proclaiming the emancipation of your brethren and making
an agreement before me in the house that is named after me.
16 But then you changed your mind and profaned my name by
taking back your male and female slaves to whom you had
given their freedom; you forced them once more into slavery.
17 Therefore, thus says the Lord: You did not obey me by pro-
claiming your neighbors and kinsmen free. I now proclaim you
free, says the Lord, for the sword, famine, and pestilence. I will
make you an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.
18 The men who violated my covenant and did not observe the
terms of the agreement which they made before me, I will
make like the calf which they cut in two, between whose two
19 parts they passed. The princes of Juda and of Jerusalem, the
courtiers, the priests, and the common people, who passed
20 between the parts of the calf, | I will hand over, all of them,
to their enemies, to those who seek their lives: their corpses
shall be food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.
21 Sedecia, too, king of Juda, and his princes, I will hand over
to their enemies, to those who seek their lives, to the soldiers
of the king of Babylon who have at present withdrawn from
22 you. I will give the command, says the Lord, and bring them
back to this city. They shall attack and capture it, and destroy
it with fire; the cities of Juda I will turn into a desert where no
man dwells.

34, 18: See Gn 15, 10-17 for this ceremony. Archeological inscriptions testify to these sacrificial rites.

35

1 ***The Faithful Rechabites*** This word came to Jeremia
from the Lord in the days of Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda:
2 Approach the Rechabites and speak to them; bring them into
the house of the Lord, to one of the rooms, and give them wine
3 to drink. So I went and brought Jezonia, son of Jeremia, son of
Habsania, his brothers and all his sons, the whole company of
4 the Rechabites, | into the house of the Lord, to the room of the
sons of Hanan, son of Jegedelia, the man of God, next to the
princes' room, above the room of Maasia, son of Sellum, keeper
5 of the doorway. I set before these Rechabite men bowls full of
wine and offered them cups to drink the wine.
6 "We do not drink wine," they said to me: "Jonadab, Rechab's
son, our father, forbade us in these words: 'Neither you nor
7 your children shall ever drink wine. Build no house and sow
no seed; neither plant nor own a vineyard. You shall dwell in
tents all your life, so that you may live long on the earth where
8 you are wayfarers.' Now we have heeded Jonadab, Rechab's
son, our father, in all his prohibitions. All our lives we have not
drunk wine, neither we, nor our wives, nor our sons, nor our
9 daughters. We build no houses to live in; we own no vineyards
10 or fields or crops, | and we live in tents; we obediently do every-
11 thing our father Jonadab commanded us. But when Nabu-
chodonosor, king of Babylon, invaded this land, we decided to
come into Jerusalem to escape the army of the Chaldeans and
the army of Aram; that is why we are now living in Jerusalem."
12.13 Then this word of the Lord came to Jeremia: Thus says
the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Go, say to the men of
Juda and to the citizens of Jerusalem: Will you not take
14 correction and obey my words? says the Lord. The advice of
Jonadab, Rechab's son, by which he forbade his children to
drink wine, has been followed: to this day they have not drunk
it; they obeyed their father's command. Me, however, you have
not obeyed, although I spoke to you untiringly and insistently.
15 I kept sending you all my servants the prophets, telling you to
turn back, all of you, from your evil way; to reform your con-
duct, and not follow strange gods or serve them, if you would
remain on the land which I gave you and your fathers; but you
16 did not heed me or obey me. Yes, the children of Jonadab,
Rechab's son, observed the command which their father laid

35, 1: About 599-98 B.C.

35, 1-19: Jeremia, without advocating a return to nomadic life, presented the Rechabites as models of obedience.

35, 11: Nabuchodonosor had the help of the Syrians ("army of Aram").

17 on them; but this people does not obey me! Now, therefore, say
the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel: I will bring upon
Juda and all the citizens of Jerusalem every evil that I threat-
ened; because when I spoke they did not obey, when I called
they did not answer.
18 But to the company of the Rechabites Jeremia said: Thus
says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Since you have
obeyed the command of Jonadab, your father, kept all his
19 commands and done everything he commanded you, | thus
therefore says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Never shall
there fail to be a descendant of Jonadab, Rechab's son, standing
in my service.

36

1 ***Baruch Writes the Prophecies of Jeremia*** In the fourth
year of Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda, this word came
2 to Jeremia from the Lord: Take a scroll and write on it all the
words I have spoken to you against Israel, Juda, and all the
nations, from the day I first spoke to you, in the days of Josia
3 until today. Perhaps, when the house of Juda hears all the
evil I have in mind to do to them, they will turn back each from
his evil way, so that I may forgive their wickedness and their
4 sin. So Jeremia called Baruch, son of Neria, who wrote down
on a scroll, as Jeremia dictated, all the words which the Lord
had spoken to him.
9 In the ninth month, in the fifth year of Joakim, son of Josia,
king of Juda, a fast to placate the Lord was proclaimed for all
the people of Jerusalem and all who came from Juda's cities
5 to Jerusalem. Then Jeremia charged Baruch: I cannot go to
6 the house of the Lord; I am prevented from doing so. Do you
go on the fast day and read publicly in the Lord's house the
Lord's words from the scroll you wrote at my dictation; read
them also to all the men of Juda who come up from their cities.
7 Perhaps they will lay their supplication before the Lord and
will all turn back from their evil way; for great is the fury of
anger with which the Lord has threatened this people.
8 Baruch, son of Neria, did everything the prophet Jeremia
commanded; from the book-scroll he read the Lord's words in
10 the Lord's house. It was in the room of Gamaria, son of the
scribe Saphan, in the upper court of the Lord's house, at the

36, 5: Jeremia was "prevented," perhaps because he was ritually unclean.

36, 10: Baruch read from a window in a room in the fortress of the temple gateway, which looked over the temple courtyard.

entrance of the New Temple-Gate, that Baruch publicly read the words of Jeremia from his book.

11 Now Michaia, son of Gamaria, son of Saphan, heard all
12 the words of the Lord read from the book. So he went down to the king's palace, into the scribe's chamber, where the princes were just then in session: Elisama, the scribe, Dalaia, son of Semeia, Elnathan, son of Achobor, Gamaria, son of Saphan,
13 Sedecia, son of Anania, and the other princes. To them Michaia reported all that he had heard Baruch read publicly from his
14 book. Thereupon the princes sent Judi, son of Nathania, son of Selemia, son of Chusi, to Baruch with the order: "Come, and bring with you the scroll you read publicly to the people."
15 Scroll in hand, Baruch, son of Neria, went to them. "Sit down," they said to him, "and read it to us." Baruch read it to them, |
16 and when they heard all its words, they were frightened and said to one another, "We must certainly tell the king all these
17 things." | Then they asked Baruch: "Tell us, please, how you
18 came to write down all these words." "Jeremia dictated all these words to me," Baruch answered them, "and I wrote them down
19 with ink in the book." At this the princes said to Baruch, "Go into hiding, you and Jeremia; let no one know where you are."
20 Leaving the scroll in safekeeping in the room of Elisama the scribe, they entered the room where the king was. When they
21 told him everything that had happened, he sent Judi to fetch the scroll. Judi brought it from the room of Elisama the scribe, and read it to the king and to all the princes who were in
22 attendance on the king. Now the king was sitting in his winter house, since it was the ninth month, and fire was burning in a
23 brazier before him. Each time Judi finished reading three or four columns, the king would cut off the piece with a scribe's knife and cast it into the fire in the brazier, until the entire roll
24 was consumed in the fire. Hearing all these words did not frighten the king and his ministers or cause them to rend their
25 garments. And though Elnathan, Dalaia, and Gamaria urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them, |
26 but commanded Jeremiel, a royal prince, and Seraia, son of Ezriel, and Selemia, son of Abdeel, to arrest Baruch, the secretary, and the prophet Jeremia. But the Lord kept them concealed.
27 This word of the Lord came to Jeremia, after the king burned
28 the scroll with the text Jeremia had dictated to Baruch: Take another scroll, and write on it everything that the first scroll
29 contained, which Joakim, king of Juda, burned up. And against Joakim, king of Juda, say this: Thus says the Lord: You burned

36, 23: *A scribe's knife:* it was used to sharpen pens made of reeds.

that scroll, saying, "Why did you write on it: Babylon's kin
shall surely come and lay waste this land and empty it of ma
30 and beast?" The Lord now says of Joakim, king of Juda: N
descendant of his shall succeed to David's throne; his corps
shall be cast out, exposed to the heat of day, to the cold of nigh
31 I will punish him and his descendants and his ministers for thei
wickedness; against them and the citizens of Jerusalem and th
men of Juda I will fulfill all the threats of evil which wer
unheeded.
32 Jeremia took another scroll, and gave it to his secretary
Baruch, son of Neria; he wrote on it at Jeremia's dictation a
the words contained in the book which Joakim, king of Juda
had burned in the fire, and many others of the same kind i
addition.

37

1 *Jeremia in the Dungeon* Jechonia, son of Joakim, wa
succeeded by king Sedecia, son of Josia; he was made king ove
2 the land of Juda by Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon. Neithe
he, nor his ministers, nor the people of the land would listen t
3 the words of the Lord spoken by Jeremia the prophet. Yet kin
Sedecia sent Juchal, son of Selemia, and Sophonia, son o
Maasia the priest, to the prophet Jeremia with this request
4 "Pray to the Lord, our God, for us." At this time Jeremia ha
not yet been put into prison; he still came and went freel
5 among the people. Also, Pharao's army had set out from Egyp
and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem hear
this report they marched away from the city.
6 This word of the Lord then came to the prophet Jeremia
7 | Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Give this answer to th
king of Juda who sent you to me to consult me: Pharao's arm
which has set out to help you will return to its own land, Egyp
8 The Chaldeans shall return to the fight against this city; the
shall capture it and destroy it with fire.
9 Thus says the Lord: Do not deceive yourselves with th
thought that the Chaldeans will leave you for good, becaus
10 they shall not leave! Even if you were to defeat the whol
Chaldean army now attacking you, and only the wounde
remained, each in his tent, these would rise up and destroy th
city with fire.

36, 30: *Joakim:* see 22, 19 n for the "burial of an ass." His so
Joachin ruled three months.
37, 1-21: In order of time, this event follows 34, 1-7.
37, 5: The "Pharao" in question was Hophra. See 34, 8-22 n.

11 When the Chaldean army lifted the siege of Jerusalem at the
12 threat of the army of Pharao, Jeremia set out from Jerusalem
for the district of Benjamin, to take part with his family in the
13 division of an inheritance. But when he reached the Gate of
Benjamin, he met the captain of the guard, a man named Jeria,
son of Selemia, son of Anania; he seized the prophet Jeremia,
14 saying, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans!" | "That is a
lie!" Jeremia answered, "I am not deserting to the Chaldeans."
Without listening, Jeria kept Jeremia in custody and brought
him to the princes.
15 The princes were enraged, and had Jeremia beaten and
thrown into prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe, which
16 they were using as a jail. And so Jeremia entered the vaulted
dungeon, where he remained a long time.
17 Once king Sedecia had him brought to his palace and he asked
him secretly whether there was any message from the Lord.
Yes! Jeremia answered: you shall be handed over to the king
18 of Babylon. Jeremia then asked king Sedecia: In what have I
wronged you, or your ministers, or this people, that you should
19 put me in prison? And where are your own prophets now,
20 who prophesied to you that the king of Babylon would not
attack you or this land? Hear now, my lord king, and grant my
petition: do not send me back into the house of Jonathan the
scribe, or I shall die there.
21 King Sedecia ordered that Jeremia be confined in the quarters
of the guard, and given a loaf of bread each day from the
bakers' shop until all the bread in the city was eaten up. Thus
Jeremia remained in the quarters of the guard.

38

1 ***Jeremia in the Miry Cistern*** Saphatia, son of Mathan,
Godolia, son of Phassur, Juchal, son of Selemia, and Phassur,
son of Melchia, heard Jeremia speaking these words to all the
2 people: Thus says the Lord: He who remains in this city
shall die by sword, or famine, or pestilence; but he who goes
out to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be spared him as
3 booty, and he shall live. | Thus says the Lord: This city shall
certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon;
he shall capture it.
4 "This man ought to be put to death," the princes said to

37, 13: See 21, 10 n.
38, 1: *Phassur:* the same as in 21, 1.
38, 4: The Lachish letters (see 34, 7 n) use the same expression, "He demoralizes the soldiers."

the king; "he demoralizes the soldiers who are left in this city,
and all the people, by speaking such things to them; he is not
interested in the welfare of our people, but in their ruin." |
5 King Sedecia answered: "He is in your power"; for the king
6 could do nothing with them. And so they took Jeremia and
threw him into the cistern of prince Melchia, which was in the
quarters of the guard, letting him down with ropes. There was
no water in the cistern, only mud, and Jeremia sank into the
mud.
7 Now Ebed-melech, a Chusite, a courtier in the king's palace,
heard that they had put Jeremia into the cistern. The king
8 happened just then to be at the Gate of Benjamin, | and Ebed-
9 melech went there from the palace and said to him, "My lord
king, these men have been at fault in all they have done to the
prophet Jeremia, casting him into the cistern. He will die of
famine on the spot, for there is no more food in the city."
10 Then the king ordered Ebed-melech the Chusite to take three
men along with him, and draw the prophet Jeremia out of the
11 cistern before he should die. Ebed-melech took the men along
with him, and went first to the linen closet in the palace, from
which he took some old, tattered rags; these he sent down to
12 Jeremia in the cistern, with ropes. | Then he said to Jeremia:
"Put the old, tattered rags between your armpits and the ropes."
13 Jeremia did so, and they drew him up with the ropes out of the
cistern. But Jeremia remained in the quarters of the guard.
14 Once king Sedecia summoned the prophet Jeremia to come
to him at the third entrance to the house of the Lord. "I have
a question to ask you," the king said to Jeremia; "hide nothing
15 from me." | Jeremia answered Sedecia: If I tell you anything,
you will have me killed, will you not? If I counsel you, you
16 will not listen to me! But king Sedecia swore to Jeremia secretly:
"As the Lord lives who gave us the breath of life, I will not kill
you; nor will I hand you over to these men who seek your life."
17 Thereupon Jeremia said to Sedecia: Thus says the Lord God
of hosts, the God of Israel: If you surrender to the princes of
Babylon's king, you shall save your life; this city shall not be
18 destroyed with fire, and you and your family shall live. But if
you do not surrender to the princes of Babylon's king, this city
shall fall into the hands of the Chaldeans, who shall destroy it
with fire, and you shall not escape their hands.
19 King Sedecia, however, said to Jeremia, "I am afraid of the
men of Juda who have deserted to the Chaldeans; I may be
20 handed over to them, and they will mistreat me." | You will

38, 7: *A Chusite:* an Ethiopian.

not be handed over, Jeremia answered. Please obey the voice
of the Lord and do as I tell you; then it shall go well with you,
21 and your life will be spared. But if you refuse to surrender, this
22 is what the Lord shows me: All the women left in the house of
Juda's king shall be brought out to the princes of Babylon's
king, and they shall taunt you thus:
"They betrayed you, outdid you, your good friends! Now that
your feet are stuck in the mud, they slink away."
23 All your wives and sons shall be led forth to the Chaldeans,
and you shall not escape their hands; you shall be handed over
to the king of Babylon, and this city shall be destroyed with
fire.
24 Then Sedecia said to Jeremia, "Let no one know about this
25 conversation, or you shall die. If the princes hear I spoke to
you, if they come and ask you, 'Tell us what you said to the
king; do not hide it from us, or we will kill you,' or, 'What
26 did the king say to you?' give them this answer: 'I petitioned the
king not to send me back to Jonathan's house to die there.' "
27 When all the princes came to Jeremia, they questioned him, and
he answered them in the very words the king had commanded.
They said no more to him, for nothing had been heard of the
28 earlier conversation. Thus Jeremia stayed in the quarters of the
guard till the day Jerusalem was taken.

39

Jeremia and Godolia When Jerusalem was taken. . . . |
1 In the tenth month of the ninth year of Sedecia, king of Juda,
Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, and all his army marched
2 against Jerusalem and besieged it. On the ninth day of the
fourth month, in the eleventh year of Sedecia, a breach was
3 made in the city's defenses. All the princes of the king of
Babylon came and occupied the middle gate: Nergal-sarezer,
of Sin-magir, the chief officer, Nabu-sezban, the high dignitary,
4 and all the other princes of the king of Babylon. . . . When
Sedecia, king of Juda, saw them, he and all his warriors fled by
night, leaving the city on the Royal Garden Road through the
gate between the two walls. He went in the direction of the
5 Araba, | but the Chaldean army pursued them, and overtook
and captured Sedecia in the desert near Jericho. He was brought
to Ribla, in the land of Hamath, where Nabuchodonosor, king

39, 2: July, 587 B.C.
39, 3-4: Sedecia escaped through the southern gate opening into the Cedron valley, and headed toward the Jordan valley ("Araba").
39, 5: *Ribla:* Syria.

6 of Babylon pronounced sentence upon him. As Sedecia looked
on, his sons were slain at Ribla by order of the king of Babylon,
7 who slew also all the nobles of Juda. He then blinded Sedecia
and bound him in chains to bring him to Babylon.
8 The Chaldeans set fire to the king's palace and the houses
9 of the people, and demolished the walls of Jerusalem. Nabu-
zardan, chief of the bodyguard, deported to Babylon the rest of
the people left in the city, those who had deserted to him, and
10 the rest of the workmen. But some of the poor who had no
property were left in the land of Juda by Nabu-zardan, chief of
the bodyguard, and were given at the same time vineyards and
farms.
11 Concerning Jeremia, Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, gave
the following orders through Nabu-zardan, chief of the body-
12 guard: "Take him and look after him; let no harm befall him,
13 but treat him as he himself requests." Thereupon Nabu-zardan,
chief of the bodyguard, and Nabu-sezban, the high dignitary,
and Nergal-sarezer, the chief officer, and all the nobles of the
14 king of Babylon, | had Jeremia taken out of the quarters of the
guard, and entrusted to Godolia, son of Ahicam, son of Saphan,
to be brought home. And so he remained among the people.

15 ***A Word of Comfort for Ebed-melech*** While Jeremia
was still imprisoned in the quarters of the guard, the word of the
16 Lord came to him: Go, tell this to Ebed-melech the Chusite:
Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am
now fulfilling the words I spoke against this city, for evil and
17 not for good; and this before your very eyes. But on that day I
will rescue you, says the Lord; you shall not be handed over to
18 the men of whom you are afraid. I will make certain that you
escape and do not fall by the sword. Your life shall be spared
as booty, because you trusted in me, says the Lord.

40

1 ***Jeremia still in Juda*** This word came to Jeremia from
the Lord, after Nabu-zardan, captain of the bodyguard, had
released him in Rama, where he had found him a prisoner in
chains, among the captives of Jerusalem and Juda who were
2 being exiled to Babylon. When the captain of the bodyguard
took charge of Jeremia, he said to him, "The Lord, your God,
3 foretold the ruin of this place. Now he has brought about in
deed what he threatened; because you sinned against the Lord
4 and did not obey his voice, this fate has befallen you. And now,

40, 1: There is no "word" till 42. 7ff.

I am freeing you today from the fetters that bind your hands; if it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, you may come: I will look after you well. But if it does not please you to come to Babylon, you need not come. See, the whole land is
5 before you; go wherever you think good and proper"; | and then, before he left—"or go to Godolia, son of Ahicam, son of Saphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed ruler over the cities of Juda; stay with him among the people, or go wherever you please." The captain of the bodyguard gave him
6 food and gifts and let him go. Jeremia went to Godolia, son of Ahicam, in Maspha, and stayed with him among the people left in the land.

7 When the army leaders who were still in the field with all their men heard that the king of Babylon had given Godolia, son of Ahicam, charge of the land, of men, women, and children, and of those poor who had not been led captive to Babylon,
8 they came with their men to Godolia in Maspha: Ismael, son of Nathania; Johanan, son of Caree; Sarea, son of Tanchumeth; the sons of Ophi of Netopha; and Jezonia of Beth-Maaca.
9 Godolia, son of Ahicam, son of Saphan, adjured them and their men not to be afraid to serve the Chaldeans: to stay in the land
10 and submit to the king of Babylon, for their own welfare; saying that he himself would remain in Maspha, as their intermediary with the Chaldeans who should come to them. They were to collect the wine, the fruit, and the oil, to store them in
11 jars, and to settle in the cities they occupied. When the people of Juda in Moab, those among the Ammonites, those in Edom, and those in all other lands heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Juda, and had appointed over them Godolia,
12 son of Ahicam, son of Saphan, they all returned to the land of Juda from the places to which they had scattered. They went to Godolia at Maspha and had a rich harvest of wine and fruit.

13 ***Assassination of Godolia*** Now Johanan, son of Caree, and all the leaders of the armies in the field came to Godolia in
14 Maspha | and asked him whether he did not know that Baalis,

40, 6: Since Jerusalem was too devastated, the capital was moved to "Maspha," about five miles west of Jerusalem.

40, 8: In 1932 at Tell en Nasbe (modern name of Maspha) a seal ring of a high official named "Jezonia" was found.

40, 14: The "Ammonites" were not content with Juda's crushing defeat, and "Ismael" had his own designs to rule truncated Juda since he was of the Davidic line as 41, 1 informs us.

the king of the Ammonites, had sent Ismael, son of Nathania,
15 to assassinate him. But Godolia, son of Ahicam, would not
believe them. Then Johanan, son of Caree, said secretly to
Godolia in Maspha: "Let me go and kill Ismael, son of
Nathania; no one will know it. Why should he be allowed to
kill you? All the Jews who have now rallied to you will be
16 dispersed and the remnant of Juda will perish." Nevertheless,
Godolia, son of Ahicam, answered Johanan, son of Caree: "You
shall do nothing of the kind; you have lied about Ismael."

41

1 In the seventh month Ismael, son of Nathania, son of Elisama,
of royal descent, one of the king's nobles, came with ten men to
2 Godolia, son of Ahicam, at Maspha. And while they were
together at table in Maspha, Ismael, son of Nathania, and the
ten who were with him, rose up and attacked with swords
Godolia, son of Ahicam, son of Saphan, whom the king of
Babylon had made ruler over the land; and they killed him.
3 Ismael also slew all the men of Juda of military age who were
with Godolia and the Chaldean soldiers who were there.
4 The second day after the murder of Godolia, before anyone
5 knew of it, eighty men with beards shaved off, clothes in rags,
and with gashes on their bodies came from Sichem, Silo, and
Samaria, bringing food offerings and incense for the house of
6 the Lord. Ismael, son of Nathania, went out from Maspha to
7 meet them, weeping as he went. "Come to Godolia, son of
Ahicam," he said as he met them. When they were once inside
the city, Ismael, son of Nathania, and his men slew them and
8 threw them into the cistern. But there were ten among them
who pleaded with Ismael: "Do not kill us; we have stores
buried in the field: wheat and barley, oil and honey." And so he
spared them and did not kill them, as he had killed their com-
9 panions. The cistern into which Ismael threw all the corpses of
the men he had killed was the large one made by king Asa to
defend himself against Baasa, king of Israel; this cistern Ismael,
son of Nathania, filled with the slain.
10 Ismael, son of Nathania, led away the remnant of the people
left in Maspha and the princesses, whom Nabu-zardan, captain
of the bodyguard, had confided to Godolia, son of Ahicam.
With these captives, Ismael, son of Nathania, set out to make
his way to the Ammonites.

41, 10: The princesses of royal blood had not been deported to Babylon.

11 ***Flight to Egypt*** But when Johanan, son of Caree, and the
other army leaders with him heard of the crimes Ismael, son of
12 Nathania, had committed, they took all their men and set out
to attack Ismael, son of Nathania. They overtook him at the
13 Great Waters in Gibeon. At the sight of Johanan, son of Caree,
and the other army leaders, the people who were Ismael's cap-
14 tives rejoiced. All of those whom Ismael had brought away
15 from Maspha went over to Johanan, son of Caree. But Ismael,
son of Nathania, escaped from Johanan and fled to the Am-
16 monites with eight men. Then Johanan, son of Caree, and all
his army leaders took charge of the remnant of the people, both
the soldiers and the women and children with their guardians,
whom Ismael, son of Nathania, had brought away from Maspha
17 after he killed Godolia, son of Ahicam. From Gibeon, they re-
treated to the lodging place of Chamaam near Bethlehem, where
18 they stopped, intending to flee into Egypt. They were afraid of
the Chaldeans, because Ismael, son of Nathania, had slain
Godolia, son of Ahicam, whom the king of Babylon had made
ruler in the land of Juda.

42

1 Then all the army leaders, Johanan, son of Caree, Azaria, son
of Osaia, and all the people, high and low, approached the
2 prophet Jeremia and said, "Grant our petition; pray for us to
the Lord, your God, for all this remnant. We are now few who
3 once were many, as you well see. Let the Lord, your God, show
4 us what way we should take and what we should do." Very well!
the prophet Jeremia answered them: I will pray to the Lord,
your God, as you desire; whatever the Lord answers you, I will
5 tell you; I will withhold nothing from you. And they said to
Jeremia, "May the Lord be our witness: we will truly and faith-
fully follow all the instructions the Lord, your God, will send
6 us. Whether it is pleasant or difficult, we will obey the com-
mand of the Lord, our God, to whom we are sending you, so
that it will go well with us for obeying the command of the
Lord, our God."

7 Ten days passed before the word of the Lord came to Jeremia.
8 Then he called Johanan, son of Caree, his army leaders, and
9 all the people, high and low, and said to them: Thus says the
Lord, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to offer your
10 prayer: If you remain quietly in this land I will build you up,
and not tear you down; I will plant you, not uproot you; for I

41, 12: *The Great Waters in Gibeon:* the same as the pool of Gabaon in 2 Sm 2, 13 n.

11 regret the evil I have done you. Do not fear the king of Baby-
lon, before whom you are now afraid; do not fear him, says the
Lord, for I am with you to save you, to rescue you from his
12 power. I will grant you mercy, so that he will be sorry for you
13 and let you return to your land. But if you disobey the voice of
the Lord, your God, and decide not to remain in this land, say-
14 ing, "No, we will go to Egypt, where we will see no more of
war, hear the trumpet alarm no longer, nor hunger for bread;
15 there we will live"; | then listen to the word of the Lord, rem-
nant of Juda: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:
If you are determined to go to Egypt, when you arrive there to
16 stay, | the sword you fear shall reach you in the land of Egypt;
the hunger you dread shall cling to you no less in Egypt, and
17 there you shall die. All those men who determine to go to Egypt
to stay, shall die by the sword, famine, and pestilence; not one
18 shall survive or escape the evil that I will bring upon them. For
thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Just as my furious
anger was poured out upon the citizens of Jerusalem, so shall
my anger be poured out on you when you reach Egypt. You
shall become an example of malediction and horror, a curse and
a reproach, and you shall never see this place again.
19 It is the Lord who has spoken to you, remnant of Juda; do
not go to Egypt! You can never say that I did not warn you this
20 day. At the cost of your lives you have deceived me, sending
me to the Lord, your God, saying, "Pray for us to the Lord,
our God; make known to us all that the Lord, our God, shall
21 say, and we will do it." Today I proclaim his message, but you
obey the voice of the Lord, your God, in nothing that he has
22 commissioned me to make known to you. Have no doubt of this,
you shall die by the sword, famine, and pestilence in the place
where you wish to go and settle.

43

1 When Jeremia finished speaking to the people all these words
of the Lord, their God, with which the Lord had sent him to
2 them, | Azaria, son of Osaia, Johanan, son of Caree, and all the
insolent men shouted to Jeremia: "You lie; it was not the Lord,
our God, who sent you to tell us not to go to Egypt to settle.
3 It is Baruch, son of Neria, who stirs you up against us, to hand
us over to the Chaldeans to be killed or exiled to Babylon."
4 Johanan, son of Caree, and the rest of the leaders and the
people did not obey the Lord's command to stay in the land of
5 Juda. Instead, Johanan, son of Caree, and all the army leaders
took along the whole remnant of Juda that had been dispersed
among the nations and had returned thence to dwell again in

6 the land of Juda: men, women, and children, the princesses and
everyone whom Nabu-zardan, captain of the bodyguard, had
entrusted to Godolia, son of Ahicam, son of Saphan; also Jere-
7 mia, the prophet, and Baruch, son of Neria. Against the Lord's
command they went to Egypt, and arrived at Tahpanhes. . . .

8 ***Jeremia in Egypt*** This word of the Lord came to Jeremia
9 in Tahpanhes: Take with you large stones and sink them in
mortar in the brickyard at the entrance to the royal building in
10 Tahpanhes, while the men of Juda look on, | and then say to
them: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I will send
for my servant Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, and bring him
here. He will set his throne upon these stones which I, Jeremia,
11 have sunk, and stretch his canopy over them. He shall come and
strike the land of Egypt: with death, whoever is marked for
death; with exile, everyone destined for exile; with the sword,
12 all who are intended for the sword. He shall set fire to the tem-
ples of Egypt's gods, and burn the gods or carry them off. As a
shepherd delouses his cloak, he shall delouse the land of Egypt
13 and depart victorious. He shall smash the obelisks of the tem-
ple of the sun in the land of Egypt and destroy with fire the
temples of the Egyptian gods.

44

1 This word came to Jeremia for all the people of Juda who
were living in Egypt, at Magdal, Tahpanhes, and Memphis, and
2 in Upper Egypt: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Is-
rael: You have seen all the evil I brought on Jerusalem and the
3 other cities of Juda. Today they are ruins and uninhabited, be-
cause of the evil they did to provoke me, going after strange
gods, serving them and sacrificing to them, gods which neither
4 they, nor you, nor your fathers knew. Though I kept sending
to you all my servants the prophets, with the plea not to com-
5 mit this horrible deed which I hate, they would not listen or
accept the warning to turn away from the evil of sacrificing to
6 strange gods. Therefore the fury of my anger poured forth in
flame over the cities of Juda and the streets of Jerusalem, so
that they became the ruinous waste they are today.
7 Now thus says the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel:
Why do you inflict so great an evil upon yourselves? Will you

43, 7: *Tahpanhes:* an Egyptian frontier town of the eastern Delta region.

43, 13: Heliopolis ("temple of the sun"), near Cairo, has one remaining obelisk. The two others are in London and New York City.

44, 2-30: Jeremia's last prophecy.

root out from Juda man and wife, child and nursling, and not
8 leave yourselves even a remnant? Will you go on provoking me
by the works of your hands, by sacrificing to strange gods here
in the land of Egypt where you have come to live? Will you be
rooted out and become a curse and a disgrace among all the
9 nations of the earth? Have you forgotten the evil deeds which
your fathers, and the kings of Juda and their wives, and you
yourselves and your wives have done in the land of Juda and
10 the streets of Jerusalem? To this day they have not been crushed;
they do not fear or follow the law and the statutes which I set
before you and your fathers.
11 Hence, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have
12 determined evil against you; and I will uproot all Juda. I will
take away the remnant of Juda who insisted on coming to dwell
in Egypt, so that they shall be wholly destroyed. In the land of
Egypt they shall fall by the sword or be consumed by hunger.
High and low, they shall die by the sword, or by hunger, and
become an example of malediction, a horror, a curse and a re-
13 proach. Thus will I punish those who live in Egypt, just as I
punished Jerusalem with sword, hunger, and pestilence. None
of the remnant of Juda that have come to settle in the land of
14 Egypt shall escape or survive. None shall return to the land of
Juda, though they yearn to return and live there. Only scattered
refugees shall return.
15 From all the men who knew that their wives were burning in-
cense to strange gods, from all the women who were present in
the immense crowd, and from all the people who lived in Lower
16 and Upper Egypt, Jeremia received this answer: "We will not
17 listen to what you say in the name of the Lord. Rather will we
continue doing what we had proposed; we will burn incense to
the queen of heaven and pour out libations to her, as we and our
fathers, our kings and princes have done in the cities of Juda
and the streets of Jerusalem. Then we had enough food to eat
18 and we were well off; we suffered no misfortune. But since we
stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out
libations to her, we are in need of everything and are being
19 destroyed by the sword and by hunger. And when we burned
incense to the queen of heaven and poured out libations to her,
was it without our husbands' consent that we baked for her
cakes in her image and poured out libations to her?"
20 To all the people, men and women, who gave him this an-
21 swer, Jeremia said: Was it not this that the Lord remembered
and brought to mind, that you burned incense in the cities of

44, 17: *The queen of heaven:* see 7, 18 n.

Juda and the streets of Jerusalem: you, your fathers, your kings
22 and princes, and the people generally? The Lord could no longer
bear your evil deeds, the horrible things which you were doing;
and so your land became a waste, a desert, a thing accursed
23 and without inhabitants, as it is today. Because you burned in-
cense and sinned against the Lord, not obeying the voice of the
Lord, not living by his law, his statutes, and his decrees, this
evil has befallen you at the present day.
24 Jeremia said further to all the people, including the women:
Hear the word of the Lord, all you Judeans in the land of Egypt:
25 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: You and your
wives have stated your intentions, and kept them in fact: "We
will continue to fulfill the vows we have made to burn incense
to the queen of heaven and to pour out libations to her." Very
26 well! keep your vows, carry out your resolutions! But listen then
to the word of the Lord, all you people of Juda who live in
Egypt: I swear by my own great name, says the Lord, in the
whole land of Egypt no man of Juda shall henceforth pronounce
27 my name, saying, "As the Lord God lives." | I am watching
over them to do evil, not good. All the men of Juda in Egypt
shall perish by the sword or famine until they are utterly de-
28 stroyed. Those who escape the sword to return from the land
of Egypt to the land of Juda shall be few in number. The whole
remnant of Juda who came to settle in Egypt shall know whose
word stands, mine or theirs.
29 That you may know how surely my threats of punishment
for you shall be fulfilled, this shall be a sign to you, says the
30 Lord, that I will punish you in this place. Thus says the Lord:
See! I will hand over Pharao Hophra, king of Egypt, to his ene-
mies, to those who seek his life, just as I handed over Sedecia,
king of Juda, to his enemy and mortal foe, Nabuchodonosor,
king of Babylon.

45

1 ***A Message to Baruch*** This is the message that the prophet
Jeremia gave to Baruch, son of Neria, when he wrote in a book
the prophecies that Jeremia dictated in the fourth year of
2 Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda: Thus says the Lord, God
3 of Israel, to you, Baruch, | because you said, "Alas! the Lord
adds grief to my pain; I am weary from groaning, and can find
4 no rest": say this to him, says the Lord: What I have built, I

44, 30: *Pharao Hophra:* he died at the hands of his own people.
45, 1: This verse refers to ch. 36, wherein Jeremia gives Baruch the message of ch. 45.

am tearing down; what I have planted, I am uprooting: even
5 the whole land. And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek
them not! I am bringing evil on all mankind, says the Lord, but
your life I will leave you as booty, wherever you may go.

V. ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

46

1 This is the word of the Lord that came to the prophet Jeremia
against the nations.

2 ***Against Egypt*** Concerning Egypt. Against the army of
Pharao Necho, king of Egypt, which was defeated at Charcha-
mis on the Euphrates by Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, in
the fourth year of Joakim, son of Josia, king of Juda:

3.4 Prepare shield and buckler! march to battle! | Harness the
horses, mount, charioteers! Fall in with your helmets; polish
5 your spears, put on your breastplates. | What do I see? With
broken ranks they fall back; their heroes are routed, they flee
headlong without making a stand. Terror on every side, says
6 the Lord! | The swift cannot flee, nor the hero escape: there in
the north, on the Euphrates' bank, they stumble and fall.

7 Who is this that surges forward like the Nile, like rivers of
8 billowing waters? | Egypt surges like the Nile, like rivers of
billowing waters. "I will surge forward," he says, "and cover
9 the earth, destroying the city and its people. | Forward, horses!
drive madly, chariots! Set out, warriors, Chus and Phut, bearing
10 your shields, men of Lud, stretching your bows!" | But this is
the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, vengeance
on his foes! The sword devours, is sated, drunk with their blood:
for the Lord God of hosts holds a slaughter feast in the north-
land, on the Euphrates.

11 Go up to Galaad, and take balm, O virgin daughter Egypt!
12 No use to multiply remedies; for you there is no cure. | The
nations hear of your shame, your cries fill the earth. Warrior
trips over warrior, both fall together.

46—51: In the Greek text these oracles appear with the other oracles against the nations in ch. 25. For the basic meaning of oracles against the nations, see Am 1, 2 n and Am 2, 6-16 n.

46, 1—49, 33: These oracles are chronologically arranged from "the fourth year of Joakim" (46, 2).

46, 2: Necho, in 605 B.C., lost his chance to prevent Babylon from supplanting Assyria. This defeat pushed Egypt's power down to its own borders and left Palestine open to the Babylonians.

13 The message which the Lord gave to the prophet Jeremia
concerning the advance of Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon,
to attack the land of Egypt:
14 Announce it in Egypt, publish it in Magdal, proclaim it in
Memphis and Tahpanhes! Say: Take your stand, prepare your-
15 selves, the sword has already devoured your neighbors. | Why
has Apis fled, your mighty one failed to stand? The Lord thrust
16 him down; | he stumbled repeatedly, and fell. They said one
to another, "Up! let us return to our own people, to the land
of our birth, away from the destroying sword."
17 Call Pharao, king of Egypt, by the name "The noise that let
18 its time go by." | As I live, says the King whose name is Lord of
hosts, like Thabor among the mountains he shall come, like
19 Carmel above the sea. | Pack your baggage for exile, capital
city of daughter Egypt; Memphis shall become a desert, an
empty ruin.
20 Egypt is a pretty heifer, from the north a horsefly lights
21 upon her. | The mercenaries in her ranks are like fatted calves;
they too turn and flee together, stand not their ground, when the
day of their ruin comes upon them, the time of their punish-
22 ment. | She sounds like a retreating reptile! Yes, they come in
23 force; like woodchoppers, they attack her with axes. | They cut
down her forest, says the Lord, impenetrable though it be;
24 more numerous than locusts, they cannot be counted. | Dis-
graced is daughter Egypt, handed over to the people of the
north.
25 The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, has said: See! I will
punish Amon of Thebes, and Egypt, her gods and her kings,
26 Pharao, and those who trust in him. I will hand them over to
those who seek their lives, to Nabuchodonosor, king of Baby-
lon, and his ministers. But later on Egypt shall be inhabited
again, as in times past, says the Lord.
27 But you, my servant Jacob, fear not; be not dismayed, O
Israel. Behold, I will deliver you from the far-off land, your
descendants, from their land of exile. Jacob shall again find
28 rest, shall be tranquil and undisturbed. | You, my servant
Jacob, never fear, says the Lord, for I am with you; I will make

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46, 13: *The advance of Nabuchodonosor . . . to attack . . . Egypt:* Nabuchodonosor withdrew to Syria in 601 B.C.

46, 15: *Apis:* the image of the bull-god carried in battle.

46, 17: *"The noise that let its time go by":* the second Hebrew word of this phrase seems to be a word-play on Hophra.

46, 18: *He:* Nabuchodonosor is likened to the power of the mountains ("Thabor," "Carmel").

46, 25: *Amon:* sun-god.

an end of all the nations to which I have driven you, but of you I will not make an end: I will chastise you as you deserve, I will not let you go unpunished.

47

1 ***Against the Philistines*** This is the word that came from the Lord to the prophet Jeremia concerning the Philistines, before Pharao attacked Gaza: Thus says the Lord:

2 Behold: waters are rising from the north, a torrent in flood;
it shall flood the land and all that is in it, the cities and their
3 people. All the people of the land set up a wailing cry. | They
hear the stamping hooves of his steeds, the rattling chariots, the
rumbling wheels. Fathers turn not to save their children; their
4 hands fall helpless | because of the day which has come to ruin
all the Philistines, and cut off from Tyre and Sidon the last of
their allies. Yes, the Lord is destroying the Philistines, the rem-
5 nant from the coasts of Caphtor. | Gaza is shaved bald, Ascalon
is reduced to silence; Azotus, the remnant of their strength,
6 how long will you gash yourself? | Alas, sword of the Lord!
how long till you find rest? Return into your scabbard; stop, be
7 still! | How can it find rest when the Lord has commanded it?
Against Ascalon and the seashore he has appointed it.

48

1 ***Against Moab*** Concerning Moab, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:

Woe to Nebo, it is laid waste; Cariathaim is disgraced and
2 captured, disgraced and overthrown is the stronghold: | Moab's
glory is no more. Evil they plan against Hesebon: "Come, let
us put an end to her as a people." You, too, Madmena, shall be
3 reduced to silence; behind you stalks the sword. | Listen! a
4 cry from Horonaim of ruin and great destruction! | Moab is
5 crushed, their outcry is heard in Soar. | The ascent of Luith
they climb weeping; on the descent to Horonaim the cry of
6 destruction is heard. | "Flee, save your lives, to survive like the
7 wild ass in the desert!" | Because you trusted in your works
and your treasures, you also shall be captured. Chamos shall

47, 1-7: Scholars dispute whether the Philistines here were attacked by the Egyptians (v. 1) or by the Babylonians (from "the north" v. 2).

47, 4: *Caphtor:* Crete(?)

47, 6: The Philistines speak.

48, 1-47: This chapter resembles more an anthology which grew around an original unidentified nucleus oracle by Jeremia about 605 B.C. Nabuchodonosor conquered Moab and Ammon about 582 B.C.

48, 7: *Chamos:* the chief Moabite god. See v. 13.

8 go into exile, his priests and princes with him. | The destroyer
comes upon every city, not a city escapes; ruined is the valley,
9 wasted the plain, as the Lord has said. | Set up a memorial for
Moab, for it is an utter wasteland; its cities are turned into ruins
10 where no one dwells. | [Cursed be he who does the Lord's work
remissly, cursed he who holds back his sword from blood.] |
11 Moab has been tranquil from his youth, has rested upon his
lees; he was not poured from one flask to another, he went not
into exile. Thus he kept his taste, and his scent was not lost.
12 Hence, the days shall come, says the Lord, when I will send
him coopers to turn him over; they shall empty his flasks and
13 break his jars. Chamos shall disappoint Moab, as Israel was dis-
appointed by Bethel in which they trusted.
14 How can you say, "We are heroes, men valiant in war"? |
15 The ravager of Moab and his cities advances, the flower of his
youth goes down to be slaughtered, says the King, the Lord of
16 hosts by name. | Near at hand is Moab's ruin, his disaster
17 hastens apace. | Mourn for him, all you his neighbors, all you
who knew him well! Say: How the strong staff is broken, the
18 glorious rod! | Come down from glory, sit on the ground, you
that dwell in Dibon; Moab's ravager has come up against you,
19 he has ruined your strongholds. | Stand by the wayside, watch
closely, you that dwell in Aroer; ask the man who flees, the
woman who tries to escape: say to them, "What has hap-
20 pened?" | Moab is disgraced, yes, destroyed, howl and cry out;
publish it at the Arnon, Moab is ruined!
21 For judgment has come on the land of the plateau: on Helon,
22 Jasa, and Mephaath, | on Dibon, Nebo, and Beth-Diblathaim,
23.24 | on Cariathaim, Beth-Gamul, and Beth-Maon, | on Carioth
and on Bosra: on all the cities of Moab, far and near.
25 Moab's strength is broken, his might is shattered, says the
26 Lord. Because he boasted against the Lord, make Moab drunk
so that he retches and vomits, and he too becomes a laughing-
27 stock. | Is Israel a laughingstock to you? Was she caught among
thieves, that you shake your head whenever you speak of her?
28 Leave the cities, dwell in the crags, you that dwell in Moab.
Be like a dove that nests out of reach on the edge of a chasm. |
29 We have heard of the pride of Moab, pride beyond bounds: his
30 loftiness, his pride, his scorn, his insolence of heart. | I know,
31 says the Lord, his arrogance; liar in boast, liar in deed. | And

48, 11: This verse may be seen on a clay seal at the Oriental Institute, Chicago. *Rested upon his lees:* see So 1, 12 n for the expression, "men who thicken on their lees."

48, 29-46: There seem to be borrowings from Is 15—16.

so I wail over Moab, over all Moab I cry, over the men of Cir-
32 heres I moan. | More than for Jazer I weep over you, vineyard
of Sabama. Your tendrils trailed down to the sea, as far as Jazer
they stretched. Upon your harvest, upon your vintage, the
33 ravager has fallen. | Joy and jubilation are at an end in the
fruit gardens of the land of Moab. I drain the wine from the
wine vats, the treader treads no more, the vintage shout is stilled.
34 The cry of Hesebon and Eleale is heard as far as Jasa; they
call from Segor to Horonaim, and to Eglath-shilishiya, for even
35 the waters of Nemrim turn into a desert. I will leave no one in
Moab, says the Lord, to offer a holocaust on the high place, or
36 to burn incense to his gods. Hence the wail of flutes for Moab is
in my heart; for the men of Cir-heres the wail of flutes is in my
37 heart: the wealth they acquired has perished. Every head has
been made bald, every beard shaved; every hand is gashed, and
38 the loins of all are clothed in sackcloth. On every roof of Moab
and in all his squares there is mourning; I have shattered Moab
39 like a pot that no one wants, says the Lord. How terror seizes
Moab, and wailing! How he turns his back in shame! Moab has
40 become a laughingstock and a horror to all his neighbors! For
thus says the Lord:

Behold, like an eagle he soars, spreads his wings over Moab. |
41 Cities are taken, strongholds seized: on that day the hearts of
42 Moab's heroes are like the heart of a woman in travail. | Moab
shall be destroyed, no more a people, because he boasted against
43 the Lord. | Terror, pit, and trap be upon you, people of Moab,
44 says the Lord. | He who flees from the terror falls into the pit;
he who climbs from the pit is caught in the trap; for I will bring
these things upon Moab in the year of their punishment, says
45 the Lord. | In Hesebon's shadow stop short the exhausted
refugees; for fire breaks forth from Hesebon, and a blaze from
the house of Sehon: it consumes the brow of Moab, the skull of
46 the noisemakers. | Woe to you, O Moab, you are ruined, O
people of Chamos! Your sons are taken into exile, your daugh-
47 ters into captivity. | But I will change the lot of Moab in the
days to come, says the Lord.

Thus far the judgment on Moab.

49

1 *Against the Ammonites* Concerning the Ammonites, thus
says the Lord:

48, 41: *A woman in travail:* a favorite Old Testament expression of deep anguish.

49, 1: *Melchom:* the chief Ammonite god.

Has Israel no sons? has he no heir? Why then has Melchom
disinherited Gad, why have his people settled in Gad's cities? |
2 But the days are coming, says the Lord, when against Rabba of
the Ammonites I will sound the battle alarm; she shall become
a mound of ruins, and her daughter cities shall be destroyed by
fire. Israel shall inherit those who disinherited her, says the
3 Lord. | Howl, Hesebon, for the ravager approaches, shriek,
daughters of Rabba! Put on sackcloth and mourn, run to and
fro, gashing yourselves; for Melchom goes into exile along with
4 his priests and captains. | Why do you glory in your strength,
your ebbing strength, rebellious daughter? You who trust in
5 your treasures, saying, "Who can come against me?" | I am
bringing terror upon you, says the Lord God of hosts, from all
round about you; you shall be scattered, each man in headlong
6 flight, with no one to rally the fugitives. | But afterward I will
change the lot of the Ammonites, says the Lord.

7 ***Against Edom*** Concerning Edom, thus says the Lord of
hosts:

Is there no more wisdom in Theman, has counsel perished
8 from the prudent, has their wisdom become corrupt? | Flee, re-
treat, hide in deep holes, you who live in Dedan: for I will bring
9 destruction upon Esau when I come to punish him. | If vin-
tagers came upon you, they would leave no gleanings; if thieves
10 by night, they would destroy as they pleased. | So I myself will
strip Esau; I will uncover his retreats so that he cannot hide. He
is ruined: sons, and brothers, and neighbors, so that he is no
11 more. | Leave your orphans behind, I will keep them alive;
your widows, let them trust in me.
12 For thus says the Lord: Even those not sentenced to drink
the cup must drink it! Shall you then go unpunished? You shall
13 not go unpunished; you shall surely drink it. | By my own self
I have sworn, says the Lord: Bosra shall become an object of
horror and a disgrace, a desolation and a curse; she and all her
cities shall become ruins forever.
14 I have heard a report from the Lord, a herald has been sent
among the nations: Gather together, move against her, rise up
15 for battle. | Small will I make you among the nations, despised

49, 7-22: On the occasion of the raids made by Edom, Moab, and Ammon on Juda in 605 B.C., Jeremia wrote a speech which became embellished, especially in vv. 12-22. There are notable similarities with the Book of Abdia.

49, 7: Edom had a reputation for wisdom (see Jb 2, 11).

49, 10: *Esau:* the ancestor of the Edomites. See Gn 36.

49, 12: *Cup:* a biblical symbol of suffering as in 25, 15ff.

16 among men! | The terror you spread beguiled you, and your
presumption of heart; you that live in rocky crags, that hold the
heights of the hill: though you build your nest high as the
eagle, from there I will drag you down, says the Lord.
17 Edom shall become an object of horror. Every passer-by shall
18 be appalled and catch his breath at all her wounds. As when
Sodom, Gomorra, and their neighbors were overthrown, says
the Lord, not a man shall dwell there: no one shall visit there
19 As when a lion comes up from the thicket of Jordan to the
permanent feeding grounds, so I, in an instant, will drive men
off; and whom I choose I will establish there! For who is like
me? who can call me to account? What shepherd can stand
20 against me? | Therefore, hear the counsel of the Lord, which
he has taken against Edom; hear the plans he has made against
those that live in Theman: they shall be dragged away, even
the smallest sheep, their own pasture shall be aghast because of
21 them. At the noise of their fall the earth quakes, to the Red
22 Sea the outcry is heard! | See! like an eagle he soars aloft, and
spreads his wings over Bosra; on that day the hearts of Edom's
heroes shall be like the heart of a woman in travail.

23 *Against Damascus* Concerning Damascus: | Hamath and
Arphad are covered with shame, they have heard bad news
24 worried, they toss like the sea which cannot rest. | Damascus
is weakened, she turns to flee, panic has seized her. Distress
and pangs take hold of her, like those of a woman in travail.
25 How can the city of glory be forsaken, the town of delight!
26 But now her young men shall fall in her streets, and all her
warriors shall be stilled. On that day, says the Lord of hosts,
27 I will set fire to the wall of Damascus, and it shall devour the
palaces of Benadad.

28 *Against Arabia* Of Cedar and the kingdoms of Asor, de-
feated by Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, thus says the
Lord:
29 Rise up, attack Cedar, ravage the Easterners. | Their tents
and herds shall be taken away, their tent curtains and all their
goods; their camels they shall carry off for themselves, and

49, 19-22: These verses against Babylon seem more appropriate in 50, 44-46, from where they seem to originate.

49, 23-27: It is difficult to know the historical circumstance behind this oracle, and how much of it is really from Jeremia.

49, 23: The two states are north of Damascus.

49, 27: *Benadad:* a few kings of Damascus bore this name.

49, 28-33: See 49, 23-27 n. The same observation applies here.

30 shout from upon them, "Terror on every side!" | Flee! leave
your homes, hide in deep holes, you that live in Asor, says the
Lord; for counsel has been taken against you, a plan has been
31 formed against you [Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon]. | Rise
up! set out against a nation that is at peace, that lives secure,
says the Lord, that has no gates or bars, and dwells alone. |
32 Their camels shall be your booty, their many herds your spoil;
I will scatter to the winds those who shave their temples, from
33 all sides I will bring ruin upon them, says the Lord. | Asor shall
become a haunt of jackals, a desert forever, where no man
lives, no human being stays.

34 ***Against Elam*** The following word of the Lord against
Elam came to the prophet Jeremia at the beginning of the reign
35 of Sedecia, king of Juda: Thus says the Lord of hosts:
Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their
36 might. | I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four
ends of the heavens: I will scatter them to all these winds, till
there is no nation to which the outcasts of Elam shall not come.
37 | I will break Elam before their foes, before those who seek their
life; I will bring evil upon them, my burning wrath, says the
Lord. I will send the sword to pursue them until I have com-
38 pletely made an end of them; | my throne I will set up in Elam
39 and destroy from there king and princes, says the Lord. | But
in the days to come I will change the lot of Elam, says the Lord.

50

1 ***The First Prophecy against Babylon*** The word which
the Lord spoke against Babylon, against the land of the Chal-
deans, through the prophet Jeremia:
2 Announce and publish it among the nations; publish it, hide
it not, but say: Babylon is taken, Bel confounded, Merodach

49, 32: *Shave their temples:* see 9, 25 n.

49, 34-39: The historical situation seems to be the aid furnished by the Elamites to Assyria in 597.

49, 34: *Elam:* present-day southwestern Iran.

49, 39: Elam, like other pagan nations in these oracles, will be restored.

50, 1—51, 58: An anthology of speeches against Babylon, composed from previous chapters in Jeremia, Habacuc, and Isaia. The theme of this section is the fall of Babylon and the return of the Jews from their Babylonian exile.

50, 1: *Through the prophet Jeremia:* most likely not in the original text. Very probably these speeches are not from Jeremia but from several inspired writers after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

50, 2: The god Bel was later identified with Marduk ("Merodach") the chief god of Babylon.

3 shattered; her images are put to shame, her idols shattered. | A
people from the north advances against her to turn her land
into a desert, so that no one shall live there, because man and
4 beast have fled away. | In those days, at that time, says the
Lord, the men of Israel and of Juda shall come, weeping as they
5 come, to seek the Lord, their God; to their goal in Sion they
shall ask the way. "Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord with
6 covenant everlasting, never to be forgotten." | Lost sheep were
my people, their shepherds misled them, straggling on the moun-
tains; from mountain to hill they wandered, losing the way to
7 their fold. | Whoever came upon them devoured them, and
their enemies said, "We incur no guilt, because they sinned
against the Lord, the hope of their fathers, their abode of
justice."
8 Flee from Babylon, leave the land of the Chaldeans, be like
9 the rams at the head of the flock. | See, I am stirring up against
Babylon a band of great nations from the north; from there they
advance, and she shall be taken. Their arrows are arrows of the
10 skilled warrior; none shall return empty. | Chaldea shall be
their plunder, and all her plunderers shall be enriched, says the
11 Lord. | Yes, rejoice and exult, you that plunder my portion,
12 frisk like calves on the green, snort like stallions! | Your mother
shall be sorely put to shame, she that bore you shall be abashed;
13 see, the last of the nations, a desert, dry and waste. | Because
of the Lord's wrath she shall be empty, and become a total des-
ert; everyone who passes by Babylon will be appalled and
14 catch his breath, at all her wounds. | Take your posts encircling
Babylon, you who bend the bow; shoot at her, spare not your
15 arrows, | raise the war cry against her on all sides. She sur-
renders, her bastions fall, her walls are torn down: vengeance
of the Lord is this! Take revenge on her, as she has done, do to
16 her; for she sinned against the Lord. | Cut off from Babylon
the sower and him who wields the sickle in harvest time! Before
the destroying sword, each of them turns to his own people,
17 everyone flees to his own land. | A stray sheep was Israel that
lions pursued; formerly the king of Assyria devoured her, now
Nabuchodonosor of Babylon gnaws her bones.
18 Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:
I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as once I pun-
19 ished the king of Assyria; | but I will bring back Israel to her
fold, to feed on Carmel and Basan, and on Mount Ephraim and
Galaad, till she has her fill.

50, 15: *Her bastions fall . . . torn down:* a symbolic description of Babylon's fall.

20 In those days at that time, says the Lord: They shall seek
Israel's guilt, but it shall be no more, and Juda's sins, but these
shall no longer be found; for I will forgive the remnant I pre-
serve.
21 Attack the land of Merathaim, and those who live in Pecod;
slaughter and doom them, says the Lord, do all I have com-
22 manded you. | Battle alarm in the land, dire destruction! |
23 How has the hammer of the whole earth been broken and shat-
tered! What an object of horror Babylon has become among
24 the nations! | You ensnared yourself, and were caught, O Baby-
lon, before you knew it! You were discovered and seized, be-
25 cause you challenged the Lord. | The Lord opens his armory
and brings forth the weapons of his wrath; for the Lord God of
hosts has work to do in the land of the Chaldeans.
26 Come upon her from every side, open her granaries, pile up
27 her goods in heaps and doom it, leave not a remnant. | Slay
all her oxen, let them go down to the slaughter; woe to them!
28 their day has come, the time of their punishment. | Listen! the
fugitives, the escaped from the land of Babylon: they announce
29 in Sion the vengeance of the Lord, our God. | Call up against
Babylon archers, all who bend the bow; encamp around her,
let no one escape. Repay her for her deeds; as she has done, do
to her, for she insulted the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. |
30 Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, all her war-
riors shall perish on that day, says the Lord.
31 I am against you, man of insolence, says the Lord God of
hosts; for your day has come, the time for me to punish you. |
32 Insolence stumbles and falls; there is no one to raise him up. I
will kindle in his cities a fire that shall devour everything around
33 him. | Thus says the Lord of hosts: Oppressed are the men of
Israel, and with them the men of Juda; all their captors hold
34 them fast and refuse to let them go. | Strong is their avenger,
whose name is Lord of hosts; he will defend their cause with
success, and give rest to the earth, but unrest to those who live
in Babylon.
35 A sword upon the Chaldeans, says the Lord, upon Babylon's
36 people, her princes and wise men! | A sword upon the sooth-
sayers, that they may become fools! A sword upon her warriors,
37 that they may tremble; | a sword upon her motley throng, that
they may become women! A sword upon her treasures, that they
38 may be plundered; | a sword upon her waters, that they may
dry up! For it is a land of idols, and they shall be made frantic

50, 21: "Merathaim" means "twice bitter" and "Pecod" means punishment. These are symbolic names for Babylonia.

39 by fearful things. ¦ Hence, wildcats and desert beasts shall
dwell there, and ostriches shall occupy it; never again shall it
40 be peopled, or lived in, from age to age. ¦ As when God over-
turned Sodom and Gomorra, with their neighbors, says the
Lord, not a man shall dwell there, no human being shall tarry
there.
41 See! a people comes from the north, a great nation, and
42 mighty kings roused from the ends of the earth. ¦ Bow and
javelin they wield, cruel and pitiless are they; they sound like the
roaring sea, as they ride forth on steeds, each in his place for
43 battle against you, daughter Babylon. ¦ The king of Babylon
hears news of them, and helpless fall his hands; anguish seizes
44 him, throes like a mother's in childbirth. ¦ As when a lion comes
up from the Jordan's thicket to the permanent feeding grounds,
so I, in one instant, will drive them off, and whom I choose I
will establish there; for who is like me? who calls me to account?
45 what shepherd can stand against me? ¦ Therefore hear the
counsel of the Lord which he has taken against Babylon; hear
the plans he has made against the land of the Chaldeans: They
shall be dragged away, even the smallest sheep; their own pas-
46 ture shall be aghast because of them. ¦ At the cry "Babylon
is captured!" the earth quakes; the outcry is heard among the
nations.

51

1 ***The Second Prophecy against Babylon*** Thus says the
Lord: See! I rouse against Babylon, and against those who live
2 in Chaldea, a destroying wind. ¦ Against Babylon I will send
winnowers to winnow her and lay waste her land; they shall
3 besiege her from all sides on the day of affliction. ¦ Let the bow-
man draw his bow, and flaunt his coat of mail; spare not her
4 young men, doom her entire army. ¦ The slain shall fall in the
5 land of Chaldea, the transfixed, in her streets; ¦ for Israel and
Juda are not widowed of their God, the Lord of hosts, and the
Chaldean land is full of guilt to be punished by the Holy One
of Israel.
6 Flee out of Babylon; let each one save his life, perish not for
her guilt; this is a time of vengeance for the Lord, he pays her
7 her due. ¦ Babylon was a golden cup in the hand of the Lord
which made the whole earth drunk; the nations drank its wine,
8 with this they have become mad. ¦ Babylon suddenly falls and

50, 44: *Shepherd:* leader, as in 49, 19.
51, 7: God used Babylon to punish the nations. Compare with 25, 15ff.

is crushed: howl over her! Bring balm for her wounds, in case
9 she can be healed. | "We have tried to heal Babylon, but she
cannot be healed. Leave her, let us go, each to his own land."
10 Her judgment reaches heaven, it touches the clouds. | The
Lord has brought to light our just cause; come, let us tell in
Sion what the Lord, our God, has done.
11 Sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers; the Lord has stirred up
the spirit of Media's kings; Babylon he is resolved to destroy.
Yes, it is the vengeance of the Lord, vengeance for his temple. |
12 Against the walls of Babylon raise a signal, make strong the
watch; post sentries, arrange ambushes! For the Lord has
planned and he will carry out his threat against the inhabi-
13 tants of Babylon. | You who dwell by mighty waters, rich
in treasure, your end has come, the term at which you shall be
cut off!
14 The Lord of hosts has sworn by himself: I will fill you with
men as numerous as locusts, who shall raise over you the vintage
15 shout! | He has sworn who made the earth by his power, and
established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the
16 heavens by his skill. | When he thunders, the waters in the
heavens roar, and he brings up clouds from the end of the earth;
he makes the lightning flash in the rain, and releases stormwinds
17 from their chambers. | Every man is stupid, ignorant; every
artisan is put to shame by his idol: he molded a fraud, without
18 breath of life. | Nothingness are they, a ridiculous work, that
19 will perish in their time of punishment. | Not like these is the
portion of Jacob, he is the creator of all things; Israel is his very
own tribe, Lord of hosts is his name.
20 You are my hammer, my weapon for war; with you I shatter
21 nations, with you I destroy kingdoms. | With you I shatter
22 horse and rider, with you I shatter chariot and driver. | With
you I shatter man and wife, with you I shatter old and young,
23 with you I shatter youth and maiden. | With you I shatter the
shepherd and his flock, with you I shatter the farmer and his
24 team, with you I shatter satraps and prefects. | Thus will I
repay Babylon, and all who live in Chaldea all the evil they
did to Sion, as you shall see with your own eyes, says the Lord.
25 | Beware! I am against you, destroying mountain, destroyer of
the entire earth, says the Lord; I will stretch forth my hand
against you, roll you down over the cliffs, and make you a
26 burnt mountain: | they will not take from you a cornerstone,
or a foundation stone; ruins forever shall you be, says the Lord.

51, 11: About 560 the Medes were expected to attack Babylon.

27 Raise a signal on the earth, blow the trumpet among the
nations; dedicate peoples to war against her, summon against
her the kingdoms, Ararat, Menni, and Aschenez; appoint re-
cruiting officers against her, send up horses like bristling locusts
28 | Dedicate peoples to war against her: the king of Media, its
29 governors and all its prefects, every land in his domain. | The
earth quakes and writhes, the Lord's plan against Babylon is
carried out, turning the land of Babylon into a desert where no
30 one lives. | Babylon's warriors have ceased to fight, they re-
main in their strongholds; dried up is their strength, they have
become women. Burned are their homes, and broken their bars.
31 | One runner meets another, herald meets herald, telling the
32 king of Babylon that all his city is taken. | The fords have been
seized, and the fortresses set on fire, while warriors are in panic
33 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Daughter
Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is trodden; yet
34 a little while, and the harvest time will come for her. | He has
consumed me, routed me, [Nabuchodonosor, king of Baby-
lon,] he has left me as an empty vessel; he has swallowed me
like a dragon: filled his belly with my delights, and cast me out.
35 | My torn flesh be upon Babylon, says the city on Sion; my
36 blood upon the people of Chaldea, says Jerusalem. | But now,
thus says the Lord: Surely I will defend your cause, I will
avenge you; I will dry up her sea, and drain her fountain. |
37 Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals; a
38 place of horror and ridicule, where no one lives. | They all roar
39 like lions, growl like lion cubs. | When they are parched, I will
set a drink before them to make them drunk, that they may be
overcome with perpetual sleep, never to awaken, says the Lord.
40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams
41 and goats. | How has she been seized, made captive, the glory
of the whole world! What a horror has Babylon become among
42 nations: | against Babylon the sea rises, she is overwhelmed by
43 the roaring waves! | Her cities have become a desert, parched
and arid land where no man lives, and no one passes through. |
44 I will punish Bel in Babylon, and make him disgorge what he
swallowed; peoples shall stream to him no more. The wall of
45 Babylon falls! | Leave her, my people, let each one save him-
self from the burning wrath of the Lord.
46 Be not discouraged for fear of rumors spread in the land;
this year the rumor comes, then violence in the land, tyrant

51, 27: At this time, Media ruled Armenia ("Ararat, Menni, and Aschenez").
51, 34: *Me:* Jerusalem.

47 against tyrant. But behold, the days are coming when I will
punish the idols of Babylon; her whole land shall be put to
48 shame, and all her slain shall lie fallen within her. Then heaven,
and earth, and everything in them shall shout over Babylon with
joy, when the destroyers come against her from the north, says
49 the Lord. Babylon, too, must fall, O slain of Israel, as at the
hands of Babylon have fallen the slain of all the earth.
50 You who have escaped the sword, go on, stand not still; re-
member the Lord from afar, let Jerusalem come to your minds.
51 | We are ashamed because we have heard taunts, confusion
covers our faces; strangers have entered the holy places of the
52 house of the Lord. But behold, the days are coming, says the
Lord, when I will punish her idols, and in her whole land the
53 wounded will groan. | Though Babylon scale the heavens, and
make her strong heights inaccessible, destroyers from me shall
54 reach her, says the Lord. | Hear! loud cries from Babylon, dire
55 destruction from the land of the Chaldeans; | for the Lord
lays Babylon waste, stills her loud cry, though her waves were
roaring like mighty waters, and their clamor was heard afar. |
56 For the destroyer comes upon her, [Babylon,] her heroes are
captured, their bows broken; the Lord is a God who requites,
he will surely repay.
57 I will make her princes and her wise men drunk, her gover-
nors, her prefects, and her warriors, so that they sleep an eternal
sleep, never to awaken, says the King, whose name is the Lord
58 of hosts. Thus says the Lord of hosts:
The walls of spacious Babylon shall be leveled utterly; her
lofty gates shall be destroyed by fire. The toil of the nations is
for nothing; for the flames the peoples weary themselves.

59 ***The Prophecy Sent to Babylon*** This was the errand
given by the prophet Jeremia to Saraia, son of Neria, son of
Maasia, when he went to Babylon for the king in the fourth
year of the reign of Sedecia; Saraia was chief quartermaster.
60 Jeremia had written all the misfortune that was to befall Baby-
lon in a single book: all these words that were written against
61 Babylon. And Jeremia said to Saraia: When you reach Baby-
62 lon, see that you read aloud all these words, | and then say: O
Lord, you yourself threatened to destroy this place, so that
neither man nor beast should dwell in it, since it would remain
63 an everlasting desert. When you have finished reading this book,

51, 59-64: All the preceding parts (50, 1—51, 58) serve to introduce the present section. This symbolic act (v. 63f) perhaps refers to 29, 3.

64 tie a stone to it and throw it in the Euphrates, | and say: Thus
shall Babylon sink. Never shall she rise, because of the evil I
am bringing upon her. [To "weary themselves" are the words
of Jeremia.]

VI. HISTORICAL APPENDIX

52

1 ***Capture of Jerusalem*** Sedecia was twenty-one years old
when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.
His mother's name was Amital, daughter of Jeremia of Lobna.
2 He did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as Joakim had
3 done. Indeed, what was done in Jerusalem and in Juda so an-
gered the Lord that he cast them out from his presence.
4 Sedecia rebelled against the king of Babylon. | In the tenth
month of the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the
month, Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, and his whole army
advanced against Jerusalem, encamped around it, and built
5 siege walls on every side. The siege of the city continued until
the eleventh year of king Sedecia.
6 On the ninth day of the fourth month, when famine had
7 gripped the city and the people had no more bread, | the city
walls were breached. Then all the soldiers took to flight and
left the city by night through the gate between the two walls
which was near the king's garden. With the Chaldeans sur-
8 rounding the city, they went in the direction of the Araba. But
the Chaldean army pursued the king and overtook Sedecia in
the desert near Jericho, while his whole army fled from him.
9 The king, therefore, was arrested and brought to Ribla, in
the land of Hamath, to the king of Babylon, who pronounced
10 sentence on him. As Sedecia looked on, the king of Babylon
11 slew his sons as well as all the princes of Juda at Ribla. Then he
blinded Sedecia, bound him with fetters, and had him brought
to Babylon and kept in prison until the day of his death.

12 ***Destruction of Jerusalem*** On the tenth day of the fifth
month (this was in the nineteenth year of Nabuchodonosor
king of Babylon), Nabu-zardan, captain of the bodyguard
came to Jerusalem as the representative of the king of Babylon.
13 He burned the house of the Lord, the palace of the king, and all
the houses of Jerusalem; every large building he destroyed with

52, 1-34: The last editor of the Book of Jeremia took this appendix
from 4 Kgs 24, 18—25, 30 and added it here to show the fulfillment of
Jeremia's prophecies. This appendix repeats in part Jer 39—41.

14 fire. And the Chaldean troops who were with the captain of the
guard tore down all the walls that surrounded Jerusalem.
15 Then Nabu-zardan, captain of the guard, led into exile the
rest of the people left in the city, and those who had deserted
16 to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the artisans. But some of
the country's poor, Nabu-zardan, captain of the guard, left
behind as vinedressers and farmers.
17 The bronze pillars that belonged to the house of the Lord,
and the wheeled carts and the bronze sea in the house of the
Lord, the Chaldeans broke into pieces; they carried away all
18 the bronze to Babylon. They took also the pots, the shovels, the
snuffers, the bowls, the pans, and all the bronze vessels used for
19 service. The basins also, the fire holders, the bowls, the pots, the
lampstands, the pans, the sacrificial bowls which were of gold
20 or silver, these too the captain of the guard carried off, as well
as the two pillars, the one sea, and the twelve oxen of bronze
under the sea, and the wheeled carts which king Solomon had
made for the house of the Lord. The bronze of all these furnish-
ings could not be weighed.
21 Each of the pillars was eighteen cubits high, and a thread of
twelve cubits encircled it; each was four fingers thick, and hol-
22 low inside. A bronze capital five cubits high surmounted the one
pillar, and a network with pomegranates encircled the capital,
all of brass; and so for the other pillar. The pomegranates . . .
23 | there were ninety-six pomegranates. [Space.] There were a
hundred pomegranates, all around the network.
24 The captain of the guard also took Saraia, the high priest,
Sophonia, the second priest, and the three keepers of the entry.
25 And from the city he took one courtier, a commander of soldiers,
and seven men in the personal service of the king who were
present in the city, and the scribe of the army commander who
mustered the people of the land, and sixty of the common peo-
26 ple who were in the city. The captain of the guard, Nabu-
zardan, arrested these and brought them to the king of Babylon
27 at Ribla, who had them struck down and put to death in Ribla,
in the land of Hamath.
28 Thus was Juda exiled from her land. | This is the number of
the people whom Nabuchodonosor led away captive: in his
seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three people of Juda;
29 in the eighteenth year of Nabuchodonosor, eight hundred and

52, 28-30: This mention is lacking in the Greek text and it does not come from 4 Kgs 25, but from an unknown source which uses a different chronology. Besides the deportations of 598 and 587 B.C., mention is made here of a final one which took place in the year 582-81 B.C.

30 thirty-two persons from Jerusalem; in the twenty-third year of
Nabuchodonosor, Nabu-zardan, captain of the guard, exiled
seven hundred and forty-five people of Juda: four thousand
six hundred persons in all.

31 ***Favor Shown to Joachin*** In the thirty-seventh year of the
exile of Joachin, king of Juda, on the twenty-fifth day of the
twelfth month, Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon, in the in-
augural year of his reign, took up the case of Joachin, king of
32 Juda, and released him from prison. He spoke kindly to him and
gave him a throne higher than that of the other kings who were
33 with him in Babylon. Joachin took off his prison garb and ate
34 at the king's table as long as he lived. The allowance given him
by the king of Babylon was a perpetual allowance, in fixed
daily amounts, all the days of his life until the day of his death.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. the Lamentations were composed not to give an historical account of the catastrophe but to stress the awareness of national guilt that brought on the destruction of Jerusalem. Besides, the overtones of God's just punishment and the future hope of restoration of the nation ring loudly in this book.

The first four Lamentations are alphabetic poems, in which each verse or stanza begins with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Although this literary device is not rare in the Bible (see Ps 9A, 2-21 n), it was uncommon in contemporaneous Near Eastern literature. The limping rhythm of these elegiac poems is well suited to convey the deep pathos of suffering Jews contemplating the ruins of Jerusalem. Wherever sentiments reign in these poems, logical sequence becomes secondary because of the artificial structure of the Lamentations.

Jeremia's authorship of the Lamentations has been deduced from 2 Par 35, 25 where it is recorded that he wrote the Lamentation over king Josia. In the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo painted Jeremia as the author of Lamentations, and thus reinforced this long standing belief. Modern critics doubt that Jeremia composed them, for the ideas expressed therein differ too often from the Book of Jeremia. The critics speak of one or more inspired authors other than Jeremia, though they do not deny his influence on Lamentations.

After the exile, the Lamentations were read in the synagogues annually on the ninth of Ab (July-August), the anniversary day of the burning of the temple.

In the eighth or ninth century the Lamentations became part of the Roman liturgy's Holy Week Office. They are used as a powerful expression of Christ's suffering on the cross.

The influence of the Lamentations today is felt in the world of music. There are at least nine renowned compositions including one in English, "The Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet" (Tallis).

1

1 ***Jerusalem Abandoned and Disgraced*** How lonely she is now, the once crowded city! Widowed is she who was mistress over nations; the princess among the provinces has been made a toiling slave.

2 Bitterly she weeps at night, tears upon her cheeks, with not one to console her of all her dear ones; her friends have all betrayed her and become her enemies.

1, 1: *Widowed is she:* the prophet and other Near Eastern writers often personified a city as a widow to express poverty and abandonment. In Hebrew society a widow loses her possessions to her husband's relatives.

3 Juda has fled into exile from oppression and cruel slavery;
yet where she lives among the nations she finds no place to rest:
all her persecutors come upon her where she is narrowly confined.
4 The roads to Sion mourn for lack of pilgrims going to her feasts;
all her gateways are deserted, her priests groan, her virgins sigh;
she is in bitter grief.
5 Her foes are uppermost, her enemies are at ease; the Lord has punished her for her many sins.
Her little ones have gone away, captive before the foe.
6 Gone from daughter Sion is all her glory: her princes, like rams that find no pasture,
have gone off without strength before their captors.
7 Jerusalem is mindful of the days of her wretched homelessness,
when her people fell into enemy hands, and she had no one to help her;
when her foes gloated over her, laughed at her ruin.
8 Through the sin of which she is guilty, Jerusalem is defiled;
all who esteemed her think her vile now that they see her nakedness;
she herself groans and turns away.
9 Her filth is on her skirt; she gave no thought how she would end.
Astounding is her downfall, with no one to console her.
Look, O Lord, upon her misery, for the enemy has triumphed!
10 The foe stretched out his hand to all her treasures;
she has seen those nations enter her sanctuary whom you forbade to come into your assembly.
11 All her people groan, searching for bread; they give their treasures for food, to retain the breath of life.
"Look, O Lord, and see how worthless I have become!
12 "Come, all you who pass by the way, look and see whether there is any suffering like my suffering, which has been dealt me
when the Lord afflicted me on the day of his blazing wrath.
13 "From on high he sent fire down into my very frame; he spread a net for my feet, and overthrew me.
He left me desolate, in pain all the day.

1, 5: *The Lord has punished her for her many sins:* this theological view of history, which bypasses secondary causes and says that the people were punished for their sins, runs through the prophetic books of the exile.

1, 9: She sank so deeply in the mire of immorality that even her skirt became soiled.

1, 11: *"Look, O Lord, and see":* from this verse onward the poet ceases to lament, and Jerusalem is personified as the lamenting speaker.

1, 12: A popular verse in the Roman liturgy, e.g., the Gradual of the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

14 "He has kept watch over my sins; by his hand they have
been plaited: they have settled about my neck, he has brought
my strength to its knees; the Lord has delivered me into their
grip, I am unable to rise.
15 "All the mighty ones in my midst the Lord has cast away;
he summoned an army against me to crush my young men;
the Lord has trodden in the wine press virgin daughter Juda.
16 "At this I weep, my eyes run with tears: far from me are all
who could console me, any who might revive me; my sons were
reduced to silence when the enemy prevailed."
17 Sion stretched out her hands, but there was no one to console
her; the Lord gave orders against Jacob for his neighbors to be
his foes; Jerusalem has become in their midst a thing unclean.
18 "The Lord is just; I had defied his command. Listen, all you
peoples, and behold my suffering: my maidens and my youths
have gone into captivity.
19 "I cried out to my lovers, but they failed me. My priests and
my elders perished in the city; where they sought food for them-
selves, they found it not.
20 "Look, O Lord, upon my distress: all within me is in ferment,
my heart recoils within me from my monstrous rebellion. In
the streets the sword bereaves, at home death stalks.
21 "Give heed to my groaning; there is no one to console me.
All my enemies rejoice at my misfortune: it is you who have
wrought it. Bring on the day you have proclaimed, that they
may be even as I.
22 "Let all their evil come before you; deal with them as you
have dealt with me for all my sins; my groans are many, and
I am sick at heart."

2

1 ***The Lord's Wrath against Sion*** How the Lord in his
wrath has detested daughter Sion! He has cast down from

1, 14: *My sins . . . plaited . . . about my neck:* the people's sins were strung together as a yoke upon them.

1, 15: *The Lord has trodden in the wine press:* see the same imagery in Is 63, 3.

1, 19: *My lovers:* Jeremia frequently used this term to signify Jerusalem's political allies who proved unfaithful in time of need.

1, 21: *That they may be even as I:* for the notion of revenge see Jer 12, 3 n.

2, 1-22: This poem is poetically superior to the first poem because it expresses deeper and more delicate sentiments.

2, 1: *The glory of Israel:* the Jerusalem temple. *Footstool:* the Ark of the Covenant or the temple.

heaven to earth the glory of Israel, unmindful of his footstool on the day of his wrath.

2 The Lord has consumed without pity all the dwellings of Jacob; he has torn down in his anger the fortresses of daughter Juda; he has brought to the ground in dishonor her king and her princes.

3 He broke off, in fiery wrath, the horn that was Israel's whole strength; he withheld the support of his right hand when the enemy approached; he blazed up in Jacob like a flaming fire devouring all about it.

4 Like an enemy he made taut his bow; with his arrows in his right hand he took his stand as a foe, and slew all on whom the eye doted; over the tent of daughter Sion he poured out his wrath like fire.

5 The Lord has become an enemy, he has consumed Israel: consumed all her castles and destroyed her fortresses; for daughter Juda he has multiplied moaning and groaning.

6 He has demolished his shelter like a garden booth, he has destroyed his dwelling; in Sion the Lord has made feast and Sabbath to be forgotten; he has scorned in fierce wrath both king and priest.

7 The Lord has disowned his altar, rejected his sanctuary; the walls of her towers he has handed over to the enemy, who shout in the house of the Lord as on a feast day.

8 The Lord marked for destruction the wall of daughter Sion: he stretched out the measuring line; his hand brought ruin, yet he did not relent—he brought grief on wall and rampart till both succumbed.

9 Sunk into the ground are her gates; he has removed and broken her bars. Her king and her princes are among the pagans; priestly instruction is wanting, and her prophets have not received any vision from the Lord.

10 On the ground in silence sit the old men of daughter Sion; they strew dust on their heads and gird themselves with sackcloth; the maidens of Jerusalem bow their heads to the ground.

11 Worn out from weeping are my eyes, within me all is in ferment; my gall is poured out on the ground because of the downfall of the daughter of my people, as child and infant faint away in the open spaces of the town.

12 They ask their mothers, "Where is the cereal?"—in vain, as

2, 3: *Horn:* strength.
2, 8: *The measuring line:* it is used here with destructive intent.
2, 10: *Dust . . . sackcloth:* signs of mourning.
2, 11: *My gall . . . ground:* I am in deep anguish.

they faint away like the wounded in the streets of the city, and breathe their last in their mothers' arms.

13 To what can I liken or compare you, O daughter Jerusalem?
What example can I show you for your comfort, virgin daughter Sion?
For great as the sea is your downfall; who can heal you?

14 Your prophets had for you false and specious visions;
they did not lay bare your guilt, to avert your fate;
they beheld for you in vision false and misleading portents.

15 All who pass by clap their hands at you;
they hiss and wag their heads over daughter Jerusalem:
"Is this the all-beautiful city, the joy of the whole earth?"

16 All your enemies open their mouths against you;
they hiss and gnash their teeth. They say,
"We have devoured her. This at last is the day we hoped for;
we have lived to see it!"

17 The Lord has done as he decreed: he has fulfilled the threat
he set forth from the days of old;
he has destroyed and had no pity,
letting the enemy gloat over you and exalting the horn of your foes.

18 Cry out to the Lord; moan, O daughter Sion!
Let your tears flow like a torrent day and night;
let there be no respite for you, no repose for your eyes.

19 Rise up, shrill in the night, at the beginning of every watch;
pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord;
lift up your hands to him for the lives of your little ones [who faint from hunger at the corner of every street].

20 "Look, O Lord, and consider: whom have you ever treated thus?
Must women eat their offspring, their well-formed children?
Are priest and prophet to be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?

21 "Dead in the dust of the streets lie young and old;
my maidens and young men have fallen by the sword;
you have slain on the day of your wrath, slaughtered without pity.

22 "You summoned as for a feast day terrors against me from all sides;
there was not, on the day of your wrath, either fugitive or survivor;
those whom I bore and reared my enemy has utterly destroyed."

2, 13: The poet hyperbolically claims that, if he had some kind of a comparison of Jerusalem's suffering, it would at least be of some consolation.

2, 15: *The joy of the whole earth:* a hyperbole because, although to the Jews Jerusalem was one of the wonders of the world, it was small in comparison to Babylon and other pagan capitals.

2, 17: *Horn:* strength.

2, 20: See 4 Kgs 6, 28f, describing that women ate their children during the siege of Jerusalem.

3

Sufferings of the Prophet and His People

1 I am a man
2 who knows affliction from the rod of his anger, | one whom
he has led and forced to walk in darkness, not in the light;
3 against me alone he brings back his hand again and again all
the day.
4 He has worn away my flesh and my skin, he has broken my
5 bones; | he has beset me round about with poverty and weari-
6 ness; | he has left me to dwell in the dark like those long dead.
7 He has hemmed me in with no escape and weighed me down
8 with chains; | even when I cry out for help, he stops my
9 prayer; | he has blocked my ways with fitted stones, and
turned my paths aside.
10.11 A lurking bear he has been to me, a lion in ambush! | He
12 deranged my ways, set me astray, left me desolate. | He bent
his bow, and set me up as the target for his arrow.
13.14 He pierces my sides with shafts from his quiver. | I have
become a laughingstock for all nations, their taunt all the day
15 long; | he has sated me with bitter food, made me drink my
fill of wormwood.
16 He has broken my teeth with gravel, pressed my face in the
17 dust; | my soul is deprived of peace, I have forgotten what
18 happiness is; | I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped
for from the Lord.
19 The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall
20 | remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within
21 me. | But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope:
22 The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not
23 spent; | they are renewed each morning, so great is his faith-
24 fulness. | My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will
I hope in him.
25 Good is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that
26 seeks him; | it is good to hope in silence for the saving help of
27 the Lord. | It is good for a man to bear the yoke from his
youth.
28 Let him sit alone and in silence, when it is laid upon him.
29 Let him put his mouth to the dust; there may yet be hope.
30 Let him offer his cheek to be struck, let him be filled with
disgrace.

3, 1-21: The author makes his own the excruciating sufferings of Jerusalem.

3, 24: *My portion is the Lord:* we would say: God is everything to me.

3, 27: *To bear the yoke:* to do the will of God.

3, 29: Let him submit.

31.32 For the Lord's rejection does not last forever; though he
33 punishes, he takes pity, in the abundance of his mercies; | he
has no joy in afflicting or grieving the sons of men.
34 When anyone tramples underfoot all the prisoners in the
35 land, when he distorts men's rights in the very sight of the
36 Most High, | when he presses a crooked claim, the Lord does
not look on unconcerned.
37 Who commands, so that it comes to pass, except the Lord
38 ordains it; | except it proceeds from the mouth of the Most
39 High, whether the thing be good or bad! | Why should any
living man complain, any mortal, in the face of his sins?
40 Let us search and examine our ways that we may return to the
41 Lord! | Let us reach out our hearts toward God in heaven! |
42 We have sinned and rebelled; you have not forgiven us.
43 You veiled yourself in wrath and pursued us, you slew us and
44 took no pity; you wrapped yourself in a cloud which prayer
45 could not pierce. | You have made us offscourings and refuse
among the nations.
46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us; |
47 terror and the pit have been our lot, desolation and destruction;
48 | my eyes run with streams of water over the downfall of the
daughter of my people.
49.50 My eyes flow without ceasing, there is no respite, | till the
51 Lord from heaven looks down and sees. | My eyes torment my
soul at the sight of all the daughters of my city.
52 Those who were my enemies without cause hunted me down
53 like a bird; | they struck me down alive in the pit, and sealed
54 me in with a stone. | The waters flowed over my head, and I
said, "I am lost!"
55 I called upon your name, O Lord, from the bottom of the
56 pit; | you heard me call, "Let not your ear be deaf to my cry
57 for help!" | You came to my aid when I called to you; you said,
"Have no fear!"
58 You defended me in mortal danger, you redeemed my life. |
59.60 You see, O Lord, how I am wronged; do me justice! | You
see all their vindictiveness, all their plots against me.
61 You hear their insults, O Lord, [all their plots against me],
62 | the whispered murmurings of my foes, against me all the
63 day; | whether they sit or stand, see, I am their taunt song.
64 Requite them as they deserve, O Lord, according to their
65 deeds; | give them hardness of heart, as your curse upon them;
66 | pursue them in wrath and destroy them from under your
heavens!

3, 64-66: See Jer 12, 3 n.

4

1 ***Miseries of the Besieged City*** How tarnished is the gold,
how changed the noble metal; how the sacred stones lie
strewn at every street corner!
2 Sion's precious sons, fine gold their counterpart, now worth
no more than earthen jars made by the hands of a potter!
3 Even the jackals bare their breasts and suckle their young;
the daughter of my people has become as cruel as the ostrich in
the desert.
4 The tongue of the suckling cleaves to the roof of its mouth
in thirst; the babes cry for food, but there is no one to give it
to them.
5 Those accustomed to dainty food perish in the streets; those
brought up in purple now cling to the ash heaps.
6 The punishment of the daughter of my people is greater than
the penalty of Sodom, which was overthrown in an instant
without the turning of a hand.
7 Brighter than snow were her princes, whiter than milk, more
ruddy than coral, more precious than sapphire.
8 Now their appearance is blacker than soot, they are unrecog-
nized on the streets; their skin shrinks on their bones, as dry as
wood.
9 Better for those who perish by the sword than for those who
die of hunger, who waste away, as though pierced through,
lacking the fruits of the field!
10 The hands of compassionate women boiled their own chil-
dren, to serve them as mourners' food in the downfall of the
daughter of my people.
11 The Lord has spent his anger, poured out his blazing wrath;
he has kindled a fire in Sion that has consumed her foundations.
12 The kings of the earth did not believe, nor any of the world's
inhabitants, that enemy or foe could enter the gates of Jerusalem.
13 Because of the sins of her prophets and the crimes of her
priests, who shed in her midst the blood of the just!—
14 They staggered blindly in the streets, soiled with blood, so
that people could not touch even their garments:
15 "Away, you unclean!" they cried to them, "Away, away, do

4, 1: Important men of Jerusalem are thrown out on the streets.
4, 3: Jackals and ostriches in the Bible are considered to be deprived of all maternal instinct. But even jackals fed their young, while mothers were unable to do so. *Cruel as an ostrich:* Jerusalem abandons her children like an ostrich abandons its eggs on the sunny sand.
4, 13: The prophets and priests gave false assurances to the people that society was living according to God's law. See Jer 5, 31.

not draw near!" If they left and wandered among the nations,
nowhere could they remain.
16 The Lord himself has dispersed them, he regards them no
more; he does not receive the priests with favor, nor show kind-
ness to the elders.
17 Our eyes ever wasted away, looking in vain for aid; from
our watchtower we watched for a nation that could not save us.
18 Men dogged our steps so that we could not walk in our
streets; our end drew near, and came; our time had expired.
19 Our pursuers were swifter than eagles in the air, they harassed
us on the mountains and waylaid us in the desert.
20 The anointed one of the Lord, our breath of life, was caught
in their snares, he in whose shadow we thought we could live
on among the nations.
21 Though you rejoice and are glad, O daughter Edom, you
who dwell in the land of Us, to you also shall the cup be passed;
you shall become drunk and naked.
22 Your chastisement is completed, O daughter Sion, he will
not prolong your exile; but your wickedness, O daughter Edom,
he will punish, he will lay bare your sins.

5

1 ***The Prophet's Lament and Supplication*** Remember
2 O Lord, what has befallen us, look, and see our disgrace: | our
inherited lands have been turned over to strangers, our homes
3 to foreigners. | We have become orphans, fatherless; widowed
4 are our mothers. | The water we drink we must buy, for our
5 own wood we must pay. | On our necks is the yoke of those who
drive us; we are worn out, but allowed no rest.
6 To Egypt we submitted, and to Assyria, to fill our need of
7 bread. | Our fathers, who sinned, are no more; but we bear
8 their guilt. | Slaves rule over us; there is no one to rescue us
9 from their hands. | At the peril of our lives we bring in our
10 sustenance, in the face of the desert heat; | our skin is shriveled

4, 17: *A nation:* Egypt did not help Juda against Babylon. See Jer 37, 5ff.

4, 19: *Our pursuers:* the Babylonians.

4, 20: *Our breath of life:* a royal Egyptian title for the king. Seneca calls the emperor, "Vital Spirit."

4, 21: *Cup:* of affliction.

5, 1-22: This is not an alphabetic poem as the others, but a prayer of hope in God.

5, 6: *Assyria:* a general term for whoever was the master of Mesopotamia. At this time it was Babylon.

5, 7: This verse shows the notion of collective responsibility.

5, 8: *Slaves:* a reference to foreign officials ruling the Jews.

up, as though by a furnace, with the searing blasts of famine.
11 The wives in Sion were ravished by the enemy, the maidens
12 in the cities of Juda; | princes were gibbeted by them, elders
13 shown no respect. | The youths carry the millstones, boys
14 stagger under their loads of wood; | the old men have abandoned the gate, the young men their music.
15 The joy of our hearts has ceased, our dance has turned into
16 mourning; | the garlands have fallen from our heads: woe to
17 us, for we have sinned! | Over this our hearts are sick, at this
18 our eyes grow dim: | that Mount Sion should be desolate, with jackals roaming there!
19 You, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your throne stands from
20 age to age. | Why, then, should you forget us, abandon us so
21 long a time? | Lead us back to you, O Lord, that we may be
22 restored: give us anew such days as we had of old. | For now you have indeed rejected us, and in full measure turned your wrath against us.

5, 14: *Gate:* the place of assembly where the important decisions of city life took place.

5, 16: *The garlands have fallen from our heads:* this is remarkably reminiscent of medieval art portraying the "Synagogue" as a lady with a falling crown. See Jer 13, 18.

5, 20: A rhetorical question to ask for forgiveness.

THE BOOK OF BARUCH

INTRODUCTION

Modern scholars tend to date the Book of Baruch from the end of the second century or the beginning of the first century B.C. They also tend to classify it as pseudepigraphic. This is to say, the author or authors, or the editor, assumed the name of a famous person to lend his work prestige and authority. The famous person here is Jeremia's secretary, Baruch, of the sixth century B.C. See Jer 36, 4ff. Both the author and his readers were accustomed to this literary device (Bar 1, 1), of which the Book of Daniel is another example.

The Book of Baruch is a collection of five independent compositions, which may have existed separately at first. Only a few scholars state that the book was written for the liturgy. It was originally composed in Hebrew, in whole or in part, but it is known only in its Greek translation.

The work is intended for exiles whose sad conditions resemble those of the Jews living in the Babylonian exile of the sixth century. The value of this inspired book is the rough sketch it affords of the religious life of the Jews living outside of Palestine: a life of prayer, of reverent attitude toward the Mosaic Law, and of high hopes for the future.

Although Catholics consider this book inspired, the Jews and Protestants do not.

Main divisions of the Book of Baruch are:

1. Prayer of the Exiles, 1, 1—3, 8
2. Praise of Wisdom in the Law of Moses, 3, 9—4, 4
3. Jerusalem Bewails and Consoles Her Captive Children, 4, 5-29
4. Jerusalem Consoled: The Captivity about to End, 4, 30—5, 9
5. The Letter of Jeremia against Idolatry, 6, 1-72

I. PRAYER OF THE EXILES

1

1 ***Meeting in Babylon*** Now these are the words of the scroll which Baruch, son of Neria, son of Maasia, son of
2 Sedecia, son of Asadia, son of Helcia, wrote in Babylon, | in the fifth year [on the seventh day of the month, at the time when
3 the Chaldeans took Jerusalem and burnt it with fire]. And Baruch read the words of this scroll for Jechonia, son of Joakim, king of Juda, to hear it, as well as all the people who

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1, 1: According to pseudepigraphic writing (see Introduction) the author is presented as Baruch, an exile who wrote in sixth century Babylon.

1, 2: *On the seventh day of the month:* the text should read ". . . of the fifth month," according to 4 Kgs 25, 8.

4 came to the reading: the nobles, the kings' sons, the elders, and
the whole people, small and great alike—all who lived in
Babylon by the river Sud.
5.6 They wept and fasted and prayed before the Lord, and col-
7 lected such funds as each could furnish. These they sent to Jeru-
salem, to Joakim, son of Helcia, son of Salom, the priest, and to
the priests and the whole people who were with him in Jerusa-
8 lem. [This was when he received the vessels of the house of the
Lord that had been removed from the temple, to restore them
to the land of Juda, on the tenth of Sivan. These silver vessels
9 Sedecia, son of Josia, king of Juda, had had made | after
Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, carried off Jechonia, and
the princes, and the skilled workers, and the nobles, and the
people of the land from Jerusalem, as captives, and brought
them to Babylon.]
10 Their message was: "We send you funds, with which you
are to procure holocausts, sin offerings, and frankincense, and
to prepare cereal offerings; offer these on the altar of the Lord
11 our God, and pray for the life of Nabuchodonosor, king of
Babylon, and that of Baltasar, his son, that their lifetimes may
12 equal the duration of the heavens above the earth; and that
the Lord may give us strength, and light to our eyes, that we
may live under the protective shadow of Nabuchodonosor, king
of Babylon, and that of Baltasar, his son, and serve them long,
finding favor in their sight.

13 ***Confession of Guilt*** "Pray for us also to the Lord, our
God; for we have sinned against the Lord, our God, and the
wrath and anger of the Lord have not yet been withdrawn from
14 us at the present day. And read out publicly this scroll which
we send you, in the house of the Lord, on the feast day and
during the days of assembly:
15 "Justice is with the Lord, our God; and we today are flushed
16 with shame, we men of Juda and citizens of Jerusalem, | that
we, with our kings and rulers and priests and prophets, and with
17.18 our fathers, | have sinned in the Lord's sight | and disobeyed
him. We have neither heeded the voice of the Lord, our God,
19 nor followed the precepts which the Lord set before us. From

1, 4: *The river Sud:* an unidentified Babylonian canal.

1, 8: *He received:* Baruch (?). *These silver vessels:* these are different from those vessels taken by Nabuchodonosor as described in 4 Kgs 25, 13ff when Jerusalem fell.

1, 11: Treading in the footsteps of Daniel (Dn 5, 1-2), Baltasar is called the son of Nabuchodonosor. Historically, several kings reigned between them.

the time the Lord led our fathers out of the land of Egypt until
the present day, we have been disobedient to the Lord, our God,
20 and only too ready not to heed his voice. And the evils and the
curse which the Lord enjoined upon Moses, his servant, at the
time he led our fathers forth from the land of Egypt to give
us the land flowing with milk and honey, cling to us even today.
21 For we did not heed the voice of the Lord, our God, in all the
22 words of the prophets whom he sent us, | but each one of us
went off after the devices of our own wicked hearts, served
other gods, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, our God.

2

1 "And the Lord fulfilled the warning he had uttered against
us: against our judges, who governed Israel, against our kings
2 and princes, and against the men of Israel and Juda. He brought
down upon us evils so great that there has not been done any-
where under heaven what has been done in Jerusalem, as was
3 written in the law of Moses: that one after another of us should
4 eat the flesh of his son or of his daughter. He has made us
subject to all the kingdoms round about us, a reproach and a
horror among all the nations round about to which the Lord
5 has scattered us. We are brought low, not raised up, because
we sinned against the Lord, our God, not heeding his voice.
6 "Justice is with the Lord, our God; and we, like our fathers,
7 are flushed with shame even today. All the evils of which the
8 Lord had warned us have come upon us; and we did not plead
before the Lord, or turn, each from the figments of his evil
9 heart. And the Lord kept watch over the evils, and brought
them home to us; for the Lord is just in all the works he
10 commanded us to do, but we did not heed his voice, or follow
the precepts of the Lord which he set before us.

11 ***Prayer for Deliverance*** "And now, Lord, God of Israel,
you who led your people out of the land of Egypt with your
mighty hand, with signs and wonders and great might, and
with your upraised arm, so that you have made for yourself a
12 name till the present day: we have sinned, been impious, and
13 violated, O Lord, our God, all your statutes. Let your anger
be withdrawn from us, for we are left few in number among the
14 nations to which you scattered us. Hear, O Lord, our prayer

1, 20: *Curse:* for cursing as effective pedagogy to teach obedience, see Dt 28, 3-68 n.

2, 3: *Eat the flesh of his son:* see 4 Kgs 6, 28f for women eating their children during the siege of Jerusalem.

of supplication, and deliver us for your own sake: grant us
15 favor in the presence of our captors, that the whole earth may
know that you are the Lord, our God, and that Israel and his
16 descendants bear your name. O Lord, look down from your holy
dwelling and take thought of us; turn, O Lord, your ear to
17 hear us. Look directly at us, and behold: it is not the dead in the
nether world, whose spirits have been taken from within them,
18 who will give glory and vindication to the Lord. He whose
soul is deeply grieved, who walks bowed and feeble, with fail-
ing eyes and famished soul, will declare your glory and justice,
Lord!

19 "Not on the just deeds of our fathers and our kings do we
20 base our plea for mercy in your sight, O Lord, our God. You
have brought your wrath and anger down upon us, as you had
21 warned us through your servants the prophets: | 'Thus says
the Lord: Bend your shoulders to the service of the king of
Babylon, that you may continue in the land I gave your fathers:
22 for if you do not hear the Lord's voice so as to serve the king
23 of Babylon, | I will make to cease from the cities of Juda and
from the streets of Jerusalem the sounds of gladness, the voice
of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; and all the land
shall be deserted, without inhabitants.'

24 But we did not heed your voice, or serve the king of Babylon,
and you fulfilled the threats you had made through your serv-
ants the prophets, to have the bones of our kings and the bones
25 of our fathers brought out from their burial places. And indeed,
they lie exposed to the heat of day and the frost of night. They
26 died in dire anguish, by hunger and the sword and plague. And
you reduced the house which bears your name to what it is
today, for the wickedness of the kingdom of Israel and the
kingdom of Juda.

27 ***God's Promises Recalled*** "But with us, O Lord, our God,
you have dealt in all your clemency and in all your great
28 mercy. This was your warning through your servant Moses,
the day you ordered him to write down your law in the presence
29 of the Israelites: If you do not heed my voice, surely this great
and numerous throng will dwindle away among the nations to

2, 17-18: The author does not yet know of the reward of eternal bliss for the saved.

2, 23: The idea is from Jer 7, 34.

2, 24-25: *The bones of our fathers brought out from their burial places:* for a probable allusion to an ironical passage, see Jer 8, 1-3 n.

2, 26: *The house:* the Jerusalem temple was in ruins during the exile.

30 which I will scatter them. For I know they will not heed me,
because they are a stiff-necked people. But in the land of their
31 captivity they shall have a change of heart; they shall know
that I, the Lord, am their God. I will give them hearts, and
32 heedful ears; | and they shall praise me in the land of their
33 captivity, and shall invoke my name. Then they shall turn back
from their stiff-necked stubbornness, and from their evil deeds,
because they shall remember the fate of their fathers who sinned
34 against the Lord. And I will bring them back to the land which
with my oath I promised to their fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob; and they shall rule it. I will make them increase; they
35 shall not then diminish. And I will establish for them, as an
eternal covenant, that I will be their God, and they shall be my
people; and I will not again remove my people Israel from the
land I gave them.

3

1 "Lord Almighty, God of Israel, afflicted souls and dismayed
2 spirits call to you. Hear, O Lord, for you are a God of mercy;
3 and have mercy on us, who have sinned against you: for you
4 are enthroned forever, while we are perishing forever. Lord
Almighty, God of Israel, hear the prayer of Israel's few, the
sons of those who sinned against you; they did not heed the
5 voice of the Lord, their God, and the evils cling to us. Remember
at this time not the misdeeds of our fathers, but your own hand
6 and name: for you are the Lord, our God; and you, O Lord, we
7 will praise! For this, you put into our hearts the fear of you:
that we may call upon your name, and praise you in our
captivity, when we have removed from our hearts all the wicked-
8 ness of our fathers who sinned against you. Behold us today in
our captivity, where you scattered us, a reproach, a curse, and
a requital for all the misdeeds of our fathers, who withdrew
from the Lord, our God."

II. PRAISE OF WISDOM IN THE LAW OF MOSES

9 Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life: listen, and know

3, 9—4, 4: This poem personifies wisdom as the Mosaic Law (see 4, 1). The main teaching is: if the exiles (3, 10) do not follow wisdom (law), they will perish.

3, 9: *Hear, O Israel:* in the Wisdom books of the Bible, the sage of a wisdom poem addresses circles of disciples. Here the sage addresses all his nation, and even the fate of the Gentile nations is decided in relation to wisdom (law), 3, 15-19.

10 prudence! | How is it, Israel, that you are in the land of your
foes, grown old in a foreign land, defiled with the dead,
11.12 accounted with those destined for the nether world? | You
13 have forsaken the fountain of wisdom! | Had you walked in
the way of God, you would have dwelt in enduring peace. |
14 Learn where prudence is, where strength, where understanding,
that you may know also where are length of days, and life,
where light of the eyes, and peace.
15 Who has found the place of wisdom, who has entered into
16 her treasuries? | Where are the rulers of the nations, they who
17 lorded it over the wild beasts of the earth, | and made sport of
the birds of the heavens: they who heaped up the silver and the
gold in which men trust; of whose possessions there was no
18 end? | They schemed anxiously for money, but there is no trace
19 of their work: | they have vanished down into the nether world,
and others have risen up in their stead.
20 Later generations have seen the light, have dwelt in the land,
21 but the way to understanding they have not known, | they have
not perceived her paths, or reached her; their offspring were far
22 from the way to her. | She has not been heard of in Chanaan,
23 nor seen in Theman. | The sons of Agar who seek knowledge
on earth, the merchants of Madian and Theman, the phrase-
makers seeking knowledge, these have not known the way to
wisdom, nor have they her paths in mind.
24 O Israel, how vast is the house of God, how broad the scope of
25 his dominion: | vast and endless, high and immeasurable! |
26 In it were born the giants, renowned at the first, stalwarts
27 skilled in war. | Not these did God choose, nor did he give them
28 the way of understanding; | they perished for lack of prudence,
29 perished through their folly. | Who has gone up to the heavens
30 and taken her, or brought her down from the clouds? | Who
has crossed the sea and found her, bearing her away rather than
31 choice gold? | None knows the way to her, nor has any under-
stood her paths.

3, 15-19: The rulers and the people they represented, in spite of worldly riches, died without wisdom (law).

3, 16: Even the domestication of animals and the capture of birds is inferior to true wisdom (law).

3, 22-23: Even the peoples who were reputed for wisdom did not possess true wisdom (law), namely, the Chanaanites, Edomites ("Theman"), the Arabs ("sons of Agar").

3, 24: *The house of God:* the world.

3, 26-28: Even the ancient giants died without wisdom (law).

3, 29-31: The conquest of true wisdom (law) is impossible by human means.

32 Yet he who knows all things knows her; he has probed her by
his knowledge—he who established the earth for all time, and
33 filled it with four-footed beasts; | he who dismisses the light,
34 and it departs, calls it, and it obeys him trembling; | before
35 whom the stars at their posts shine and rejoice; | when he
calls them, they answer, "Here we are!" shining with joy for
36 their Maker. | Such is our God; no other is to be compared to
37 him: | he has traced out all the way of understanding, and has
given her to Jacob, his servant, to Israel, his beloved son.
38 Since then she has appeared on earth, and moved among men.

4

1 She is the book of the precepts of God, the Law that endures
forever; all who cling to her will live, but those will die who
2 forsake her. | Turn, O Jacob, and receive her: walk by her light
3 toward splendor. | Give not your glory to another, your privi-
4 leges to an alien race. | Blessed are we, O Israel; for what
pleases God is known to us!

III. JERUSALEM BEWAILS AND CONSOLES HER CAPTIVE CHILDREN

5.6 Fear not, my people! Remember, Israel, | you were sold to
the nations not for your destruction; it was because you angered
7 God that you were handed over to your foes. | For you provoked
8 your Maker with sacrifices to demons, to no-gods; | you for-
sook the Eternal God who nourished you, and you grieved
9 Jerusalem who fostered you. | She indeed saw coming upon
you the anger of God; and she said:

"Hear, you neighbors of Sion! God has brought great mourn-
10 ing upon me, | for I have seen the captivity that the Eternal
11 God has brought upon my sons and daughters. | With joy I
fostered them; but with mourning and lament I let them go. |
12 Let no one gloat over me, a widow, bereft of many: for the sins
of my children I am left desolate, because they turned from the
13 law of God, | and did not acknowledge his statutes; in the
ways of God's commandments they did not walk, nor did they
tread the disciplined paths of his justice.
14 "Let Sion's neighbors come, to take note of the captivity of

3, 32-37: Only God has true wisdom (32-36), and He has given it out of love to a chosen people, to "Israel, his beloved son" (37).

4, 1: This is the dazzling climax of the poem when wisdom is finally identified as the Mosaic Law.

4, 6: *It was because you angered God . . . foes:* for the same theological view of history, see Lam 1, 5 n.

my sons and daughters, brought upon them by the Eternal
15 God. | He has brought against them a nation from afar, a
nation ruthless and of alien speech, that has neither reverence
16 for age nor tenderness for childhood; | they have led away this
widow's cherished sons, have left me solitary, without daughters.
17.18 | What can I do to help you? | He who has brought this evil
upon you must himself deliver you from your enemies' hands.
19.20 | Farewell, my children, farewell: I am left desolate. | I have
taken off the garment of peace, have put on sackcloth for my
prayer of supplication, and while I live I will cry out to the
Eternal God.
21 "Fear not, my children; call upon God, who will deliver you
22 from oppression at enemy hands. | I have trusted in the Eternal
God for your welfare, and joy has come to me from the Holy
One because of the mercy that will swiftly reach you from
23 your eternal savior. | With mourning and lament I sent you
forth, but God will give you back to me with enduring gladness
24 and joy. | As Sion's neighbors lately saw you taken captive,
so shall they soon see God's salvation come to you, with great
glory and the splendor of the Eternal God.
25 "My children, bear patiently the anger that has come from
God upon you; your enemies have persecuted you, and you will
26 soon see their destruction and trample upon their necks. | My
pampered children have trodden rough roads, carried off by
27 their enemies like sheep in a raid. | Fear not, my children; call
out to God! He who brought this upon you will remember you.
28 | As your hearts have been disposed to stray from God, turn
29 now ten times the more to seek him; | for he who has brought
disaster upon you will, in saving you, bring you back enduring
joy."

IV. JERUSALEM CONSOLED: THE CAPTIVITY ABOUT TO END

30 Fear not, Jerusalem! He who gave you your name is your
31 encouragement. | Fearful are those who harmed you, who
32 rejoiced at your downfall; | fearful are the cities where your
33 children were enslaved, fearful the city that took your sons. | As
that city rejoiced at your collapse, and made merry at your

4, 25: Since the author did not yet know of eternal punishment, he could see only temporal punishment as executing God's justice.

4, 30: *He who gave you your name:* a reference to Is 60, 14: "They shall call you 'City of the Lord' . . ."

4, 32: *The city:* a reference to the fall of Jerusalem and the exile in Babylon.

34 downfall, so shall she grieve over her own desolation. | I will
take from her the joyous throngs, and her exultation shall be
35 turned to mourning: | for fire shall come upon her from the
Eternal God, for a long time, and demons shall dwell in her
from that time on.
36 Look to the east, Jerusalem! behold the joy that comes to you
37 from God. | Here come your sons whom you once let go,
gathered in from the east and from the west by the word of the
Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God.

5

1 Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put
2 on the splendor of glory from God forever: | wrapped in the
cloak of justice from God, bear on your head the mitre that
3 displays the glory of the eternal name. | For God will show
4 all the earth your splendor: | you will be named by God for-
ever the peace of justice, the glory of God's worship.
5 Up, Jerusalem! stand upon the heights; look to the east and
see your children gathered from the east and the west at the
word of the Holy One, rejoicing that they are remembered by
6 God. | Led away on foot by their enemies they left you: but
God will bring them back to you borne aloft in glory as on
7 royal thrones. | For God has commanded that every lofty
mountain be made low, and that the age-old depths and gorges
be filled to level ground, that Israel may advance secure in the
8 glory of God. | The forests and every fragrant kind of tree
9 have overshadowed Israel at God's command; | for God is
leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with his mercy
for company.

V. THE LETTER OF JEREMIA AGAINST IDOLATRY

6

1 A copy of the letter which Jeremia sent to those who were
being led captive to Babylon by the king of the Babylonians, to
convey to them what God had commanded him.

4, 35: Reflecting ancient ideas, the Bible often refers to the desert and abandoned places as the hovels of demons. See Tb 8, 3.

4, 36: This verse is fused with 5, 5a and used in the Communion verse of the Second Sunday of Advent in the Roman Liturgy.

5, 5a: See liturgical use in 4, 36 n.

5, 7: A reference to Is 40, 3-4.

6, 1-72: This letter is attributed to Jeremia who actually had sent a letter of encouragement to the exiles (Jer 29, 1ff). It is an earnest satire

For the sins you committed before God, you are being le
captive to Babylon by Nabuchodonosor, king of the Babylonians
2 When you reach Babylon you will be there many years, a perio
seven generations long; after which I will bring you back fro
3 there in peace. And now in Babylon you will see borne upo
men's shoulders gods of silver and gold and wood, which cas
4 fear upon the pagans. Take care that you yourselves do no
5 imitate their alien example and stand in fear of them, whe
you see the crowd before them and behind worshiping them
Rather, say in your hearts, "You, O Lord, are to be wor
6 shiped!"; | for my angel is with you, and he is the custodia
of your lives.
7 Their tongues are smoothed by woodworkers; they ar
covered with gold and silver—but they are a fraud, and canno
8 speak. People bring gold, as to a maiden in love with ornament
9 and furnish crowns for the heads of their gods. Then sometime
the priests take the silver and gold from their gods and spen
10 it on themselves, or give part of it to the harlots on the terrace
They trick them out in garments like men, these gods of silve
11 and gold and wood; but though they are wrapped in purpl
12 clothing, they are not safe from corrosion or insects. They wip
their faces clean of the house dust which is thick upon them
13 Each has a scepter, like the human ruler of a district; but none
14 does away with those that offend against it. Each has in it
right hand an axe or dagger, but it cannot save itself from wa
or pillage. Thus it is known they are not gods; do not fear them.
15.16 As useless as one's broken tools | are their gods, set up
in their houses; their eyes are full of dust from the feet of
17 those who enter. Their courtyards are walled in like those of a
man brought to execution for a crime against the king; the
priests reinforce their houses with gates and bars and bolts,
18 lest they be carried off by robbers. They light more lamps for
them than for themselves, yet not one of these can they see.
19 They are like any beam in the house; it is said their hearts are
eaten away. Though the insects out of the ground consume them
20 and their garments, they do not feel it. Their faces are blackened
21 by the smoke of the house. Bats and swallows alight on their
22 bodies and on their heads; and cats as well as birds. Know,
therefore, that they are not gods, and do not fear them.

against idolatry. See Is 44, 9-20 n on the Jewish understanding of idolatry.

6. 2: *Seven generations:* the author multiplies the "seventy years" of Jer 29, 10 by three or four times. It may indicate the late date of the writing.

6, 10: *Harlots:* prostitutes of the fertility cult.

23 Despite the gold that covers them for adornment, unless
someone wipes away the corrosion, they do not shine; nor did
24 they feel anything when they were molded. They are bought
25 at any price, and there is no spirit in them. Having no feet, they
are carried on men's shoulders, displaying their shame to all;
26 and those who worship them are put to confusion | because, if
they fall to the ground, the worshipers must raise them up.
They neither move of themselves if one sets them upright, nor
come upright if they fall; but one puts gifts beside them as
27 beside the dead. Their priests resell their sacrifices for their
own advantage. Even their wives cure parts of the meat, but
28 do not share it with the poor and the weak; the menstruous and
women in childbed handle their sacrifices. Knowing from this
that they are not gods, do not fear them.
29 How can they be called gods? For women bring the offerings
30 to these gods of silver and gold and wood; and in their temples
the priests squat with torn tunic and with shaven hair and
31 beard, and with their heads uncovered. They shout and wail
32 before their gods as others do at a funeral banquet. The priests
take some of their clothing and put it on their wives and chil-
33 dren. Whether they are treated well or ill by anyone, they
cannot requite it; they can neither set up a king nor remove
34 him. Similarly, they cannot give anyone riches or coppers; if
one fails to fulfill a vow to them, they cannot exact it of him.
35 They neither save a man from death, nor deliver the weak from
36 the strong. To no blind man do they restore his sight, nor do
37 they save any man in an emergency. They neither pity the
38 widow nor benefit the orphan. These gilded and silvered
wooden statutes are like stones from the mountains; and their
39 worshipers will be put to shame. How then can it be thought or
claimed that they are gods?
40 Even the Chaldeans themselves have no respect for them;
for when they see a deaf mute, incapable of speech, they bring
forward Bel and ask the god to make noise, as though the
41 man could understand; and they are themselves unable to
42 reflect and abandon these gods, for they have no sense. And
their women, girt with cords, sit by the roads, burning chaff

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6, 27-31: These practices were especially abominable to a Jew because they were forbidden by his own Mosaic Law.

6, 33-39: The sacred writer lists the things which the gods cannot do, but he implies that Yahweh can do them.

6, 42: These Babylonian women wore a cord around their waists and burned "chaff for incense" which was supposed to have aphrodisiac properties.

43 for incense; and whenever one of them is drawn aside by son
passerby who lies with her, she mocks her neighbor who h
not been dignified as she has, and has not had her cord broke
44 All that takes place around these gods is a fraud: how then ca
it be thought or claimed that they are gods?
45 They are produced by woodworkers and goldsmiths, and th
are nothing else than what these craftsmen wish them to b
46.47 Even those who produce them are not long-lived; how th
can what they have produced be gods? They have left frau
48 and opprobrium to their successors. For when war or disast
comes upon them, the priests deliberate among themselv
49 where they can hide with them. How then can one not kno
that these are no-gods, which do not save themselves eith
50 from war or from disaster? They are wooden, gilded an
silvered; they will later be known for frauds. To all peoples an
kings it will be clear that they are not gods, but human hand
work; and that God's work is not in them.
51.52 Who does not know that they are not gods? They set n
53 king over the land, nor do they give men rain. They neith
vindicate their own rights, nor do they recover what is unjustl
54 taken, for they are unable; they are like crows between heave
and earth. For when fire breaks out in the temple of thes
wooden or gilded or silvered gods, though the priests flee an
are safe, they themselves are burnt up in the fire like beam
55.56 They cannot resist a king, or enemy forces. How then can
be admitted or thought that they are gods?
They are safe from neither thieves nor bandits, these woode
57 and silvered and gilded gods; those who seize them strip off th
gold and the silver, and go away with the clothing that was o
58 them, and they cannot help themselves. How much better to b
a king displaying his valor, or a handy tool in a house, the jo
of its owner, than these false gods; or the door of a house, tha
keeps safe those who are within, rather than these false gods
or a wooden post in a palace, rather than these false gods
59 The sun and moon and stars are bright, and obedient in th
60 service for which they are sent. Likewise the lightning, when i
flashes, is a goodly sight; and the same wind blows over all th
61 land. The clouds, too, when commanded by God to proceed
62 across the whole world, fulfill the order; and fire, sent from ou
high to burn up the mountains and the forests, does what ha
been commanded. But these false gods are not their equal
63 whether in beauty or in power; so that it is unthinkable, an

6, 43: The unbroken cord indicated that she had not done her dut
to the goddess Ishtar.

cannot be claimed, that they are gods. They can neither execute
64 judgment, nor benefit man. Know, therefore, that they are not
gods, and do not fear them.
65.66 Kings they neither curse nor bless. They show the nations
no signs in the heavens, nor are they brilliant like the sun, nor
67 shining like the moon. The beasts which can help themselves by
68 fleeing to shelter are better than they are. Thus in no way is it
69 clear to us that they are gods; so do not fear them. For like a
scarecrow in a cucumber patch, that is no protection, are their
70 wooden, gilded, silvered gods. Just like a thornbush in a garden
on which perches every kind of bird, or like a corpse hurled
71 into darkness, are their silvered and gilded wooden gods. From
the rotting of the purple and the linen upon them, it can be
known that they are not gods; they themselves will in the end
72 be consumed, and be a disgrace in the land. The better for the
just man who has no idols: he shall be far from disgrace!

THE BOOK OF EZECHIEL

INTRODUCTION

Ezechiel was one of the important deported persons who accompanie king Joachin of Juda to Babylon from Jerusalem in 598 B.C. He r ceived his vocation to be a prophet in 593 B.C. (1, 1ff). Thus, he is tl only prophet who received his vocation in a foreign land. Ezechiel prophetic message was to announce to his fellow exiles that Jerusale would inevitably be destroyed and the rest of its population exiled.

The theme of the first half of the book, chs. 1—24, has often bee described as "Jerusalem must be destroyed." Simultaneously, back Jerusalem, Jeremia was preaching the same message except that he mac it conditional on repentance. But Jerusalem refused repentance and tl city fell in 587 B.C. For the historical background see Introduction to tl Book of Jeremia.

The second part of Ezechiel's prophetic message (chs. 25—48) w one of consolation and encouragement, namely, that the people wou return from exile to restore their city and land. He prepares them e pecially for the ideal cult of the temple (chs. 40—48).

The theory assumed in the remarks so far is that Ezechiel preache only in Babylon and not partly in Jerusalem (till 598) and partly Babylon. The all-Babylonian theory still remains the better one toda

The formation of Ezechiel's book is a highly specialized, still debate problem. On the following elements, however, there is general agre ment: the book has artificial groupings, some repetitions, some passag by other inspired writers, and passages with no date are joined to passag with a date; Ezechiel's prophecies underwent additions and editing l postexilic inspired writers; much of this is common to the formation o the books of Isaia and Jeremia; the general plan is also common amor these prophets, namely, oracles against Juda (1—24), oracles again the nations (25—32), and oracles on a better future (33—48).

Ezechiel's personality is one of contrasts; he is the most challengir Old Testament prophet to understand as a person. It is relevant to no here the prohibition of the rabbis in St. Jerome's time which barred tl reading of Ezechiel's visions until the age of thirty. Ezechiel's charact easily arouses interest. He is a priest who preaches ("prophet") an writes. His message is half on the destruction of the people and half c their restoration to happiness. His cast of mind seems that of a visionai as well as that of a realist.

Although Ezechiel stresses God's majesty and holiness, he is bett known for the development of the doctrine on individual and person responsibility for one's conduct to God. See 18, 1-32 n.

Ezechiel's other contribution, outstanding among the prophets, is h writing on the temple and the liturgy. No other prophet shows as muc interest, if we judge by the amount of writing. Small wonder tha scholars call him the "father of Judaism."

Because of Ezechiel's influence on Judaism one would think that h influenced the New Testament writers. Yet, it is a matter of statistic that of all the great prophets he is quoted the least. Not even his Me

sianic texts are quoted. On the other hand, scholars often point out the influence of Ez 34, 23 on the parable of the Good Shepherd (see Jn 10, 11-16), but especially the influence of his imagery on St. John's Apocalypse.

Main divisions of the Book of Ezechiel are:

1. Call of the Prophet, 1—3
2. Before the Siege of Jerusalem, 4—24
3. Prophecies against Foreign Nations, 25—32
4. Salvation for Israel, 33—39
5. The New Israel, 40—48

I. CALL OF THE PROPHET

1

1 ***The Vision: God on the Cherubim*** In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was among the exiles by the river Chobar, the heavens opened, and I saw
2 divine visions. | On the fifth day of the month, the fifth year,
3 that is, of king Joachin's exile, | the word of the Lord came to the priest Ezechiel, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chobar.—There the hand of the Lord came upon me.

4 As I looked, a stormwind came from the North, a huge cloud with flashing fire [enveloped in brightness], from the midst of which [the midst of the fire] something gleamed like electrum.

1, 1: The "thirtieth" year is evidently intended to correspond with the "fifth" year in v. 2. Scholars understand the fifth year as 593 B.C., but they do not understand what the thirtieth year means, unless it refers to Ezechiel's age. *Chobar:* one of the Jewish settlements near Nippur, southeast of Babylon, where most of the deportees lived with king Joachin.

1, 3: *Ezechiel:* his name means "God is strong." *The hand of the Lord came upon me:* Ezechiel uses this phrase many times to express his awareness of God communicating with him.

1, 4-28: This is Ezechiel's famous vision in which he most probably receives his vocation and mission as the prophet to preach among the exiles. The counterparts of this mystical experience and vocation scene are Jer 1 and Is 6. In what was most likely a true ecstasy, Ezechiel sees four cherubim harnessed to the chariot wheels, the throne, and finally God seated on it. The significance of several details are a matter of dispute, but the general meaning is that God is present everywhere—not only in the Jerusalem temple, but even in a foreign land like Babylon. All scholars admit the dependence of Ap 4, 7-8 on Ezechiel here, and that this scene is the origin of the symbols of the four Evangelists. The meanings applied to the Evangelists' symbols, however, have differed in the Middle Ages.

1, 4: *The North:* other biblical texts refer to this direction as the dwelling place of God. *Electrum:* the Hebrew word means a brilliant metal, which we cannot identify.

5 Within it were figures resembling four living creatures that
6 looked like this: their form was human, but each had four
7 faces and four wings, and their legs went straight down; the
soles of their feet were round. They sparkled with a gleam
like burnished bronze.
10 Their faces were like this: each of the four had the face of
a man, but on the right side was the face of a lion, and on the
left side the face of an ox, and finally each had the face of an
9 eagle. Their faces [and their wings] looked out on all their
four sides; they did not turn when they moved, but each went
12 straight forward. [Each went straight forward; wherever the
spirit wished to go, there they went; they did not turn when
they moved.]
8 Human hands were under their wings, and the wings of one
11 touched those of another. Each had two wings spread out above
so that they touched one another's, while the other two wings
13 of each covered his body. In among the living creatures some-
thing like burning coals of fire could be seen; they seemed like
torches, moving to and fro among the living creatures. The fire
gleamed, and from it came forth flashes of lightning.
15 As I looked at the living creatures, I saw wheels on the
16 ground, one beside each of the four living creatures. The
wheels had the sparkling appearance of chrysolite, and all four
of them looked the same: they were constructed as though one
17 wheel were within another. They could move in any of the four
18 directions they faced, without veering as they moved. The four
of them had rims, and I saw that their rims were full of eyes
19 all around. When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved
with them; and when the living creatures were raised from the
20 ground, the wheels also were raised. Wherever the spirit wished
to go, there the wheels went, and they were raised together with
the living creatures; for the spirit of the living creatures was in
the wheels.
22 Over the heads of the living creatures, something like a
firmament could be seen, seeming like glittering crystal, stretched
23 straight out above their heads. Beneath the firmament their
wings were stretched out, one toward the other. [Each of
24 them had two covering his body.] | Then I heard the sound of
their wings, like the roaring of mighty waters, like the voice
of the Almighty. When they moved, the sound of the tumult

1, 5: The "cherubim" in 10, 20-21 are the same as these "four living creatures."

1, 10: See Za 4, 4ff for the general explanation of verse rearrangement. Notice that verses 14 and 21 are omitted entirely.

was like the din of an army. [And when they stood still, they lowered their wings.]

46 Above the firmament over their heads something like a throne could be seen, looking like sapphire. Upon it was seated,
27 up above, one who had the appearance of a man. Upward from what resembled his waist I saw what gleamed like electrum; downward from what resembled his waist I saw what
28 looked like fire; he was surrounded with splendor. Like the bow which appears in the clouds on a rainy day was the splendor that surrounded him. Such was the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

2

1 ***Eating of the Scroll*** When I had seen it, I fell upon my face and heard a voice that said to me: Son of man, stand up!
2 I wish to speak with you. As he spoke to me, spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard the one who was
3 speaking | say to me: Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their
4 fathers have revolted against me to this very day. Hard of face and obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending
5 you. But you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord God! And whether they heed or resist—for they are a rebellious house—
6 they shall know that a prophet has been among them. But as for you, son of man, fear neither them nor their words when they contradict you and reject you, and when you sit on scorpions. Neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their
7 looks, for they are a rebellious house. [But speak my words to them, whether they heed or resist, for they are rebellious.]
8 As for you, son of man, obey me when I speak to you: be not rebellious like this house of rebellion, but open your mouth and eat what I shall give you.

9 It was then I saw a hand stretched out to me, in which was
10 a written scroll | which he unrolled before me. It was covered with writing front and back, and written on it was: Lamentation and wailing and woe!

2, 1: *Son of man:* a Hebraic expression for man. "Son of" in Hebrew often means belonging to a group. "Son of man" occurs ninety times in Ezechiel, perhaps to stress the difference between man and God.

2, 2: *Spirit:* a frequent expression of God's power fortifying Ezechiel.

2, 6: *When you sit on scorpions:* the sense is: preach to them in spite of the most stinging opposition.

2, 10: *Writing front and back:* since a scroll was usually written on only one side, this may mean: the imminent doom (of Jerusalem) will be thorough.

3
1 He said to me: Son of man, eat what is before you; eat this
2 scroll, then go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my
3 mouth and he gave me the scroll to eat. Son of man, he then
said to me, feed your belly and fill your stomach with this scroll
I am giving you. I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my
4 mouth. He said: | Son of man, go now to the house of Israel
and speak my words to them.
5 Not to a people with difficult speech and barbarous language
6 am I sending you, | nor to the many peoples [with difficult
speech and barbarous language] whose words you cannot
understand. If I were to send you to these, they would listen to
7 you; but the house of Israel will refuse to listen to you, since
they will not listen to me. For the whole house of Israel is
8 stubborn of brow and obstinate in heart. But I will make your
face as hard as theirs, and your brow as stubborn as theirs.
9 like diamond, harder than flint. Fear them not, nor be dismayed
at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.
10 Son of man, he said to me, take into your heart all my words
11 that I speak to you; hear them well. Now go to the exiles, to
your countrymen, and say to them: Thus says the Lord God
—whether they heed or resist!
12 Then spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the noise of
a loud rumbling as the glory of the Lord rose from its place:
13 the noise made by the wings of the living creatures striking one
another, and by the wheels alongside them, a loud rumbling.
14 The spirit which had lifted me up seized me, and I went off
spiritually stirred, while the hand of the Lord rested heavily
15 upon me. Thus I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Abib by
the river Chobar, and for seven days I sat among them
distraught.

17 ***The Prophet as Watchman*** Thus the word of the Lord
came to me: Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for

3, 1-2: The eating of the scroll symbolizes that God is the author of the message which the prophet is to make his very own. Parallels to scroll eating range from the ancient Egyptian tale of Satni-Khamois to modern Moslems, who swallow verses from the Koran to drive away bodily ailments.

3, 3: *It was sweet as honey:* since the scroll came from God, it was sweet. See Ps 18, 11: God's ordinances are "sweeter also than syrup or honey. . . ."

3, 12-13: Yahweh, carried by the cherubim, leaves Ezechiel to contemplate the divine message.

3, 15: *Tel Abib:* probably Ezechiel's Babylonian home near Nippur.

3, 17-21: This passage seems to be a repetition of what Ezechiel

the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth,
you shall warn them for me.
18 If I say to the wicked man, You shall surely die; and you do
not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his wicked
conduct so that he may live: that wicked man shall die for his
19 sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, on the
other hand, you have warned the wicked man, yet he has not
turned away from his evil nor from his wicked conduct, then
he shall die for his sin, but you shall save your life.
20 If a virtuous man turns away from virtue and does wrong
when I place a stumbling block before him, he shall die. He
shall die for his sin, and his virtuous deeds shall not be remem-
bered; but I will hold you responsible for his death if you did
21 not warn him. When, on the other hand, you have warned a
virtuous man not to sin, and he has in fact not sinned, he shall
surely live because of the warning, and you shall save your own
life.

22 ***Ezechiel's Dumbness*** The hand of the Lord came upon me,
and he said to me: Get up and go out into the plain, where I will
23 speak with you. So I got up and went out into the plain, and I
saw that the glory of the Lord was in that place, like the glory I
24 had seen by the river Chobar. I fell prone, | but then spirit
entered into me and set me on my feet, and he spoke with me.
25 He said to me: Go shut yourself up in your house. [As for
you, son of man, they will put cords upon you and bind you with
26 them, so that you cannot go out among them.] I will make your
tongue stick to your palate so that you will be dumb and unable
27 to rebuke them for being a rebellious house. Only when I speak
with you and open your mouth, shall you say to them: Thus
says the Lord God! Let him heed who will, and let him resist
who will, for they are a rebellious house.

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preached later in his career. See 33, 1-9. The overall meaning of these four cases is to underscore the responsibility of Ezechiel as a preacher ("watchman") to the people, but especially to stress the responsibility of the people as individuals. See 18, 1-32 n.

3, 22-27: The state of "dumbness" (see 3, 25-26 n) seems to have occurred at the end of the siege of Jerusalem, which puts this passage more appropriately with 24, 25-27; 33, 21-22.

3, 23: *Like the glory I had seen by the river Chobar:* reference to 1, 3.

3, 25-26: Most commentators understand the "cords" to symbolize God's confinement of Ezechiel to his home. Most likely, the dumbness of Ezechiel does not mean the loss of speech, but his "dumbness" symbolizes God's prohibition to rebuke the exiles while Jerusalem is under siege, as 24, 27 indicates.

II. BEFORE THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

16 At the end of seven days . . . :

4

1 ***Acts Symbolic of Siege and Exile*** As for you, son o
man, take a clay tablet; lay it in front of you, and draw on it
2 city [Jerusalem]. Raise a siege against it: build a tower, lay ou
a ramp, pitch camps, and set up battering rams all around
3 Then take an iron griddle and set it up as an iron wall betwee
you and the city. Fix your gaze on it: it shall be in the state o
siege, and you shall besiege it. This shall be a sign for the hous
4 of Israel. Then you shall lie on your left side, while I place th
sins of the house of Israel upon you. As many days as you li
5 thus, you shall bear their sins. For the years of their sins I allo
you the same number of days, three hundred and ninety, durin
6 which you will bear the sins of the house of Israel. When yo
finish this, you are to lie down again, but on your right side, an
bear the sins of the house of Juda forty days; one day for eac
7 year I have allotted you. Fixing your gaze on the siege of Jerusa
8 lem, with bared arm you shall prophesy against it. See, I wil
bind you with cords so that you cannot turn from one side t
the other until you have completed the days of your siege.
9 Again, take wheat and barley, and beans and lentils, an
millet and spelt; put them in a single vessel and make brea
out of them. Eat it for as many days as you lie upon you
10 side, three hundred and ninety. The food you eat shall b

3, 16: *At the end of seven days:* the incomplete text must have continued thus: "The word of the Lord came to me." See Za 4, 4ff n for a general explanation of the changed order of verses.

4—5: Several symbolic acts signify Jerusalem's imminent fall. Ezechiel performs these acts at home when visited and consulted by his fellow exiles.

4, 3: *Fix your gaze on it:* this may symbolize the determination of the Babylonians to capture Jerusalem.

4, 5-6: *Three hundred and ninety [days] . . . forty days:* the symbolism of these numbers is more generally interpreted as the number of years of exile, but three hundred and ninety days is not well explained. The unmentioned time span of Jerusalem's siege is another interpretation of these two figures.

4, 7: *You shall prophesy against it:* through threatening gestures.

4, 8: The "cords" mean he is to remain in his house (see 3, 25-26 n). It is not necessary to understand literally that Ezechiel lay on his left (v. 4) and right side (v. 6) all the time indicated.

4, 9-17: This act symbolizes food rationing, even to the extent of eating unclean food prohibited by the Mosaic Law.

4, 10: *Twenty shekels:* about nine ounces.

11 twenty shekels a day by weight; each day the same. And the
water you drink shall be the sixth of a hin by measure; each
16 day the same. | Then he said to me: Son of man, I am breaking
the staff of bread in Jerusalem. They shall eat bread which they
have weighed out anxiously, and they shall drink water which
17 they have measured out fearfully, | so that, owing to the scar-
city of bread and water, everyone shall be filled with terror and
waste away because of his sins.
17 For your food you must bake barley loaves over human
18 excrement in their sight, said the Lord. Thus the Israelites shall
eat their food unclean among the nations where I scatter them.
14 | "Oh no, Lord God!" I protested. "Never have I been made
unclean, and from my youth till now, never have I eaten carrion
flesh or that torn by wild beasts; never has any unclean meat
15 entered my mouth." Very well, he replied, I allow you cow's
dung in place of human excrement; bake your bread on that.

5

1 As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword and use it like
a barber's razor, passing it over your head and beard. Then take
2 a set of scales and divide the hair you have cut. Burn a third
in the fire, within the city, when the days of your siege are
completed; place another third around the city and strike it
with the sword; the final third strew in the wind, and pursue
3 it with the sword. [But of the last take a small number and tie
4 them in the hem of your garment. Then take some of these and
throw them in the midst of the fire and burn them.]
5 Say to the whole house of Israel: | Thus says the Lord God:
This is Jerusalem! In the midst of the nations I placed her,
6 surrounded by foreign countries. But she rebelled against my
ordinances more wickedly than the nations, and against my
statutes more than the foreign countries surrounding her; she
has spurned my ordinances and has not lived by my statutes.
7 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have been more
rebellious than the nations surrounding you, not living by my

4, 11: *The sixth of a hin:* about one quart.

4, 16: See Za 4, 4ff n for a general explanation of the changed order of verses. *Breaking the staff of bread:* this is a familiar biblical figure which refers to drastic rationing of bread. Bread helps man through life as a staff helps a traveler.

4, 12: These unsophisticated examples were meant for a people of a different background and mentality than ours. God used inspired writers according to their own temperament and thought patterns.

5, 2: Ezechiel places a third of the hair "around the city" which he drew on the clay tablet. See 4, 1.

5, 5: *Say . . . This is Jerusalem:* by a pointing gesture.

statutes nor fulfilling my ordinances, but acting according to
8 the ordinances of the surrounding nations; therefore thus says
the Lord God: See, I am coming at you! I will inflict punish-
9 ments in your midst while the nations look on. Because of all
your abominations I will do with you what I have never done
10 before, the like of which I will never do again. This means
that fathers within you shall eat sons, and sons shall eat fathers.
I will inflict punishments upon you and scatter all that remain
of your people in every direction.
11 Therefore, as I live, says the Lord God, because you have
defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable abominations,
I swear to cut you down. I will not look upon you with pity nor
12 have mercy. A third of your people shall die of pestilence and
perish of hunger within you; another third shall fall by the sword
all around you; and a third I will scatter in every direction, and I
16 will pursue them with the sword. When I loose against you the
cruel, destructive arrows of hunger, I will break your staff of
17 bread; I will send famine against you, and wild beasts that shall
rob you of your children. Pestilence and bloodshed shall stalk
through you, and I will bring the sword upon you. I, the Lord,
have spoken!
13 Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will wreak my fury
upon them till I am appeased; they shall know that I, the Lord,
have spoken in my jealousy when I spend my fury upon them.
14 I will make you a waste and a reproach among the nations that
15 surround you, which every passer-by may see. When I execute
judgment upon you in anger and fury and with furious chastise-
ments, you shall be a reproach and an object of scorn, a terrible
warning to the nations that surround you. I, the Lord, have
spoken!

6

1 ***Against the Mountains of Israel*** Thus the word of the
2 Lord came to me: Son of man, turn toward the mountains of
3 Israel, and prophesy against them: Mountains of Israel, hear the

5, 8: God is attributed a current warlike expression used by an aggressor who attacks with the sword, saying, "I am coming at you." In vv. 8-17 the "you" refers to Jerusalem.

5, 10: A reference to the example of cannibalism during the siege of Jerusalem. See 4 Kgs 6, 28f.

6, 1-14: Through gestures, Ezechiel here addresses the Judean mountains by proclaiming to the exiles a ruin of the "high places" (v. 3) on the "mountains of Israel" (vv. 2-3) and "beneath every green tree and leafy oak" (v. 13) where illegal idolatrous practices were conducted in honor of Yahweh or of the Chanaanite gods. When all these places are destroyed, the people will know that Yahweh is the one true

word of the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God [to the mountains and hills, the ravines and valleys]: See, I am bringing a
4 sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. Your altars shall be laid waste, your incense stands shall be broken,
5 and I will cast down your slain ones before your idols; I will
6 scatter their bones all around your altars. In all your dwelling places cities shall be made desolate and laid waste, so that your altars will be made desolate and laid waste, your idols broken
7 and removed, and your incense stands smashed to bits. [The slain shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I am the
8 Lord. I have warned you.]

When some of your people have escaped to other nations from
9 the sword, and have been scattered over the foreign lands, then those who have escaped will remember me among the nations to which they have been exiled, after I have broken their adulterous hearts that turned away from me [and their eyes which lusted after idols]. They shall loathe themselves because
10 of their evil deeds, all their abominations. Then they shall know that it was not in vain that I, the Lord, threatened to inflict this calamity upon them.

11 Thus says the Lord God: Clap your hands, stamp your feet, and cry "Alas!" because of all the abominations of the house of Israel, for which they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by
12 pestilence. He that is far off shall die of pestilence, he that is near shall fall by the sword, and he that is besieged shall perish
13 by famine; so will I spend my fury upon them. Then shall they know that I am the Lord, when their slain shall lie amid their idols, all about their altars, on every high hill and mountaintop, beneath every green tree and leafy oak, wherever they offered
14 appeasing odors to any of their gods. I will stretch out my hand against them, and wherever they live I will make the land a desolate waste, from the desert to Ribla; thus shall they know that I am the Lord.

7

1 ***The End Has Come*** Thus the word of the Lord came to

God. The chapter is composed of verses spoken at different times in Ezechiel's career.

6, 5: Unburied corpses are especially loathsome to many of the ancients.

6, 11: These gestures seem to express grief here, and joy in 25, 6.

6, 14: *From the desert to Ribla:* Ezechiel's expression for the northern and southern extremities of the Holy Land.

7, 1-27: It is difficult to date and understand this poorly preserved oracle in which Ezechiel addresses the "land of Israel" (v. 2) on the brink of ruin.

me: | Son of man, now say: Thus says the Lord God to the
land of Israel: An end! The end has come upon the four corners
of the land! Now the end is upon you; I will unleash my anger
against you and judge you according to your conduct and lay
upon you the consequences of all your abominations. I will not
look upon you with pity nor have mercy; I will bring your con-
duct down upon you, and the consequences of your abomina-
tions shall be in your midst; then shall you know that I am the
Lord.

Thus says the Lord God: Disaster upon disaster! See it com-
ing! | An end is coming, the end is coming upon you! See it
coming! | The climax has come for you who dwell in the land!
The time has come, near is the day: a time of consternation,
not of rejoicing. Soon now I will pour out my fury upon you
and spend my anger upon you; I will judge you according to
your conduct and lay upon you the consequences of all your
abominations. I will not look upon you with pity nor have
mercy; I will deal with you according to your conduct, and the
consequences of your abominations shall be in your midst; then
shall you know that it is I, the Lord, who strike.

See, the day of the Lord! See, the end is coming! Lawlessness
is in full bloom, insolence flourishes, | violence has risen to sup-
port wickedness. It shall not be long in coming, nor shall it delay.
The time has come, the day dawns. Let not the buyer rejoice
nor the seller mourn, for wrath shall be upon all the throng. The
seller shall not regain what he sold as long as he lives, for wrath
shall be upon all the throng. Because of his sins, no one shall
preserve his life. They shall sound the trumpet and make every-
thing ready, yet no one shall go to war, for my wrath is upon
all the throng.

The sword is outside; pestilence and hunger are within. He
that is in the country shall die by the sword; pestilence and
famine shall devour those in the city. Even those who escape
and flee to the mountains like the doves of the valleys—I will
put them all to death, each one for his own sins. All their hands
shall be limp, and all their knees shall run with water. They
shall put on sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; shame shall
be on all their faces and baldness on all their heads. They shall

7, 2: *Four corners of the land:* the prophets often announce the end of the Holy Land as the end of the world.

7, 10-11: These verses are beyond reconstruction in the Hebrew text.

7, 17: *Their knees shall run with water:* a hyperbolic expression for fatigue.

7, 18: Signs of mourning.

fling their silver into the streets, and their gold shall be considered refuse. Their silver and gold cannot save them on the day of the Lord's wrath. They shall not be allowed to satisfy their craving or fill their bellies, for this has been the occasion of their sin.
20 In the beauty of their ornaments they put their pride: they made of them their abominable images [their idols]. For this reason
21 I make them refuse. | I will hand them over as booty to foreign-
22 ers, to be spoiled and defiled by the wicked of the earth. I will turn away my face from them, and my treasure shall be profaned: robbers shall enter and profane it.
23 They shall wreak slaughter, for the land is filled with blood-
24 shed and the city full of violence. I will bring in the worst of the nations, who shall take possession of their houses. I will put an end to their proud strength, and their sanctuaries shall be pro-
25 faned. When anguish comes they shall seek peace, but there will
26 be none. There shall be disaster after disaster, rumor after rumor. Prophetic vision shall fade; instruction shall be lacking
27 to the priest, and counsel to the elders, while the prince shall be enveloped in terror, and the hands of the common people shall tremble. I will deal with them according to their conduct, and according to their judgments I will judge them; thus they shall know that I am the Lord.

8

1 ***Vision of Abominations in the Temple*** Spirit lifted me up in the air and brought me in divine visions to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate, where stood the statue of
3 jealousy which stirs up jealousy. | He said to me: Son of man, look toward the north! I looked toward the north and saw
6 northward of the gate the altar of the statue of jealousy. Son of

7, 22: *My treasure:* in the Jerusalem temple.

8—11: Although Ezechiel is not transported bodily to Jerusalem, it is difficult to determine whether he means this as a true vision or a literary one; but this problem is not as important as the meaning of the vision. The general meaning which Ezechiel presents to the exiles is: Yahweh will not spare Jerusalem and Juda, for they sinned too grievously.

8, 3: Note the change in verse order. Verses 1, 2, 4 are placed before chapter 10.

8, 3-18: Ezechiel "sees" idolatrous scenes in the temple of Jerusalem, whose topography is difficult to follow.

8, 3: *Statue of jealousy:* many believe it is the statue of the goddess Ashera set up by king Manasse (4 Kgs 21, 7) and removed in the religious reform of Josia, but reinstalled later. The statue "stirs up" the jealousy of Yahweh.

8, 5: *He:* in the light of 40, 3ff the "he" refers to an angel, true or literary (see 8—11 n), which represents God's voice.

man, he asked me, do you see what they are doing? Do you see
the great abominations that the house of Israel is practicing
here, so that I must depart from my sanctuary? But you shall
see still greater abominations!
7 Then he brought me to the entrance of the court, where I saw
8 there was a hole in the wall. Son of man, he ordered, dig through
9 the wall. I dug through the wall and saw a door. Enter, he said
to me, and see the abominable evils which they are doing here.
10 I entered and saw that all around upon the wall were
pictured the figures of all kinds of creeping things and loath-
11 some beasts [all the idols of the house of Israel]. Before these
stood seventy of the elders of the house of Israel, among whom
stood Jezonia, son of Saphan, each of them with his censer in
his hand, and the fragrance of the incense was rising upward.
12 | Then he said to me: Do you see, son of man, what each of
these elders of the house of Israel is doing in his idol room?
They think: "The Lord cannot see us; the Lord has forsaken
13 the land." | He continued: You shall see still greater abomina-
tions that they are practicing.
14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the
temple, and I saw sitting there the women who were weeping
15 for Tammuz. | Then he said to me: Do you see this, son of
man? You shall see other abominations, greater than these!
16 Then he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house,
and there at the door of the Lord's temple, between the vestibule
and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to
the Lord's temple and their faces toward the east; they were
17 bowing down to the sun. Do you see, son of man? he asked me.
Is it such a trivial matter for the house of Juda to do the abomi-
nable things they have done here—for they have filled the land
with violence, and again and again they have provoked me—
18 that now they must also put the branch to my nose? Therefore
I in turn will act furiously: I will not look upon them with pity
nor will I show mercy.

8, 7-11: The nobles (elders) were paying homage most probably to the Egyptian animal gods painted on the wall.

8, 14: The women wept because the descent of the Babylonian god Tammuz into the lower world represented autumn when trees and plants failed to produce.

8, 16: A reference to sun worshipers. See 4 Kgs 23, 11.

8, 17: *Put the branch to my nose:* this may mean that the worship given to the idols was tantamount to provoking Yahweh. The expression may also refer to the rite of putting a vine branch to the nose of the Egyptian sun god Re to symbolize the transference of creative power from him to living things.

9

1 ***Slaughter of the Idolaters*** Then he cried loud for me to
2 hear: Come, you scourges of the city! With that I saw six men coming from the direction of the upper gate which faces the north, each with a destroying weapon in his hand. In their midst was a man dressed in linen, with a writer's case at his waist.
3 They entered and stood beside the bronze altar. Then he called to the man dressed in linen with the writer's case at his waist, |
4 saying to him: Pass through the city [through Jerusalem] and mark an X on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over
5 all the abominations that are practiced within it. To the others I heard him say: Pass through the city after him and strike! Do
6 not look on them with pity nor show any mercy! Old men, youths and maidens, women and children—wipe them out! But do not touch any marked with the X; begin at my sanctuary. So they began with the men [the elders] who were in front of the tem-
7 ple. Defile the temple, he said to them, and fill the courts with the slain; then go out and strike in the city.
8 As they began to strike, I was left alone. I fell prone, crying out, "Alas, Lord God! Will you destroy all that is left of Israel
9 when you pour out your fury on Jerusalem?" | He answered me: The sins of the house of Israel are great beyond measure; the land is filled with bloodshed, the city with lawlessness. They think that the Lord has forsaken the land, that he does not see
10 them. I, however, will not look upon them with pity, nor show any mercy. I will bring down their conduct upon their heads.
11 Then I saw the man dressed in linen with the writing case at his waist make his report: "I have done as you ordered."
11,24 Spirit lifted me up and brought me back to the exiles in Chaldea [in a vision, by God's spirit]. Then the vision I had
11,25 seen left me, and I told the exiles everything the Lord had shown me.

8,1 ***God's Glory Leaves Jerusalem*** On the fifth day of the sixth month, in the sixth year, as I was sitting in my house, and the elders of Juda sat before me, the hand of the Lord God fell
8,2 upon me there. I looked up and saw a form that looked like a

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9, 1-11: The vision of the slaughter of the idolatrous worshipers.
11, 24-25: Note the change of chapter order. See 8—11 n on "vision."
8, 1—11, 25: In these chapters of the current Hebrew text several visions involving the temple of Jerusalem were combined to form a single, continuous vision. The redistribution of verses in this translation is an attempt to separate the original visions.
8, 1: The date is September 17, 592 B.C.

man. Downward from what seemed to be his waist, there was fire; from his waist upward there seemed to be a brightness like the sheen of electrum. He stretched out what appeared to be a
8,4 hand and seized me by the hair of my head. . . .
I saw there the glory of the God of Israel, like the vision I had seen in the plain.

10

20 The cherubim were stationed to the right of the temple; these were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the river Chobar, whom I now recognized to be cheru-
21 bim. Each had four faces and four wings; something like human
22 hands were under their wings. Their faces looked just like those I had seen by the river Chobar; each one went straight forward.
14 Each had four faces: the first face was that of an ox, the second that of a man, the third that of a lion, and the fourth that of an
15 eagle. Such were the living creatures I had seen by the river Chobar.

9 I also saw four wheels beside them, one wheel beside each cherub; the wheels appeared to have the luster of chrysolite
10 stone. All four of them seemed to be made the same, as though
11 there were a wheel within a wheel. When they moved, they went in any one of their four directions without veering as they moved; for in whichever direction they were faced, they went
12 straight toward it without veering as they moved. The rims of
13 the four wheels were full of eyes all around. I heard the wheels
16 given the name "wheelwork." When the cherubim moved, the wheels went beside them; when the cherubim lifted their wings to rise from the earth, even then the wheels did not leave their
17 sides. When they stood still, the wheels stood still; when they rose, the wheels rose with them; for the living creatures' spirit was in them.

1 I looked and saw in the firmament above the cherubim what appeared to be sapphire stone; something like a throne could be
2 seen upon it. He said to the man dressed in linen: Go within the wheelwork under the cherubim; fill both your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim, then scatter them over the city. As I looked on, he entered.

The glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherubim,

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8, 2: The dots (head . . .) suppose the omission of some words describing the prophet's being transported in his vision to the court of the temple.

10, 20-21: A reference to the same vision as in 1, 4ff.

10, 2: The destruction of Jerusalem is symbolized by the scattering of burning coals.

upon which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. As the man entered, the cloud filled the inner court, and the glory of the Lord rose from over the cherubim to the threshold of the temple; the temple was filled with the cloud, and all the court was bright with the glory of the Lord. The noise of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far as the outer court; it was like the voice of God the Almighty when he speaks.

When he had commanded the man dressed in linen to take fire from within the wheelwork, among the cherubim, the man entered and stood by one of the wheels. Thereupon its cherub stretched out his hand toward the fire that was among the cherubim. He took up some of it and put it in the hands of the one dressed in linen, who took it and came out. [Something like human hands could be seen under the wings of the cherubim.]

Then the glory of the Lord left the threshold of the temple and rested upon the cherubim. These lifted their wings, and I saw them rise from the earth, the wheels rising along with them. They stood at the entrance of the eastern gate of the Lord's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was up above them.

11

Then the cherubim lifted their wings, and the wheels went along with them, while up above them was the glory of the God of Israel. And the glory of the Lord rose from the city and took a stand on the mountain which is to the east of the city.

Judgment of the Princes Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the temple. At the entrance of the gate I saw twenty-five men, among whom were Jezonia, son of Azur, and Pheltia, son of Banaia, princes of the people. | The Lord said to me: Son of man, these are the men who are planning evil and giving wicked counsel in this city. "Shall we not," they say, "be building houses soon? The city is the kettle, and we are the meat." | Therefore prophesy against them, son of man, prophesy! Then the spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he told me to say: Thus says the Lord: This is the way you talk, house of Israel, and what you are plotting I well know. You have slain many in this city and have filled its streets with your slain. | Therefore thus says the Lord God: Your slain whom you have

11, 23: *The mountain:* Mount of Olives.

11, 1-2: Ezechiel witnesses the guilty princes.

11, 3: The princes are so confident that the Babylonians will not succeed in their siege of Jerusalem that they say, "shall we not . . . be building houses soon?" They compare Jerusalem to an impregnable kettle protecting its inhabitants ("meat"). But the meaning is inverted in ch. 24. See 24, 3ff n.

placed within it, they are the meat, and the city is the kettle; but
8 you I will take out of it. You fear the sword, but the sword
9 will bring upon you, says the Lord God. I will bring you out of
the city, and hand you over to foreigners, and inflict punish
10 ments upon you. By the sword you shall fall; at the boundaries
of Israel I will judge you; thus you shall know that I am the
11 Lord. The city shall not be a kettle for you, nor shall you be the
meat within it. At the boundaries of Israel I will judge you,
12 and you shall know that I am the Lord, by whose statutes you
have not lived, and whose ordinances you have not kept; rather
you have acted according to the ordinances of the nations
around you.
13 While I was prophesying, Pheltia, the son of Banaia, died. I
fell prone and cried out in a loud voice: "Alas, Lord God! will
you utterly wipe out what remains of Israel?"

14 ***Restoration of the Exiles*** Thus the word of the Lord
15 came to me: Son of man, it is about your kinsmen, your fellow
exiles, and the whole house of Israel that the inhabitants of
Jerusalem say, "They are far away from the Lord; to us the
16 land of Israel has been given as our possession." Therefore say:
Thus says the Lord God: Though I have removed them far
among the nations and scattered them over foreign countries—
and was for a while their only sanctuary in the countries to
17 which they had gone—I will gather you from the nations and
assemble you from the countries over which you have been scat-
18 tered, and I will restore to you the land of Israel. They shall
return to it and remove from it all its detestable abominations.
19 I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them;
I will remove the stony heart from their bodies, and replace it
20 with a natural heart, | so that they will live according to my
statutes, and observe and carry out my ordinances; thus they
21 shall be my people and I will be their God. But as for those
whose hearts are devoted to their detestable abominations, I will
bring down their conduct upon their heads, says the Lord God.

12

1 ***Acts Symbolic of the Exile*** Thus the word of the Lord
2 came to me: Son of man, you live in the midst of a rebellious

11, 13: As Ezechiel explains this vision to the exiles, news comes of Pheltia's death.

11, 14-21: The Judeans who will remain in Juda will not form the loyal remnant which will restore the nation anew, but the exiles will form that remnant. Jer 29 delivers the same message.

12, 1-16: The purpose of Ezechiel's silent symbolic act of imitating

house; they have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but
3 do not hear, for they are a rebellious house. Now, son of man,
during the day while they are looking on, prepare your baggage
as though for exile, and again while they are looking on, mi-
grate from where you live to another place; perhaps they will
4 see that they are a rebellious house. You shall bring out your
baggage like an exile in the daytime while they are looking on;
in the evening, again while they are looking on, you shall go out
5 like one of those driven into exile; while they look on, dig a hole
6 in the wall and pass through it; while they look on, shoulder the
burden and set out in the darkness; cover your face that you may
not see the land, for I have made you a sign for the house of
Israel.
7 I did as I was told. During the day I brought out my baggage
as though it were that of an exile, and at evening I dug a hole
through the wall with my hand and, while they looked on, set
out in the darkness, shouldering my burden.
8 Then, in the morning, the word of the Lord came to me:
9 Son of man, did not the house of Israel, that rebellious house,
10 ask you what you were doing? Tell them: Thus says the Lord
God: This oracle concerns Jerusalem and the whole house of
11 Israel within it. I am a sign for you: as I have done, so shall it
12 be done to them; as captives they shall go into exile. The prince
who is among them shall shoulder his burden and set out in
darkness, going through a hole that he has dug in the wall, and
13 covering his face lest he be seen by anyone. But I will spread my
net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare. I will bring
him to Babylon, into the land of the Chaldeans—but he shall
14 not see it—and there he shall die. All his retinue, his aides, and

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the Jerusalem inhabitants' preparation for exile was to teach his fellow exiles of the imminent exile of the Jerusalemites. Ezechiel's fellow exiles were hoping for a divine intervention that would allow them to return home. They would not believe that Jerusalem would fall and another exile begin.

12, 3: *To another place:* it is not necessary to understand here that Ezechiel traveled to a nearby town.

12, 5: The digging of a hole in the wall of his own home signified either that the Jerusalem inhabitants will flee from the breaches of their ruined homes or city walls, or that they would escape in stealth at nightfall.

12, 10-16: The explanation of Ezechiel's symbolic acts. See vv. 3-7. Ezechiel had recovered the use of speech.

12, 12-13: King Sedecia ("prince") escaped at night through the breach in the Jerusalem wall (v. 12) but he was captured by the Babylonians and blinded ("he shall not see it") by Nabuchodonosor, before setting out for Babylon where he was to die (v. 13). For the whole account, see Jer 52, 7-11 or 4 Kgs 25, 4-7.

his troops I will scatter in every direction, and pursue them with
15 the sword. Then shall they know that I am the Lord, when
disperse them among the nations and scatter them over foreign
16 lands. Yet I will leave a few of them to escape the sword
famine and pestilence, so that they may tell of all their abomina
tions among the nations to which they will come; thus they shall
know that I am the Lord.
17.18 Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, eat
your bread trembling, and drink your water shaking with
19 anxiety. | Then say to the people of the land: Thus says the
Lord God of the inhabitants of Jerusalem [to the land of Is
rael]: They shall eat their bread in anxiety and drink their
water in horror, that their land may be emptied of the violence
20 of all its inhabitants that now fills it. Inhabited cities shall be in
ruins, and the land shall be a waste; thus you shall know that I
am the Lord.

21 ***Prophecy Ridiculed*** Thus the word of the Lord came to
22 me: Son of man, what is this proverb that you have in the land
of Israel: "The days drag on, and no vision ever comes to any
23 thing"? | Say to them therefore: Thus says the Lord God: I will
put an end to this proverb; they shall never quote it again in
Israel. Rather, say to them: The days are at hand, and also the
25 fulfillment of every vision. Whatever I speak is final; and it
shall be done without further delay. In your days, rebellious
house, whatever I speak I will bring about, says the Lord God.
24 There shall no longer be any false visions or deceitful divina
tions within the house of Israel, because it is I, the Lord, who
will speak.
26.27 Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, listen
to the house of Israel saying, "The vision he sees is a long way
28 off; he prophesies of the distant future!" Say to them therefore:
Thus says the Lord God: None of my words shall be delayed
any longer; whatever I speak is final, and it shall be done, says
the Lord God.

13

1 ***Against the Prophets of Peace*** Thus the word of the
2 Lord came to me: Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of
Israel, prophesy! Say to those who prophesy their own thought

12, 17-20: The exiles of Jerusalem were to be rationed to the bare minimum (bread and water).

12, 21-28: Ezechiel answers his mockers that his prophecies on Jerusalem's doom are about to materialize.

5 Hear the word of the Lord: You did not step into the breach,
nor did you build a wall about the house of Israel that would
7 stand firm against attack on the day of the Lord. Was not the
8 vision you saw false, and your divination lying? Therefore thus
says the Lord God: Because you have spoken falsehood and
have seen lying visions, therefore see! I am coming at you, says
the Lord God.
10 For the very reason that they led my people astray, saying,
"Peace!" when there was no peace, and that, as one built a wall,
11 they would cover it with whitewash, | say then to the white-
washers: I will bring down a flooding rain; hailstones shall fall,
12 and a stormwind shall break out. And when the wall has fallen,
will you not be asked: Where is the whitewash you spread on?
13 Therefore thus says the Lord God: In my fury I will let loose
stormwinds; because of my anger there shall be a flooding rain,
14 and hailstones shall fall with destructive wrath. I will tear down
the wall that you have whitewashed and level it to the ground,
laying bare its foundations. When it falls, you shall be crushed
15 beneath it; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. When I
have spent my fury on the wall and its whitewashers, I tell you
16 there shall be no wall, nor shall there be whitewashers— | those
prophets of Israel who prophesied to Jerusalem and saw for it
visions of peace when there was no peace, says the Lord God.

3 ***Against False Prophets in Chaldea*** Thus says the Lord
God: Woe to those prophets who are fools, who follow their
4 own spirit and have seen no vision. Like foxes among ruins are
6 your prophets, O Israel! Their visions are false and their divina-
tion lying. They say, "Thus says the Lord!" though the Lord
did not send them; then they wait for him to fulfill their word!
9 But I will stretch out my hand against the prophets who have
false visions and who foretell lies. They shall not belong to the
community of my people, nor be recorded in the register of the
house of Israel, nor enter the land of Israel; thus you shall know
that I am the Lord.

17 ***Against False Prophetesses*** Now, son of man, turn to-
ward the daughters of your people who prophesy their own
thoughts; against these, prophesy: Thus says the Lord God:
22 Because you have disheartened the upright man with lies when
I did not wish him grieved, and have encouraged the wicked
23 man not to turn from his evil conduct and save his life; there-

13, 5: Note the frequent change of verse order in this chapter.
13, 8: *I am coming at you:* see 5, 8 n.

fore you shall no longer see false visions and practice divination, but I will rescue my people from your power. Thus you shall know that I am the Lord.

18 *Against Sorceresses* Woe to those who sew bands for everyone's wrists and make veils for every size of head so as to entrap their owners. Do you think to entrap the lives of my
19 people, yet keep yourselves alive? You dishonor me before my people with handfuls of barley and crumbs of bread, killing those who should not die and keeping alive those who should
20 not live, lying to my people who willingly hear lies. ¦ Therefore thus says the Lord God: See! I am coming at those bands of yours in which you entrap men's lives: I will tear them from
21 their arms and set free those you have caught. I will tear off your veils and rescue my people from your power, so that they shall no longer be prey to your hands. Thus you shall know that I am the Lord.

14

1 *Prophecy Useless for Idolaters* When certain elders of
2 Israel came and sat down before me, the word of the Lord came
3 to me: Son of man, these men have the memory of their idols fresh in their hearts, and they keep the occasion of their sin before them. Why should I allow myself to be consulted by
4 them? Therefore speak with them, and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: If anyone of the house of Israel, holding the memory of his idols in his heart and keeping the occasion of his sin before him, has recourse to a prophet, I, the Lord, will be his
5 answer in person because of his many idols. Thus would I bring back to their senses the house of Israel, who have become estranged from me through all their idols.
6 Therefore say to the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord God: Return and be converted from your idols; turn yourselves
7 away from all your abominations. For if anyone of the house of Israel or any alien resident in Israel is estranged from me, and holds the memory of his idols in his heart and keeps the occasion of his sin before him, yet asks a prophet to consult me for him, I,
8 the Lord, will be his answer in person. I will turn against that man, and make of him an example and a byword. I will cut him

13, 18: Jewish sorceresses, adopting Babylonian practices, claimed powers over those on whom they put bands and veils.

13, 19: *Barley and crumbs of bread:* these were used by the sorceresses

off from the midst of my people. Thus you shall know that I
am the Lord.
9 As for the prophet, if he is beguiled into speaking a word, I,
the Lord, shall have beguiled that prophet; I will stretch out my
10 hand against him and root him out of my people Israel. Each
shall receive punishment for his sin, the inquirer and the prophet
11 shall be punished alike, | so that the house of Israel may no
longer stray from me and may no longer be defiled by all their
sins. Thus they shall be my people, and I will be their God, says
the Lord God.

12 ***Personal Responsibility*** Thus the word of the Lord came
13 to me: Son of man, when a land sins against me by breaking
faith, I stretch out my hand against it and break its staff of
bread, I let famine loose upon it and cut off from it both man
14 and beast; and even if these three men were in it, Noe, Daniel,
and Job, they could save only themselves by their virtue, says
15 the Lord God. If I were to cause wild beasts to prowl the land,
depopulating it so that it became a waste, traversed by none
16 because of the wild beasts, | and these three men were in it, as
I live, says the Lord God, I swear they could save neither sons
nor daughters; they alone would be saved, and the land would
17 be a waste. Or if I brought the sword upon this country, com-
manding the sword to pass through the land cutting off from
18 it man and beast, | and these three men were in it, as I live, says
the Lord God, they would be unable to save either sons or
19 daughters; they alone would be saved. Or if I were to send
pestilence into this land, pouring out upon it my bloodthirsty
20 fury, cutting off from it man and beast, | even if Noe, Daniel,
and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, I swear that they
could save neither son nor daughter; they would save only
themselves by their virtue.
21 Thus says the Lord God: Even though I send Jerusalem my
four cruel punishments, the sword, famine, wild beasts, and
22 pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast, | still some sur-
vivors shall be left in it who will bring out sons and daughters;

14, 9: *I, the Lord, shall have beguiled that prophet:* the sacred writers attribute evil to God without distinguishing between what God wants and what God allows.

14, 12-23: This is one of the four texts in which Ezechiel stresses the doctrine of individual responsibility. See 18, 1-32 n.

14, 13: *Staff of bread:* see 4, 16 n.

14, 14: *Noe, Daniel, and Job:* the renowned Old Testament saints. "Daniel" here is not the "prophet" of Dn 1—12 but the "judge" of Dn 13, who in turn most likely comes from Phoenician mythology as shown in discovered clay tablets from Ugarit, Syria.

when they come out to you, you shall see their conduct and thei
actions and be consoled regarding the evil I have brought on
23 Jerusalem [all that I have brought upon it]. They shall consol
you when you see their conduct and actions, for you shall the
know that it was not without reason that I did to it what I did
says the Lord God.

15

1 ***Parable of the Vine*** Thus the word of the Lord came t
2 me: Son of man, what makes the wood of the vine better tha
any other wood? That branch among the trees of the forest
3 Can you use its wood to make anything worthwhile? Can yo
4 make even a peg from it, to hang on it any kind of vessel? If yo
throw it on the fire as fuel and the fire devours both ends an
5 even the middle is scorched, is it still good for anything? Why
even when it was whole it was good for nothing; how muc
less, when the fire has devoured and scorched it, can it be use
6 for anything! | Therefore, thus says the Lord God: Like th
wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I hav
destined as fuel for the fire, do I make the inhabitants of Jeru
7 salem. I will set my face against them; they have escaped fron
the fire, but the fire shall devour them. Thus you shall know tha
8 I am the Lord, when I turn my face against them. I will mak
the land a waste, because they have broken faith, says the Lor
God.

16

1 ***The Faithless Spouse*** Thus the word of the Lord cam
2 to me: Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations
3 Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: By origin and birth yo
are of the land of Chanaan; your father was an Amorrite an
4 your mother a Hethite. As for your birth, the day you were
born your navel cord was not cut; you were neither washed with
water nor anointed, nor were you rubbed with salt, nor swathe
5 in swaddling clothes. No one looked on you with pity or com
passion to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were
thrown out on the ground as something loathsome, the day yo
were born.

15, 7: *Set my face:* a popular phrase in Ezechiel.

16, 1-63: To warn the exiles of Jerusalem's imminent doom, Ezechie
allegorically reinterprets the Sinaitic Covenant and the history of th
Jews. He highlights the gratuity of God's love. G. B. Shaw's "Pygma
lion" resembles this theme.

16, 3-4: The Judeans assimilated many pagan ideas and customs o
the original inhabitants of Palestine.

6 Then I passed by and saw you weltering in your blood. I said
7 to you: Live in your blood | and grow like a plant in the field.
You grew and developed, you came to the age of puberty; your
breasts were formed, your hair had grown, but you were still
8 stark naked. Again I passed by you and saw that you were now
old enough for love. So I spread the corner of my cloak over
you to cover your nakedness; I swore an oath to you and entered
into a covenant with you; you became mine, says the Lord God.
9 Then I bathed you with water, washed away your blood, and
10 anointed you with oil. I clothed you with an embroidered gown,
put sandals of fine leather on your feet; I gave you a fine linen
11 sash and silk robes to wear. I adorned you with jewelry: I put
12 bracelets on your arms, a necklace about your neck, | a ring in
your nose, pendants in your ears, and a glorious diadem upon
13 your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver; your
garments were of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. Fine
flour, honey, and oil were your food. You were exceedingly
14 beautiful, with the dignity of a queen. You were renowned
among the nations for your beauty, perfect as it was, because of
my splendor which I had bestowed on you, says the Lord God.
15 But you were captivated by your own beauty, you used your
renown to make yourself a harlot, and you lavished your har-
16 lotry on every passer-by, whose own you became. You took some
of your gowns and made for yourself gaudy high places, where
17 you played the harlot. . . . You took the splendid gold and sil-
ver ornaments that I had given you and made for yourself male
18 images, with which also you played the harlot. You took your
embroidered gowns to cover them; my oil and my incense you
19 set before them; | the food that I had given you, the fine flour,
the oil, and the honey with which I fed you, you set before them
20 as an appeasing odor, says the Lord God. The sons and daugh-
ters you had borne me you took and offered as sacrifices to be
devoured by them! Was it not enough that you had become a
21 harlot? You slaughtered and immolated my children to them,
22 making them pass through fire. And through all your abomina-
tions and harlotries you remembered nothing of when you were
a girl, stark naked and weltering in your blood.
23 Then after all your evildoing—woe, woe to you! says the

16, 8: *I spread the corner of my cloak over you to cover your nakedness:* a proposal for marriage. See Ru 3, 9 n.

16, 16: Fine robes were used to cover a couch for harlotry. See Prv 7, 16-17. In this chapter, Ezechiel constantly uses the figure of harlotry to signify idolatry.

16, 20-21: Some Judean kings introduced human sacrifice. See 4 Kgs 16, 3.

24 Lord God— | you raised for yourself a platform and a dais in
25 every public place. At every street corner you built a dais for
yourself to use your beauty obscenely, spreading your legs for
26 every passer-by, playing the harlot countless times. You played
the harlot with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, so many
27 times that I was provoked to anger. Therefore I stretched out
my hand against you, I diminished your allowance and delivered
you over to the will of your enemies, the Philistines, who re-
28 volted at your lewd conduct. You also played the harlot with
the Assyrians, because you were not satisfied; and after playing
29 the harlot with them, you were still not satisfied. Again and
again you played the harlot, now going to Chaldea, the land of
the traders; but despite this, you were still not satisfied.
30 How wild your lust! says the Lord God, that you did all these
31 things, acting like a shameless prostitute, | building your plat-
form at every street corner and erecting your dais in every pub-
lic place! Yet you were unlike a prostitute, since you disdained
32 payment. The adulterous wife receives, instead of her husband,
33 payment. All harlots receive gifts. But you rather bestowed your
gifts on all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from all
34 sides for your harlotry. Thus in your harlotry you were different
from all other women. No one sought you out for prostitution.
Since you gave payment instead of receiving it, how different
you were!
35.36 Therefore, harlot, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says
the Lord God: Because you poured out your lust and revealed
your nakedness in your harlotry with your lovers and abomi-
nable idols, and because you sacrificed the lifeblood of your
37 children to them, I will now gather together all your lovers
whom you tried to please, whether you loved them or loved
them not; I will gather them against you from all sides and ex-
38 pose you naked for them to see. I will inflict on you the sen-
tence of adulteresses and murderesses; I will wreak fury and
39 jealousy upon you. I will hand you over to them to tear down
your platform and demolish your dais; they shall strip you of
your garments and take away your splendid ornaments, leaving
40 you stark naked. They shall lead an assembly against you to
41 stone you and hack you with their swords. They shall burn your
apartments with fire and inflict punishments on you while many
women look on. Thus I will put an end to your harlotry, and
42 you shall never again give payment. When I have wreaked my
fury upon you I will cease to be jealous of you, I will be quiet

16, 24: The Chanaanites' ritual prostitution, associated with "a platform and a dais," influenced the Israelites.

43 and no longer vexed. Because you did not remember what happened when you were a girl, but enraged me with all these things, therefore in return I am bringing down your conduct upon your head, says the Lord God. For did you not add lewdness to the rest of your abominable deeds?

44 See, everyone who is fond of proverbs will say of you, 'Like
45 mother, like daughter.' | Yes, you are the true daughter of the mother who spurned her husband and children, and you are a true sister to those who spurned their husbands and children—
46 your mother was a Hethite and your father an Amorrite. Your elder sister was Samaria with her daughters, living to the north of you; and your younger sister, living to the south of you, was
47 Sodom with her daughters. Yet not only in their ways did you walk, and act as abominably as they did; in a very short time
48 you became more corrupt in all your ways than they. As I live, says the Lord God, I swear that your sister Sodom, with her daughters, has not done as you and your daughters have done!
49 And look at the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters were proud, sated with food, complacent in their pros-
50 perity, and they gave no help to the poor and needy. Rather, they became haughty and committed abominable crimes in my pres-
51 ence; then, as you have seen, I removed them. | Samaria did not commit half your sins! You have done more abominable things than they, and have even made your sisters appear just,
52 with all the abominable deeds you have done. You, then, bear your shame; you are an argument in favor of your sisters! In view of your sinful deeds, more abominable than theirs, they appear just in comparison with you. Blush for shame, and bear the shame of having made your sisters appear just.

53 I will restore their fortunes, the fortune of Sodom and her daughters and of Samaria and her daughters [and I will restore
54 your fortune along with them], that you may bear your shame
55 and be disgraced for all the comfort you brought them. Yes, your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, Samaria and her daughters, shall return to their former state [you and your daughters
56 shall return to your former state]. Was not your sister Sodom kept in bad repute by you while you felt proud of yourself,
57 before your wickedness became evident? Now you are like her, reproached by the Edomites and all your neighbors, despised on
58 all sides by the Philistines. The penalty of your lewdness and your abominations—you must bear it all, says the Lord.

59 For thus speaks the Lord God: I will deal with you according

16, 45: *True daughter of the mother:* Jerusalem has followed in the footsteps of its heathen forebears; see v. 3.

to what you have done, you who despised your oath, breakin,
60 a covenant. Yet I will remember the covenant I made with yo
when you were a girl, and I will set up an everlasting covenan
61 with you. Then you shall remember your conduct and b
ashamed when I take your sisters, those older and younger tha
you, and give them to you as daughters, even though I am no
62 bound by my covenant with you. For I will re-establish my cove
63 nant with you, that you may know that I am the Lord, | tha
you may remember and be covered with confusion, and that yo
may be utterly silenced for shame when I pardon you for al
you have done, says the Lord God.

17

1 ***The Eagles and the Vine*** Thus the word of the Lor
2 came to me: Son of man, propose a riddle, and speak this prov
3 erb to the house of Israel: Thus speaks the Lord God:
The great eagle, with great wings, with long pinions, with
thick plumage, many-hued, came to Lebanon. He took the crest
4 of the cedar, | tearing off its topmost branch, and brought it to
5 a land of tradesmen, set it in a city of merchants. | Then h
took some seed of the land, and planted it in a seedbed; a shoo
6 by plentiful waters, like a willow he placed it, | to sprout an
grow up a vine, dense and low-lying, its branches turned towar
him, its roots lying under him. Thus it became a vine, produce
branches and put forth shoots.
7 But there was another great eagle, great of wing, rich in
plumage; to him this vine bent its roots, sent out its branches
that he might water it more freely than the bed where it wa
8 planted. | In a fertile field by plentiful waters it was planted
to grow branches, bear fruit, and become a majestic vine.
9 Say: Thus says the Lord God: Can it prosper? Will he no
rather tear it out by the roots and strip off its fruit, so that al
its green growth will wither when he pulls it up by the roots:
10 [No need of a mighty arm or many people to do this.] | True
it is planted, but will it prosper? Will it not rather wither, when
touched by the east wind, in the bed where it grew?
11.12 Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, say
now to the rebellious house: Do you not understand what this
means? It is this: The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and

17, 3-4: *Eagle:* Nabuchodonosor. *Lebanon:* Juda by poetic license *Crest:* Joachin. *Of the cedar:* the family of David. *City of merchants* Babylon.

17, 5: Nabuchodonosor enthrones Sedecia in Joachin's place.

17, 7: *Another great eagle:* Pharao Hophra.

17, 11-21: These verses explain the allegory of vv. 1-8.

took away its king and princes with him to Babylon. Then he
selected a man of the royal line with whom he made a covenant,
binding him under oath, while removing the nobles of the land,
so that the kingdom would remain a modest one, without aspira-
tions, and would keep his covenant and obey him. But this man
rebelled against him, sending envoys to Egypt to obtain horses
and a great army. Can he prosper? Can he who does such things
escape? Can he break a covenant and still go free? | As I live,
says the Lord God, in the home of the king who set him up to
rule, whose oath he spurned, whose covenant with him he broke,
there in Babylon I swear he shall die! When ramps are cast up
and siege towers are built for the destruction of many lives, he
shall not be saved in the conflict by Pharao with a great army
and numerous troops. He spurned his oath, breaking his cove-
nant. Though he gave his hand in pledge, he did all these things.
He shall not escape!

Therefore say: Thus says the Lord God: As I live, my oath
which he spurned, my covenant which he broke, I swear to
bring down upon his head. I will spread my net over him, and
he shall be taken in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and
enter into judgment with him there over his breaking faith with
me. All the crack troops among his forces shall fall by the
sword, and the survivors shall be scattered in every direction.
Thus you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken.

Therefore say: Thus says the Lord God: I, too, will take from
the crest of the cedar, from its topmost branches tear off a tender
shoot, and plant it on a high and lofty mountain; | on
the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it. It shall put
forth branches and bear fruit, and become a majestic cedar.

17, 12: *The king of Babylon:* Nabuchodonosor dethroned Joachin and exiled him.

17, 13: Nabuchodonosor selected king Sedecia, uncle of Joachin ("a man of the royal line").

17, 15: *This man rebelled:* Sedecia was misguided by false prophets to seek an alliance with Pharao Hophra of Egypt. See 4 Kgs 24,10—25,7.

17, 22-23: In contrast with v. 3, Yahweh, too, will take a person ("crest" or "tender shoot") of the cedar (the House of David, or "topmost branches"). Ezechiel has been and still is speaking of the imminent fall of Jerusalem and of its Davidic dynasty. His message of hope is that it is not the end of David's line, nor of God's promises to protect it. The prophet's prediction is: the House of David will continue, for it will be planted "on the mountain heights of Israel" and "become a majestic cedar." Ezechiel is speaking literally and directly of a single future Davidic ruler and king, who fits comfortably in the royal Messianic strand. The future kingdom will encompass all peoples: "Birds of every kind . . . its boughs" (23). That this vague future ruler was to be Christ ruling His Church went beyond Ezechiel's highest hopes.

Birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it, every winged
24 thing in the shade of its boughs. | And all the trees of the field
shall know that I, the Lord, bring low the high tree, lift high
the lowly tree, wither up the green tree, and make the withered
tree bloom.
As I, the Lord, have spoken, so will I do.

18

1 ***Personal Responsibility*** Thus the word of the Lord came
2 to me: Son of man, | what is the meaning of this proverb that
you recite in the land of Israel: "Fathers have eaten green
3 grapes, thus their children's teeth are on edge"? | As I live, says
the Lord God: I swear that there shall no longer be anyone
4 among you who will repeat this proverb in Israel. For all lives
are mine; the life of the father is like the life of the son, both
are mine; only the one who sins shall die.
5 If a man is virtuous—if he does what is right and just, |
6 if he does not eat on the mountains, nor raise his eyes to the
idols of the house of Israel; if he does not defile his neighbor's
wife, nor have relations with a woman in her menstrual period;
7 if he oppresses no one, gives back the pledge received for a debt,
commits no robbery; if he gives food to the hungry and clothes
8 the naked; if he does not lend at interest nor exact usury; if he
holds off from evildoing, judges fairly between a man and his
9 opponent; if he lives by my statutes and is careful to observe
my ordinances, that man is virtuous—he shall surely live, says
the Lord God.
10 But if he begets a son who is a thief, a murderer, or who
11 does any of these things (though the father does none of
them), a son who eats on the mountains, defiles the wife of his
12 neighbor, | oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery,
does not give back a pledge, raises his eyes to idols, does abomi-
13 nable things, | lends at interest and exacts usury—this son
certainly shall not live. Because he practiced all these abomi-

18, 1-32: The exiles believed themselves to be innocent, and put the blame for the exile with its attendant miseries on their predecessors. They epitomized this grievance in the proverb of v. 2. The same complaint is registered in Jer 31, 29. Ezechiel tells them here that they are individually and personally responsible for their own sins, which are also causing the present distress. He summarizes this teaching with fine precision in v. 20. Furthermore, even the past sins of an individual will not count, but his good actions of the present and future will be rewarded (vv. 21-23). Vice versa, even a virtuous past life will be of no avail if one lives evilly in the present and the future (vv. 24-28). For other major texts on individual responsibility, see 3, 17-21 n; 14, 12-23 n; 33, 1-20 n.

nations, he shall surely die; his death shall be his own fault.
14 On the other hand, if a man begets a son who, seeing all the
sins his father commits, yet fears and does not imitate him;
15 a son who does not eat on the mountains, or raise his eyes to
the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife;
16 who does not oppress anyone, or exact a pledge, or commit
robbery; who gives his food to the hungry and clothes the
17 naked; who holds off from evildoing, accepts no interest or
usury, but keeps my ordinances and lives by my statutes—this
one shall not die for the sins of his father, but shall surely live.
18 Only the father, since he violated rights, and robbed, and did
what was not good among his people, shall in truth die for his
19 sins. You ask: "Why is not the son charged with the guilt of his
father?" Because the son has done what is right and just, and
has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely
20 live. | Only the one who sins shall die. The son shall not be
charged with the guilt of his father, nor shall the father be
charged with the guilt of his son. The virtuous man's virtue
shall be his own, as the wicked man's wickedness shall be his.
21 But if the wicked man turns away from all the sins he
committed, if he keeps all my statutes and does what is right
22 and just, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the
crimes he committed shall be remembered against him; he shall
23 live because of the virtue he has practiced. Do I indeed derive
any pleasure from the death of the wicked? says the Lord God.
Do I not rather rejoice when he turns from his evil way that he
may live?
24 And if the virtuous man turns from the path of virtue to do
evil, the same kind of abominable things that the wicked man
does, can he do this and still live? None of his virtuous deeds
shall be remembered, because he has broken faith and committed
25 sin; because of this, he shall die. You say, "The Lord's way is
not fair!" Hear now, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair,
26 or rather, are not your ways unfair? When a virtuous man turns
away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies, it is because of
27 the iniquity he committed that he must die. But if a wicked
man, turning from the wickedness he has committed, does what
28 is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned
away from all the sins which he committed, he shall surely
29 live, he shall not die. And yet the house of Israel says, "The
Lord's way is not fair!" Is it my way that is not fair, house of
Israel, or rather, is it not that your ways are not fair?
30 Therefore I will judge you, house of Israel, each one accord-
ing to his ways, says the Lord God. Turn and be converted
from all your crimes, that they may be no cause of guilt for

31 you. Cast away from you all the crimes you have committed,
and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. Why
32 should you die, O house of Israel? | For I have no pleasure in
the death of anyone who dies, says the Lord God. Return and
live!

19

1 As for you, son of man, raise a lamentation over the prince
of Israel:

2 ***Allegory of the Lions*** What a lioness was your mother, a
lion of lions! Among young lions she couched to rear her whelps.
3 | One whelp she raised up, a young lion he became; he learned
4 to seize prey, men he devoured. | Then nations raised cries
against him, in their pit he was caught; they took him away
5 with hooks to the land of Egypt. | Then she saw that in vain
she had waited, her hope was destroyed. She took another of her
6 whelps, him she made a young lion. | He prowled among the
lions, a young lion he became; he learned to seize prey, men he
7 devoured; | he ravaged their strongholds, their cities he wasted.
The land and all in it were appalled at the noise of his roar. |
8 Nations laid out against him snares all about him; they spread
9 their net to take him, in their pit he was caught. | They put
him in a cage and took him away to the king of Babylon, so
that his voice would not be heard on the mountains of Israel.

10 ***Allegory of the Vine Branch*** Your mother was like a
vine planted by the water; fruitful and branchy was she because
11 of the abundant water. | One strong branch she put out as a
royal scepter. Stately was her height amid the dense foliage;
12 notably tall was she with her many clusters. | But she was torn
up in fury and flung to the ground; the east wind withered her
up, her fruit was torn off; then her strong branch withered up,
13 fire devoured it. | So now she is planted in the desert, in a land

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19, 2-9: Scholars admit that this is an allegory-dirge, and it is generally interpreted that the two young lions in this obscure poem are probably Joachaz and Joachin.

19, 2: *A lioness:* Juda.

19, 4: Pharao Necho, in 609, ended king Joachaz' three months' rule by exiling him to Egypt, where he died. See 4 Kings 23, 33-34.

19, 9: The second lion was Joachin, whom Nabuchodonosor exiled to Babylon. See 4 Kgs 24, 8-17.

19, 10-14: In this second allegory-dirge most scholars interpret the "mother" and "vine" as Juda and the "branch" and "scepter" as king Sedecia, who was first reigning gloriously and then came to an ignoble end. It is not a Messianic text.

14 dry and parched, | for fire came out of the branch and devoured
her shoots; she is now without a strong branch, a ruler's scepter.

This is a lamentation and serves as a lamentation.

20

1 ***Israel's History of Infidelity*** In the seventh year, on the
tenth day of the fifth month, some of the elders of Israel came
2 to consult the Lord and sat down before me. Then the word of
3 the Lord came to me: Son of man, speak with the elders of
Israel and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: Have you
come to consult me? As I live! I swear I will not allow myself to
be consulted by you, says the Lord God.
4 Will you judge them? Will you judge, son of man? Make
5 known to them the abominations of their ancestors | in these
words: Thus speaks the Lord God: The day I chose Israel, I
swore to the descendants of the house of Jacob; in the land of
Egypt I revealed myself to them and swore: I am the Lord,
6 your God. | That day I swore to bring them out of the land of
Egypt to the land I had scouted for them, a land flowing with
7 milk and honey, a jewel among all lands. | Then I said to them:
Throw away, each of you, the detestable things that have held
your eyes; do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am
the Lord, your God.
8 But they rebelled against me and refused to listen to me; none
of them threw away the detestable things that had held their
eyes, they did not abandon the idols of Egypt. Then I thought
of pouring out my fury on them and spending my anger on
9 them there in the land of Egypt; | but I acted for my name's
sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations
among whom they were, in whose presence I had made myself
known to them, revealing that I would bring them out of the
10 land of Egypt. Therefore I led them out of the land of Egypt and
11 brought them into the desert. Then I gave them my statutes and
made known to them my ordinances, which everyone must
12 keep, to have life through them. I also gave them my Sabbaths
to be a sign between me and them, to show that it was I, the
Lord, who made them holy.
13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the desert.
They did not observe my statutes, and they despised my ordi-

20, 1-44: Ezechiel describes the history of Israel as a chain of infidelities of the people to God from Egypt to the present exiles in Babylon. However, God will save a remnant (vv. 37-38).

20, 1: August 14, 591 B.C.

nances that bring life to those who keep them. My Sabbaths,
too, they desecrated grievously. Then I thought of pouring out
14 my fury on them in the desert to put an end to them, | but I
acted for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the
sight of the nations in whose presence I had brought them out.
15 Nevertheless I swore to them in the desert not to bring them to
the land I had given them, a land flowing with milk and honey,
16 a jewel among all lands. So much were their hearts devoted to
their idols, they had not lived by my statutes, but despised my
17 ordinances and desecrated my Sabbaths. But I looked on them
with pity, not wanting to destroy them, so I did not put an
end to them in the desert.
18 Then I said to their children in the desert: Do not observe the
statutes of your parents or keep their ordinances; do not defile
19 yourselves with their idols. I am the Lord, your God: observe
20 my statutes and be careful to keep my ordinances; keep holy
my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and you to show that I am
21 the Lord, your God. But their children rebelled against me:
they did not observe my statutes or keep my ordinances that
bring life to those who observe them, and my Sabbaths they
desecrated. Then I thought of pouring out my fury on them, of
22 spending my anger on them in the desert; but I stayed my hand,
acting for my name's sake, lest it be profaned in the sight of
23 the nations in whose presence I brought them out. Nevertheless
I swore to them in the desert that I would disperse them among
24 the nations and scatter them over foreign lands; for they did
not keep my ordinances, but despised my statutes and desecrated
25 my Sabbaths, with eyes only for the idols of their fathers. There-
fore I gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances
26 through which they could not live. I let them become defiled by
their gifts, by their immolation of every first-born, so as to make
them an object of horror.
27 Therefore speak to the house of Israel, son of man, and tell
them: Thus says the Lord God: In this way also your fathers
28 blasphemed me, breaking faith with me: when I had brought
them to the land I had sworn to give them, and they saw all its
high hills and leafy trees, there they offered their sacrifices
[there they brought their offensive offerings], there they sent
up appeasing odors, and there they poured out their libations.
29 | I asked them: To what sort of high place do you betake your-

20, 25-26: *I gave them statutes that were not good:* the sacred writers attribute everything to God. We would say: the people performed pagan practices through God's permissive will.

selves?—and so they call it a high place even to the present day.
30 Therefore say to the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord God:
will you defile yourselves like your fathers? Will you lust after
31 their detestable idols? By offering your gifts, by making your
children pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all
your idols even to this day. Shall I let myself be consulted by
you, house of Israel? As I live! says the Lord God: I swear I
will not let myself be consulted by you.
32 What you are thinking of shall never happen: "We shall
be like the nations, like the peoples of foreign lands, serving
33 wood and stone." As I live, says the Lord God, with a mighty
hand and outstretched arm, with poured-out wrath, I swear
34 I will be king over you! With a mighty hand and outstretched
arm, with poured-out wrath, I will bring you out from the
nations and gather you from the countries over which you are
35 scattered; then I will lead you to the desert of the peoples, where
36 I will enter into judgment with you face to face. Just as I
entered into judgment with your fathers in the desert of the land
of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, says the Lord
37 God. I will count you with the staff and bring back but a small
38 number. I will separate from you those who have rebelled and
transgressed against me; from the land where they sojourned as
aliens I will bring them out, but they shall not return to the
land of Israel. Thus you shall know that I am the Lord.
39 As for you, house of Israel, thus says the Lord God: Come,
each one of you, destroy your idols! Then listen to me, and
never again profane my holy name with your gifts and your
40 idols. For on my holy mountain, on the mountain height of
Israel, says the Lord God, there the whole house of Israel with-
out exception shall worship me; there I will accept them, and
there I will claim your tributes and the first fruits of your
41 offerings, and all that you dedicate. As a pleasing odor I will
accept you, when I have brought you from among the nations
and gathered you out of the countries over which you were
scattered; and by means of you I will manifest my holiness in
42 the sight of the nations. Thus you shall know that I am the
Lord, when I bring you back to the land of Israel, the land which
43 I swore to give to your fathers. There you shall recall your
conduct and all the deeds by which you defiled yourselves; and
you shall loathe yourselves because of all the evil things you
44 did. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I deal with
you thus, for my name's sake, and not according to your evil
conduct and corrupt actions, O house of Israel, says the Lord
God.

21

1 ***The Sword of the Lord*** Thus the word of the Lord came
2 to me: Son of man, look southward, preach toward the south,
3 and prophesy against the forest of the southern land. Hear the
word of the Lord! you shall say to the southern forest. Thus
says the Lord God: See! I am kindling a fire in you that shall
devour all trees, the green as well as the dry. The blazing flame
shall not be quenched, but from south to north every face shall
4 be scorched by it. Everyone shall see that I, the Lord, have
kindled it, and it shall not be quenched.
5 But I said, "Alas! Lord God, they say to me, 'Is not this the
6 one who is forever spinning parables?' " Then the word of the
7 Lord came to me: Son of man, look toward Jerusalem, preach
against their sanctuary, and prophesy against the land of Israel,
8 saying to the land of Israel: Thus says the Lord: See! I am
coming at you; I will draw my sword from its sheath and cut
9 off from you the virtuous and the wicked. Thus my sword shall
10 leave its sheath against everyone from south to north, and
everyone shall know that I, the Lord, have drawn my sword
from its sheath, and it shall not be sheathed again.

11 ***Act Symbolic of the City's Fall*** As for you, son of man,
groan! with shattered strength groan bitterly while they look
12 on. And when they ask you, "Why are you groaning?", you
shall say: Because of a report; when it comes every heart shall
faii, every hand shall fall helpless, every spirit shall be daunted,
and every knee shall run with water. See, it is coming, it is
here! says the Lord God.

13 ***Song of the Sword*** Thus the word of the Lord came to
14 me: Son of man, prophesy! say: Thus says the Lord:
A sword, a sword has been sharpened, a sword, a sword has
15 been burnished: to work slaughter has it been sharpened, to
flash lightning has it been burnished. Why should I now with-
draw it? You have spurned the rod and every judgment!

21, 1-37: In several oracles against the Judeans and the Ammonites, Ezechiel describes forthcoming disaster under the symbol of Yahweh's sword.

21, 1-4: *Forest of the southern land:* the oracle is directed to the kingdom of the south, Juda. The catastrophe is likened to an imminent forest fire, a familiar prophetic image.

21, 8: *The virtuous and the wicked:* this may be understood as an expression of total destruction. Actually, in the historical fall of Jerusalem, both the just and the wicked were punished.

21, 12: *A report:* of Jerusalem's fall. See 33, 21-22.

16 I have given it over to the burnisher that he might hold it in his
hand, a sword sharpened and burnished to be put in the hand
17 of a slayer. | Cry out and wail, son of man, for it is destined
for my people; it is for all the princes of Israel, victims of the
sword with my people.
18 Therefore, slap your thigh, | for the sword has been tested;
and why should it not be so? says the Lord God, since you have
spurned the rod.
19 As for you, son of man, prophesy, brushing one hand against
the other: while the sword is doubled and tripled, this sword of
slaughter, this great sword of slaughter which threatens all
20 around, | that every heart may tremble; for many will be the
fallen. At all their gates I have appointed the sword for
slaughter, fashioned to flash lightning, burnished for slaughter.
21 | Cleave to the right! destroy! to the left! wherever your edge
is turned.
22 Then I, too, shall brush one hand against the other and
wreak my fury. I, the Lord, have spoken.

23 ***Nabuchodonosor at the Crossroads*** Thus the word of
24 the Lord came to me: Son of man, make for yourself two roads
over which the sword of the king of Babylon can come. Both
roads shall lead out from the same land. Then put a signpost
25 at the head of each road, so that the sword can come to Rabbah
26 of the Ammonites or to Juda's capital, Jerusalem. For at the
fork where the two roads divide stands the king of Babylon,
divining; he has shaken the arrows, inquired of the teraphim,
27 inspected the liver. In his right hand is the divining arrow
marked "Jerusalem," bidding him to give the order for slaying,
to raise his voice in the battle cry, to post battering-rams at the
28 gates, to cast up a ramp, to build a siege tower. In their eyes this
is but a lying oracle; yet they are bound by the oaths they have
sworn, and the arrow taken in hand marks their guilt.
29 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have drawn
attention to your guilt, with your crimes laid bare and your
sinfulness in all your wicked deeds revealed (because attention

21, 16: *The burnisher:* the Babylonians.
21, 18: *Slap your thigh:* a gesture of mourning.
21, 22: A gesture repudiating responsibility. See 22, 13.
21, 26f: *He has shaken the arrows:* an arrow is chosen out of a sheath containing apparently two arrows, one marked Jerusalem and the other Rabbah, modern Amman, capital of Jordan (v. 25). The Arabs also used this form of divination. *Teraphim:* household gods in human form are consulted. *Inspected the liver:* the examination of the configuration of livers from freshly killed animals is called hepatoscopy.
21, 28: *In their eyes:* in the eyes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

30 has been drawn to you), you shall be taken in hand. And as for
you, depraved and wicked prince of Israel, whose day is coming
31 when your life of crime will be ended, | thus says the Lord
God: Off with the turban and away with the crown! Nothing
shall be as it was! Up with the low and down with the high!
32 Twisted, twisted, twisted will I leave it; it shall not be the same
until he comes who has the claim against the city; and to him
I will hand it over.

33 ***Against the Ammonites*** As for you, son of man, prophesy: Thus says the Lord God against the Ammonites and their insults: A sword, a sword is drawn for slaughter, burnished to
34 consume and to flash lightning, because you planned with
false visions and lying divinations to lay it on the necks of
depraved and wicked men whose day has come when their
35 crimes are at an end. Return it to its sheath! In the place where
you were created, in the land of your origin, I will judge you.
36 I will pour out my indignation upon you, breathing my fiery
wrath upon you; I will hand you over to ravaging men, artisans
37 of destruction. You shall be fuel for the fire, your blood shall
flow throughout the land. You shall not be remembered, for I,
the Lord, have spoken.

22

1 ***Crimes of Jerusalem*** Thus the word of the Lord came
2 to me: You, son of man, would you judge, would you judge
3 the bloody city? Then make known all her abominations, | and
say: Thus says the Lord God: Woe to the city which sheds
blood within herself so that her time has come, and which
4 has made idols for her own defilement. By the blood which you
shed you have been made guilty, and with the idols you made
you have become defiled; you have brought on your day, so
that the end of your years has come. Therefore I make you an
object of scorn to the nations and a laughingstock to all foreign
5 lands. Those near you and those far off shall deride you because
6 of your foul reputation and your great perversity. See! the princes
7 of Israel, family by family, are in you only for bloodshed. Within
you, father and mother are despised; in your midst, they extort
from the resident alien; within you, they oppress orphans and

21, 30: *Prince of Israel:* Sedecia.

21, 32: *Until he comes:* a reference to the future Messia (Gn 49, 10) or a reference to Nabuchodonosor.

21, 33-37: The Babylonians later invaded Ammon. This section belongs with the prophecies against the nations in chapters 25—32. It is placed here as a companion piece to the oracle against Jerusalem.

widows. What is holy to me you have spurned, and my Sabbaths
you have desecrated. There are those in you who slander to
cause bloodshed; within you are those who feast on the moun-
tains; in your midst are those who do lewd things. In you are
those who uncover the nakedness of their fathers, and in you
those who coerce women in their menstrual period. There are
those in you who do abominable things with the wives of their
neighbors, men who defile their daughters-in-law by incest, men
who coerce their sisters, the daughters of their own fathers.
There are those in you who take bribes to shed blood. You
exact interest and usury; you despoil your neighbors violently;
and me you have forgotten, says the Lord God.
See, I am brushing one hand against the other because of the
unjust profits you have made and because of the bloodshed in
your midst. Can your heart remain firm, will your hands be
strong, in the days when I deal with you? I, the Lord, have
spoken, and I will act. | I will disperse you among the nations
and scatter you over foreign lands, so that I may purge
your uncleanness. In you I will allow myself to be profaned in
the eyes of the nations; thus you shall know that I am the Lord.
17.18 Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, the
house of Israel has become dross for me. All of them are bronze
and tin, iron and lead [in the midst of a furnace]: dross from
silver have they become. Therefore thus says the Lord God:
Because all of you have become dross, therefore I must gather
you together within Jerusalem. Just as silver, bronze, iron, lead,
and tin are gathered into a furnace and smelted in the roaring
flames, so I will gather you together in my furious wrath, put
you in, and smelt you. When I have assembled you, I will blast
you with the fire of my anger and smelt you with it. You shall
be smelted by it just as silver is smelted in a furnace. Thus you
shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out my fury on you.
23.24 Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, say
to her: You are a land unrained on [that is, not rained on] at
the time of my fury. Her princes are like roaring lions that tear
prey; they devour people, seizing their wealth and precious
things, and make widows of many within her. Her priests
violate my law and profane what is holy to me; they do not
distinguish between the sacred and the profane, nor teach the
difference between the unclean and the clean; they pay no

22, 9: *Feast on the mountains:* by partaking in idolatrous rites.
22, 10: *Uncover the nakedness of their fathers:* incest was forbidden by the Mosaic Law.
22, 13: See 21, 22 n for this gesture.
22, 23-31: Ezechiel's roster of the guilty.

attention to my Sabbaths, so that I have been profaned in their
27 midst. Her nobles within her are like wolves that tear prey,
28 shedding blood and destroying lives to get unjust gain. Her prophets cover them with whitewash, pretending to visions that are false and performing lying divinations, saying, "Thus says
29 the Lord God," although the Lord has not spoken. The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they afflict the poor and the needy, and oppress the resident alien without
30 justice. Thus I have searched among them for someone who could build a wall or stand in the breach before me to keep me
31 from destroying the land; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out my fury upon them; with my fiery wrath I have consumed them; I have brought down their conduct upon their heads, says the Lord God.

23

1 ***The Two Sisters*** Thus the word of the Lord came to me:
2 Son of man, there were two women, daughters of the same
3 mother, who even as young girls played the harlot in Egypt. There the Egyptians caressed their bosoms and fondled their
4 virginal breasts. Oholа was the name of the elder, and the name of her sister was Oholiba. They became mine and bore sons and daughters. [As for their names: Samaria is Oholа, and
5 Jerusalem is Oholiba.] Oholа became a harlot faithless to me;
6 she lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians, warriors | dressed in purple, governors and officers, all of them attractive young men,
7 knights mounted on horses. Thus she gave herself as a harlot to them, to all the elite of the Assyrians, and she defiled herself

22, 30: Ezechiel may be referring to prophets and priests and to the leaders who should have been warning the people. See 13, 5 for the same thought.

23, 1-49: This allegory is one of the most realistic passages of the Old Testament. To show his raging disgust at his fatherland's constant sin of idolatry and its unwise political alliances with Egypt and Assyria, Ezechiel can think of nothing more revolting than the symbolism of adultery and prostitution. His audience did not regard this as a titillating piece of oratory or writing, but considered it a genuine interpretation of national idolatry as spiritual infidelity to Yahweh, which was a powerful insight into the nature of their apostasy. By contrast, the offended purity of their God appears all the more impressively.

23, 1-3: Using poetic license, Ezechiel speaks of the two kingdoms *placing them in a time* when the people were in Egypt before the Exodus.

23, 4: Oholа may mean "her own tent." This symbolic name may be a veiled reference to the illegal temple and cult of Samaria. Oholiba may mean "my tent is in her." This may allude to the true temple and cult of Jerusalem.

with all those for whom she lusted [with all their idols]. She
did not give up the harlotry which she had begun in Egypt,
when they had lain with her as a young girl, fondling her
virginal breasts and pouring out their impurities on her. There-
fore I handed her over to her lovers, the Assyrians for whom she
had lusted. They exposed her nakedness, her sons and daughters
they took away, and herself they slew with the sword. Thus she
became a byword for women, for they punished her grievously.
Though her sister Oholiba saw all this, her lust was more
depraved than her sister's, and she outdid her in harlotry. She
too lusted after the Assyrians, governors and officers, warriors
impeccably clothed, knights mounted on horses, all of them
attractive young men. I saw that she had defiled herself. Both
had gone down the same path, | yet she went further in her
harlotry. When she saw men drawn on the wall, the images
of Chaldeans drawn with vermillion, | with sashes girded about
their waists, flowing turbans on their heads, all looking like
chariot warriors, the portraits of Babylonians, natives of
Chaldea, | she lusted for them; no sooner had she set eyes
on them than she sent messengers to them in Chaldea. Then the
Babylonians came to her, to the love couch, and defiled her
with their intercourse. As soon as she was defiled by them, she
became disgusted with them. Her harlotry was discovered and
her shame was revealed, and I became disgusted with her as I
had become disgusted with her sister. But she played the harlot
all the more, recalling the days of her girlhood, when she had
been a harlot in the land of Egypt. She lusted for the lechers
of Egypt, whose members are like that of an ass, and whose
heat is like that of stallions.
You yearned for the lewdness of your girlhood, when the
Egyptians fondled your breasts, caressing your bosom. | There-
fore, Oholiba, thus says the Lord God: I will now stir up your
lovers against you, those with whom you are disgusted, and I
will bring them against you from every side: the men of
Babylon and all of Chaldea, Pecod, Shoa, and Coa, along with
all those of Assyria, attractive young men, all of them governors
and officers, charioteers and warriors, all of them horsemen.
They shall come against you from the north with chariots and
wagons and many peoples. Shields, bucklers, and helmets they
shall array against you everywhere. I will leave it to them to
judge, and they will judge you by their own ordinances. I will let
loose my jealousy against you, so that they shall deal with

23, 23: These are inhabitants of places in the vicinity of the Tigris river in Mesopotamia.

you in fury, cutting off your nose and ears; and what is left
of you shall fall by the sword. They shall take away your
sons and daughters, and what is left of you shall be devoured
26 by fire. They shall strip off your clothes and seize your splendid
27 ornaments. I will put an end to your lewdness and to the
harlotry you began in Egypt; you shall no longer look toward
it, nor shall you remember Egypt again.
28 For thus says the Lord God: I am now handing you over
29 to those whom you hate, to those who fill you with disgust. They
shall deal with you in hatred, seizing all that you have worked
for and leaving you stark naked, so that your indecent nakedness
30 is exposed. Your lewdness and harlotry have brought these
things upon you, because you played the harlot with the nations
by defiling yourself with their idols.
31 Because you followed in the path of your sister, I will hand
32 you her cup. Thus says the Lord God: The cup of your sister
you shall drink, so wide and deep, which holds so much,
33 filled with destruction and grief, a cup of dismay, the cup of
34 your sister. You shall drain it dry, and gnaw at the very
sherds of the cup, and you shall tear out your breasts; for I have
35 spoken, says the Lord God. Therefore thus says the Lord God:
Because you have forgotten me and cast me behind your back,
it is for you to bear the penalty of your lewdness and harlotry.
36 Then the Lord said to me: Son of man, would you judge
37 Ohola and Oholiba? Then make known to them their abomina-
tions. For they committed adultery, and blood is on their hands.
They committed adultery with their idols; to feed them they
immolated the children they had borne me. This, too, they did
38 to me: they defiled my sanctuary and desecrated my Sabbaths.
39 On the very day they slew their children for their idols, they
entered my sanctuary to desecrate it. Thus they acted within
40 my house. Moreover, they sent for men who had to come from
afar, to whom messengers were sent. And so they came—and
for them you bathed yourself, painted your eyes, and put on
41 ornaments. You sat on a couch prepared for them, with a
table spread before it, on which you had set my incense and
42 oil. Then was heard the shout of a carefree mob in the city,
and these were men brought in from the desert, who put brace-
lets on the women's arms and splendid diadems on their heads.
43 So I said: "Oh, this woman jaded with adulteries! Now they
44 will commit whoredom with her, and as for her. . . ." And
indeed they did come to her as men come to a harlot. Thus they

23, 40: *Men who had to come from afar:* Assyrian and Babylonian ambassadors whose alliances led to the adoption of pagan ways.

45 came to Ohola and Oholība, the lewd women. But just men
shall punish them with the sentence meted out to adulteresses
and murderesses, for they have committed adultery, and blood
is on their hands.
46 Thus says the Lord God: Summon an assembly against
47 them, and deliver them over to terror and plunder. The assembly
shall stone them and hack them to pieces with their swords.
They shall slay their sons and daughters, and burn their houses
48 with fire. Thus I will put an end to lewdness in the land, and
all the women will be warned not to imitate your lewdness.
49 They shall inflict on you the penalty of your lewdness, and you
shall pay for your sins of idolatry. Thus you shall know that
I am the Lord.

24

1 ***Allegory of the Pot*** On the tenth day of the tenth month,
2 in the ninth year, the word of the Lord came to me: Son of
man, write down this date today, for this very day the king of
3 Babylon has invested Jerusalem. Propose this parable to the
rebellious house: Thus says the Lord God:
4 Set up the pot, set it up, then pour in some water. | Put in
it pieces of meat, all good pieces: thigh and shoulder; fill it
5 with the choicest joints taken from the pick of the flock. | Then
pile the wood beneath it; bring to a boil these pieces and the
6 joints that are in it. | Take out its pieces, one by one, without
casting lots for it.
Therefore, thus says the Lord God: Woe to the bloody city,
7 a pot containing rust, whose rust has not been removed. For
the blood she shed is in her midst: she poured it on the bare
rock; she did not pour it out on the earth, to be covered with
8 dust. To work up my wrath, to excite my vengeance, she put
9 her blood on the bare rock, not to be covered. Therefore, thus
10 says the Lord God: I, too, will heap up a great bonfire, | piling

24, 1: January 15, 588 B.C. See 4 Kgs 25 for the same date in which "Nabuchodonosor . . . came . . . against Jerusalem and . . . raised works around about it."

24, 2: The reason for the divine command, according to many commentators, is that he may recall the date when later on official news comes, and therefore gain the confidence of his fellow exiles.

24, 3-14: The comparison of the Jerusalemites with the boiled meat symbolizes their punishment, not their protection as explained in 11, 3 n. Scholars in general do not try to identify the meaning of each item since the process becomes too problematic.

24, 7-8: According to Lv 17, 13f, blood was "the life of every living body" and therefore had to be covered with earth because the blood was sacred according to primitive ideas.

on wood and kindling the fire, till the meat has been cooked, til
the broth has boiled.
11 Then I will set the pot empty on the coals till its meta
glows red hot, till the impurities in it melt, and its rust dis
12 appears. Yet not even with fire will its great rust be removed
13 Because you have sullied yourself with lewdness when I woul
have purified you, and you refused to be purified of you
uncleanness, therefore you shall not be purified until I wreal
14 my fury on you. I, the Lord, have spoken; it is coming, for
will bring it about without fail. I will not have pity nor repent
By your conduct and your deeds you shall be judged, says th
Lord God.

15 ***Symbol of the Destruction of the Temple*** Thus th
16 word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, by a sudden blow
am taking away from you the delight of your eyes, but do n
17 mourn or weep or shed any tears. Groan in silence, make n
lament for the dead, bind on your turban, put your sandals o
your feet, do not cover your beard, and do not eat the customar
18 bread. That evening my wife died, and the next morning I di
19 as I had been commanded. Then the people asked me, "Wil
you not tell us what all these things that you are doing mear
20 for us?" I therefore spoke to the people that morning, | sayin
21 to them: Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Say to th
house of Israel: Thus says the Lord God: I will now desecrat
my sanctuary, the stronghold of your pride, the delight of you
eyes, the desire of your soul. The sons and daughters you lef
24 behind shall fall by the sword. Ezechiel shall be a sign for you
all that he did you shall do when it happens. Thus you shal
22 know that I am the Lord. You shall do as I have done, no
23 covering your beards nor eating the customary bread. You
turbans shall remain on your heads, your sandals on your feet
You shall not mourn or weep, but you shall rot away because
of your sins and groan one to another.

25 ***End of Ezechiel's Dumbness*** As for you, son of man,
truly, on the day I take away from them their bulwark, their
glorious joy, the delight of their eyes, the desire of their soul,
26 and the pride of their hearts, their sons and daughters, | that

24, 15-23: *The delight of your eyes:* this expression (v. 16) means his wife as v. 18 specifies. Ezechiel is ordered not to mourn his wife's death nor to perform the customary mourning rites. Neither are the people to mourn when Jerusalem falls, but they must give themselves to interior remorse.

24, 21: In this verse, there are four expressions for the Jerusalem temple.

day the fugitive will come to you, that you may hear it for
27 yourself; that day your mouth shall be opened and you shall
be dumb no longer. Thus you shall be a sign to them, and they
shall know that I am the Lord.

III. PROPHECIES AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONS

25

1 ***Against Ammon*** Thus the word of the Lord came to me:
2 Son of man, turn toward the Ammonites and prophesy against
3 them. Say to the Ammonites: Hear the word of the Lord! Thus
says the Lord God: Because you cried out your joy over the
desecration of my sanctuary, the devastation of the land of
4 Israel, and the exile of the house of Juda, therefore I will deliver
you into the possession of the Easterners. They shall set up
their encampments among you and pitch their tents; they shall
5 eat your fruits and drink your milk. I will make Rabba a pasture
for camels, and the villages of the Ammonites a resting place
for flocks. Thus you shall know that I am the Lord.
6 For thus says the Lord God: Because you clapped your hands
and stamped your feet, rejoicing most maliciously in your
7 heart over the land of Israel, therefore I will stretch out my
hand against you. I will make you plunder for the nations, I will
cut you off from the peoples, and remove you from the lands.
I will destroy you, and thus you shall know that I am the Lord.

8 ***Against Moab*** Thus says the Lord God: Because Moab
9 said, "See! the house of Juda is like all other nations," there-
fore I will clear the shoulder of Moab totally of its cities, the
jewels of the land: Beth-Jesimoth, Baal-Maon, and Cariathaim.

24, 27: *That day your mouth shall be opened:* see 3, 25-26 n, and 33, 22.

25—32: Ezechiel, following the example of Isaia and Jeremia, places his oracles against the nations after those against Juda. Most of these oracles date from about 587. These nations will be punished for partaking in Juda's downfall either in action or in gladness of the fall, or simply because of their pride. See Am 1, 2 n on the basic meaning of oracles against nations.

25, 4: *Easterners:* desert tribes who roamed east of the Ammonites.

25, 5: *Rabba:* the same place as the "Rabbah of the Ammonites" in 21, 25.

25, 6: For the same gesture signifying grief, see 6, 11 n.

25, 7: *Know that I am the Lord:* notice this refrain at the end of the prophecies against the nations.

25, 9: *The shoulder of Moab:* the side of the mountain in northern Moab. *The jewels:* recent archeological studies show that the three fortified cities formed a line of defense.

10 I will hand her over, along with the Ammonites, into the
possession of the Easterners, that she may not be remembered
11 among the peoples. Thus I will execute judgment upon Moab,
that they may know that I am the Lord.

12 ***Against Edom*** Thus says the Lord God: Because Edom
has taken vengeance on the house of Juda and has made itself
13 grievously guilty by taking vengeance on them, therefore thus
says the Lord God: I will stretch out my hand against Edom
and cut off from it man and beast. I will make it a waste from
14 Teman to Dedan; they shall fall by the sword. My vengeance
upon Edom I will entrust to my people Israel, who will deal
with Edom in accordance with my anger and my fury; thus
they shall know my vengeance, says the Lord God.

15 ***Against the Philistines*** Thus says the Lord God: Because
the Philistines have acted revengefully, and have taken venge-
ance with destructive malice in their hearts, with an undying
16 enmity, | therefore thus says the Lord God: See! I am stretching
out my hand against the Philistines; I will cut off the Cherethites
17 and wipe out the remnant on the seacoast. I will execute great
acts of vengeance on them, punishing them furiously. Thus they
shall know that I am the Lord, when I wreak my vengeance on
them.

26

1 ***Against the City of Tyre*** On the first day of the . . .
month in the eleventh year, the word of the Lord came to me:
2 Son of man, because of what Tyre said of Jerusalem: "Aha!
it is broken, the gateway to the peoples; now that it is ruined,
3 its wealth reverts to me!" therefore thus says the Lord God:
See! I am coming at you, Tyre; I will churn up against you
4 many nations, even as the sea churns up its waves; they shall
destroy the walls of Tyre and raze her towers. I will scrape the
5 ground from her and leave her a bare rock; | she shall be a
drying place for nets in the midst of the sea.
I have spoken, says the Lord God: and she shall be booty for

25, 12-14: See another oracle against Edom in 35, 1ff. At least five prophets have an oracle against Edom, especially the prophet Abdia.

25, 16: *Cherethites:* this name seems to be used synonymously with "Philistines" in the same verse.

26, 1: The number of the month has been lost. *Eleventh year:* about 587 when Jerusalem fell.

26, 4-5: *Bare rock . . . in the midst of the sea:* Tyre was an island

6 the nations. | And her daughters on the mainland shall be
slaughtered by the sword; thus they shall know that I am the
Lord.
7 For thus says the Lord God: I am now bringing up against
Tyre from the north Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon, the
king of kings, with horses and chariots, with cavalry and a great
and mighty army.
8 Your daughters on the mainland he shall slay with the sword;
he shall place a siege tower against you, cast up a ramp about
9 you, and raise his shields against you. | He shall pound your
walls with battering-rams and break down your towers with
10 his weapons. | The surge of his horses shall cover you with
dust, amid the noise of steeds, of wheels and of chariots. Your
walls shall shake as he enters your gates, even as one enters a
11 city that is breached. | With the hoofs of his horses he shall
trample all your streets; your people he shall slay by the sword;
12 your mighty pillars he shall pull to the ground. | Your wealth
shall be plundered, your merchandise pillaged; your walls shall
be torn down, your precious houses demolished; your stones,
13 your timber, and your clay shall be cast into the sea. | I will
put an end to the noise of your songs, and the sound of your
14 lyres shall be heard no more. | I will make you a bare rock;
a drying place for nets shall you be.
Never shall you be rebuilt, for I have spoken, says the Lord
God.
15 Thus says the Lord God to Tyre: At the noise of your fall,
at the groaning of the wounded, when the sword slays in your
16 midst, shall not the isles quake? All the princes of the sea shall
step down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and strip off
their embroidered garments. They shall be clothed in mourning
and, sitting on the ground, they shall tremble at every moment

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rock separated from continental Tyre, composed of "suburbian" colonies founded by Tyre and called "daughters on the mainland" (v. 6). It was only in the fourth century B.C., at the time of Alexander the Great, that a causeway connected Tyre with the mainland of Phoenicia. At the time of this prophecy (587) Nabuchodonosor began the siege of Tyre.

26, 14: Nabuchodonosor first conquered continental Tyre and then besieged the island fortress city for thirteen years between 587 and 574, but he never conquered it. Most likely the prophet himself did not know exactly when Tyre would fall definitely. This was characteristic of the limited way the prophets foretold the destruction of cities and countries. In the example of Tyre, Nabuchodonosor began its destruction, Alexander the Great continued it, and the Saracens ended it in 1291 A.D.

26, 15-16: *Isles quake . . . princes of the sea:* a poetic description of the repercussion on Tyre's colonies and dependencies at the news of her siege.

17 and be horrified at you. Then they shall utter a lament over you:
How have you perished, gone from the seas, city most prized!
Once she was mighty on the sea, she and her dwellers, who
18 spread terror into all that dwelt by the sea. | On this, the day
of your fall, the islands quake!
The isles in the sea are terrified at your passing.
19 For thus says the Lord God: When I make you a city desolate
like cities that are no longer inhabited, when I churn up the
20 abyss against you, and its mighty waters cover you, then I will
thrust you down with those who descend into the pit, those of
the bygone age; and I will make you dwell in the nether lands,
in the everlasting ruins, with those who go down to the pit, so
that you may never return to take your place in the land of the
21 living. I will make you a devastation, and you shall be no more;
you shall be sought, but never again found, says the Lord God.

27

1 ***The Ship Tyre*** Thus the word of the Lord came to me:
2-3 As for you, son of man, utter a lament over Tyre, and say to
Tyre that is situated at the approaches of the sea, that brought
the trade of the peoples to many a coastland: Thus says the
Lord God:
4 Tyre, you said, "I am a ship, perfect in beauty." | In the
midst of the sea your builders placed you, perfected your beauty.
5 | With cypress from Sanir they built for you all of your decks;
6 cedar from Lebanon they took to make you a mast; | from the
highest oaks of Basan they made your oars; your bridge they
7 made of cypress wood from the isles of Chetthim. | Fine em-
broidered linen from Egypt became your sail [to serve you as
a banner]. Purple and scarlet from the isles of Elisa covered
8 your cabin. | Citizens of Sidon and Arad served as your oars-
men; skilled men of Samar were in you to be your mariners; |
9 the elders and experts of Gebal were in you to caulk your seams.
Every ship and sailor on the sea came to you to carry trade. |
10 Persia and Lud and Phut were in your army as warriors;
shield and helmet they hung upon you, increasing your splendor.
11 The men of Arad were all about your walls, and the Gamma-

26, 20: *Pit . . . nether lands:* the abode of the dead.
27, 5: *Sanir:* Mt. Hermon.
27, 6: *Basan:* a land noted for its valuable forests, across the Jordan River. *Chetthim:* Cyprus (?)
27, 7: *Elisa:* Cyprus(?)
27, 8-9: These are Phoenician cities. *Gebal:* better known as Byblos.
27, 10: *Lud:* Lydia in modern Turkey. *Phut:* Somaliland(?)
27, 11: *Gammadites:* Syrians (?)

dites were in your towers; they hung their bucklers all around
12 on your walls, and made perfect your beauty. Tharsis traded
with you, so great was your wealth, exchanging silver, iron,
13 tin, and lead for your wares. Javan, Thubal, and Mosoch were
also traders with you, exchanging slaves and articles of bronze
14 for your goods. From Beth-Thogorma horses, steeds, and mules
15 were exchanged for your wares. The Rodanites trafficked with
you; many coastlands traded with you; ivory tusks and ebony
16 wood they gave you for payment. Edom traded with you, so
many were your products, exchanging garnets, purple, em-
17 broidered cloth, fine linen, coral, and rubies for your wares. Juda
and the land of Israel trafficked with you, exchanging Mennith
18 wheat, figs, honey, oil, and balm for your goods. Damascus
traded with you, so great was your wealth, exchanging Helbon
19 wine and Sahar wool. Javan exchanged wrought iron, cassia,
20 and aromatic cane from Uzal for your wares. Dedan traded
21 with you for riding gear. The trade of Arabia and of all the
sheikhs of Cedar belonged to you; they dealt in lambs, rams,
22 and goats. The merchants of Saba and Regma also traded with
you, exchanging for your wares the very choicest spices, all
23 kinds of precious stones, and gold. Haran, Chene, and Eden, the
24 merchants of Saba, Assur, and Chelmad | traded with you,
marketing with you rich garments, violet mantles, embroidered
25 cloth, varicolored carpets, and firmly woven cords. Ships of
Tharsis journeyed for you in your merchandising.

You were full and heavily laden in the heart of the sea. |
26 Through the deep waters your oarsmen brought you home, but
27 the east wind smashed you in the heart of the sea. | Your
wealth, your goods, your wares, your sailors, and your crew,
[the caulkers of your seams, those who traded for your goods,
all your warriors who were in you, and all the great crowd
within you] sank into the heart of the sea on the day of your
shipwreck.

28 Hearing the shouts of your mariners, the shores begin to
29 quake. | Down from their ships come all who ply the oar; the
30 sailors, all the mariners of the sea, stand on the shore, | making
their voice heard on your behalf, shouting bitter cries, strewing
31 dust on their heads, rolling in the ashes. | For you they shave
their heads and put on sackcloth, for you they weep in anguish,
32 with bitter lament. | In their mourning they utter a lament over

27, 12-25: The cities are described from west to east and from south to north.

27, 26: *The east wind:* a familiar biblical instrument of God's wrath.

27, 30-31: Mourning customs.

you; thus they wail over you: Who was ever destroyed like Tyre
in the midst of the sea?
33 With your goods which you drew from the seas you filled
many peoples; with your great wealth and merchandise you
34 enriched the kings of the earth. | Now you are wrecked in the
sea, in the watery depths; your wares and all your crew have
35 gone down with you. | All who dwell on the coastlands are
aghast over you, their kings are terrified, their faces convulsed.
36 | The traders among the peoples now hiss at you; you have
become a horror, and you shall be no more.

28

1 ***The Prince of Tyre*** Thus the word of the Lord came to
2 me: | Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre: Thus says the
Lord God:

Because you are haughty of heart, and say, "A god am I! I
occupy a godly throne in the heart of the sea!"—And yet you
are a man, and not a god, however you may think yourself like
3 a god. | Oh yes, you are wiser than Daniel, there is no secret
4 that is beyond you. | By your wisdom and your intelligence you
have made riches for yourself; you have put gold and silver
5 into your treasuries. | By your great wisdom applied to your
trading you have heaped up your riches; your heart has grown
6 haughty from your riches— | therefore thus says the Lord God:

Because you have thought yourself to have the mind of a god,
7 | therefore I will bring against you foreigners, the most bar-
barous of nations. They shall draw their swords against your
beauteous wisdom, they shall run them through your splendid
8 apparel. | They shall thrust you down to the pit, there to die a
9 bloodied corpse, in the heart of the sea. | Will you then say,
"I am a god!" when you face your murderers? No, you are a
10 man, not a god, handed over to those who will slay you. | You
shall die the death of the uncircumcised at the hands of for-
eigners, for I have spoken, says the Lord God.

11.12 Thus the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, utter

28, 2-10: A dirge on Tyre personified as a king, resembling the dirge on Babylon in Is 14, 4-23. Many brilliant Old Testament poems state the theme at the beginning; here the theme is: "you are a man and not a god" (v. 2). The theme is then repeated in the subsequent verses.

28, 12-19: Scholars commonly conjecture that just as the author of Genesis (see Gn 3, 2-6 n) did not know the precise historical sin of primitive man, but took a prevalent contemporary sin (what it was is disputed), so does Ezechiel here take another story of how man fell (a being in Eden, "of perfection . . . wisdom and perfect beauty" v. 2ff) and attached to it the prevalent sin of trafficking in the prophet's day (vv. 16 and 18).

a lament over the king of Tyre, saying to him: Thus says the Lord God:

You were stamped with the seal of perfection, of complete
13 wisdom and perfect beauty. | In Eden, the garden of God, you were, and every precious stone was your covering [carnelian, topaz, and beryl, chrysolite, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, garnet, and emerald]; of gold your pendants and jewels were made, on the day you were created.
14 With the Cherub I placed you; you were on the holy moun-
15 tain of God, walking among the fiery stones. | Blameless you were in your conduct from the day you were created, until evil
16 was found in you, | the result of your far-flung trade; violence was your business, and you sinned. Then I banned you from the mountain of God; the Cherub drove you from among the
17 fiery stones. | You became haughty of heart because of your beauty; for the sake of splendor you debased your wisdom. I cast you to the earth, so great was your guilt; I made you a spectacle in the sight of kings.
18 Because of your great guilt, your sinful trade, I have profaned your sanctuaries, and I have brought out fire from your midst which will devour you. I have reduced you to dust on
19 the earth in the sight of all who should see you. | Among the peoples, all who knew you stand aghast at you; you have become a horror, you shall be no more.

20 ***Against Sidon*** Thus the word of the Lord came to me:
21.22 Son of man, look toward Sidon, and prophesy against it: Thus says the Lord God: See! I am coming at you, Sidon; I will be glorified in your midst. Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I inflict punishments upon it and use it to manifest my holiness.
23 Into it I will send pestilence, and blood shall flow in its streets. Within it shall fall those slain by the sword that comes against it from every side.
24 Thus they shall know that I am the Lord. | Sidon shall no longer be a tearing thorn for the house of Israel, a brier that scratches them more than all the others about them who despise them; thus they shall know that I am the Lord.
25 Thus says the Lord God: When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, then I will manifest my holiness through them in the sight of the nations.

28, 14: *Holy mountain of God:* the abode of God. *Fiery stones:* in the Bible, fire frequently accompanies God's presence.
28, 24: Sidon's sin is vague.

Then they shall live on their land which I gave to my servant
26 Jacob; they shall live on it in security, building houses and planting vineyards. They shall dwell secure while I inflict punishments on all their neighbors who despised them; thus they shall know that I, the Lord, am their God.

29

1 ***Egypt the Crocodile*** On the twelfth day of the tenth
2 month in the tenth year, the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, set your face against Pharao, king of Egypt, and proph-
3 esy against him and against all Egypt. Say this to him: Thus says the Lord God:

See! I am coming at you, Pharao, king of Egypt, great crouching monster amidst your Niles: who say, "The Niles are mine; it is I who made them!"

4 I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish of your Niles stick to your scales, then draw you up from the midst of your Niles along with all the fish of your Niles sticking to your scales.
5 I will cast you into the desert, you and all the fish of your Niles; you shall fall upon the open field, you shall not be taken up or buried; to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air
6 I give you as food, | that all who dwell in Egypt may know that I am the Lord. Because you have been a reed staff for the
7 house of Israel: | when they held you in hand, you splintered, throwing every shoulder out of joint; when they leaned on you,
8 you broke, bringing each one of them down headlong; | therefore thus says the Lord God: See! I will bring the sword against
9 you, and cut off from you both man and beast. The land of Egypt shall become a desolate waste; thus they shall know that I am the Lord.

Because you said, "The Niles are mine; it is I who made
10 them," | therefore see! I am coming at you and against your Niles; I will make the land of Egypt a waste and a desolation
11 from Magdol to Syene, and even to the frontier of Ethiopia. No foot of man or beast shall pass through it; they shall not pass
12 through it, and it will be uninhabited for forty years. I will make the land of Egypt the most desolate of lands, and its cities shall be the most deserted of cities for forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and strew them over foreign
13 lands. Yet thus says the Lord God. At the end of forty years I

29, 1: January 7, 587 B.C.

29, 3: *Niles:* the branches of the Nile in the Delta, besides, perhaps, the Nile canals.

29, 10: *From Magdol to Syene:* from north to south.

will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they
14 are scattered, | and I will restore Egypt's fortune, bringing them
back to the land of Phathures, the land of their origin, where it
15 will be the lowliest | of kingdoms, never more to set itself above
the nations. I will make them few, that they may not dominate
16 the nations. No longer shall they be for the house of Israel to
trust in, but the living reminder of its guilt for having turned
to follow after them. Thus they shall know that I am the Lord.

17 ***The Wages of Nabuchodonosor*** On the first day of the
first month in the twenty-seventh year, the word of the Lord
18 came to me: Son of man, Nabuchodonosor, the king of Babylon,
has led his army in an exhausting campaign against Tyre. Their
heads became bald and their shoulders were galled; but neither
he nor his army received any wages from Tyre for the campaign
19 he led against it. Therefore thus says the Lord God: I am now
giving the land of Egypt to Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon.
He shall carry off its riches, plundering and pillaging it for the
20 wages of his soldiers, who did it for me; as payment for his toil
I have given him the land of Egypt, says the Lord God.
21 On that day I will make a horn sprout for the house of Israel,
and I will cause you to speak out in their midst; thus they shall
know that I am the Lord.

30
1 ***The Day of the Lord against Egypt*** Thus the word of
2 the Lord came to me: | Son of man, speak this prophecy: Thus
3 says the Lord God: Cry, Oh, the day! | for near is the day,
near is the day of the Lord; a day of clouds, doomsday for the
4 nations shall it be. Then a sword shall come upon Egypt, and
anguish shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain fall in Egypt, when
5 her riches are seized and her foundations are overthrown. Ethio-
pia, Phut, Lud, all Arabia, Libya, and people of the allied terri-
6 tory shall fall by the sword with them. Those who support
Egypt shall fall, and down shall come her proud strength; from

29, 14: The Egyptians were imagined to originate from southern Egypt ("Phathures").

29, 17: April 26, 571 B.C. This is the latest dated oracle in the Book of Ezechiel.

29, 18: See 26, 14 n.

29, 19-21: The inspired prophet describes God giving His instrument, Nabuchodonosor, the conquest of Egypt (which took place 568) after the Babylonian failure to capture Tyre. "On that day" the Egyptian defeat will be a sign of new strength ("horn") "for the house of Israel" (v. 21). Scholars generally interpret this text as referring to the nation rather than to a Messianic figure.

Magdal to Syene they shall fall there by the sword, says the
7 Lord God. She shall be the most devastated of lands, and her
8 cities shall be the most desolate of all. Then they shall know that
I am the Lord, when I set fire to Egypt and when all who help
9 her are broken. On that day messengers shall hasten forth at
my command to terrify unsuspecting Ethiopia; they shall be in
anguish on the day of Egypt, which is surely coming.
10 Thus says the Lord God: I will put an end to the throngs
11 of Egypt by the hand of Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon. He
and his people with him, the most ruthless of nations, shall be
brought in to devastate the land. They shall draw their swords
12 against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. I will turn the
Niles into dry land and sell the land over to the power of the
wicked. The land and everything in it I will hand over to for-
eigners to devastate. I, the Lord, have spoken.
13 Thus says the Lord God: I will put an end to the great ones
of Memphis and the princes of the land of Egypt, that they may
be no more. I will cast fear into the land of Egypt, and dev-
14 astate Phathures. I will set fire to Tanis, and inflict punish-
15 ments on Thebes. I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium, Egypt's
16 stronghold, and cut down the crowds in Memphis. I will set
fire to Egypt; Syene shall writhe in anguish; Thebes shall be
17 breached and its walls shall be demolished. The young men of
On and of Bubastis shall fall by the sword, and the cities them-
18 selves shall go into captivity. In Tahpanhes the day shall be
darkened when I break the scepter of Egypt. Her haughty pride
shall cease from her, clouds shall cover her, and her daughters
19 shall go into captivity. Thus will I inflict punishments on Egypt,
that they may know that I am the Lord.

20 ***Pharao's Broken Arm*** On the seventh day of the first
month in the eleventh year, the word of the Lord came to me:
21 Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharao, the king of Egypt,
and see, it has not been bound up with bandages and healing
remedies that it may be strong enough to hold the sword. |
22 Therefore thus says the Lord God: See! I am coming at Pharao,
the king of Egypt. I will break his strong arm, so that the sword
23 drops from his hand. I will scatter the Egyptians among the

30, 10-12: See 29, 19-21 n.

30, 17: *On:* the native city of the father-in-law of Joseph the patriarch. *Bubastis:* the city was known for its cat-headed goddess, Bast.

30, 20: April 29, 587 B.C.

30, 21: *I have broken the arm of Pharao:* when Nabuchodonosor defeated Pharao Hophra during the siege of Jerusalem, Ezechiel saw the end of Egypt. See Jer 37, 7-12.

24 nations and strew them over foreign lands. But I will strengthen
the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand,
which he will bring against Egypt so as to plunder and pillage
25 it. [I will make the arms of the king of Babylon strong, but the
arms of Pharao shall drop.] Then they shall know that I am the
Lord, when I put my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon
26 for him to wield against the land of Egypt. [I will scatter the
Egyptians among the nations and strew them over foreign
lands.] Thus they shall know that I am the Lord.

31

1 ***Allegory of the Cypress*** On the first day of the third
month in the eleventh year, the word of the Lord came to me:
2 Son of man, say to Pharao, the king of Egypt, and to his hordes:
What are you like in your greatness?
3 Behold, a cypress [cedar] in Lebanon, beautiful of branch,
4 lofty of stature, amid the very clouds lifted its crest. | Waters
made it grow, the abyss made it flourish, sending its rivers round
where it was planted, turning its streams to all the trees of the
5 field. | Thus it grew taller than every other tree of the field,
6 and longer of branch because of the abundant water. | In its
boughs nested all the birds of the air, under its branches all
beasts of the field gave birth, in its shade dwelt numerous peo-
7 ples of every race. | It became beautiful and stately in its spread
of foliage, for its roots were turned toward abundant water. |
8 The cedars in the garden of God were not its equal, nor could
the fir trees match its boughs, neither were the plane trees like
its branches; no tree in the garden of God matched its beauty. |
9 I made it beautiful, with much foliage, the envy of all Eden's
trees in the garden of God.
10 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because it became lofty in
stature, raising its crest among the clouds, and because it be-
11 came proud in heart at its height, I have handed it over to the
mightiest of the nations, which has dealt with it in keeping with

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31, 1-18: By reverting to many Old Testament images, Ezechiel hyperbolically compares the splendor of Egypt to a world-wide cypress tree so splendid as to make it "the envy of all Eden's trees" (v. 9), its crest lifted up amid the very clouds and its roots made to flourish by the abundant waters of the "abyss" (vv. 3-5).

31, 1: June 21, 587 B.C.

31, 10-12: From the sacred writer's theological point of view, it is because Egypt's achievements were not attributed to Yahweh, that God punished Egypt through His instrument, the Babylonians. This section continues the theme explained in 29, 19-21 n.

31, 10: *Heart:* the allegory suffers literarily at times, e.g., when the cypress is given a "heart," but the sense is clear.

12 its wickedness. I humiliated it. Foreigners, the most ruthless o
the nations, cut it down and left it on the mountains. Its foliag
was brought low in all the valleys, its branches lay broken i
all the ravines of the land, and all the peoples of the land with
drew from its shade, abandoning it.
13 On its fallen trunk rested all the birds of the air, and by it
branches were all the beasts of the field.
14 Thus no tree may grow lofty in stature or raise its cres
among the clouds; no tree fed by water may stand by itsel
in its loftiness.
For all of them are destined for death, for the land below
for the company of mortals, those who go down into the pit
15 Thus says the Lord God: On the day he went down to th
nether world I made the abyss close up over him; I stopped it
streams so that the deep waters were held back. I cast gloon
over Lebanon because of him, so that all the trees in the lan
16 drooped on his account. At the crash of his fall I made the na
tions rock, when I cast him down to the nether world with thos
who go down into the pit. In the land below, all Eden's trees wer
consoled, Lebanon's choice and best, all that were fed by water
17 They too have come down with him to the nether world, to thos
slain by the sword; those who dwelt in his shade are dispersed
18 among the nations. Which was your equal in glory or siz
among the trees of Eden? Yet you have been brought dow
with the trees of Eden to the land below. You shall lie with th
uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword. Such are Phara
and all his hordes, says the Lord God.

32

1 ***Dirge over Pharao*** On the first day of the twelfth month
2 in the twelfth year, the word of the Lord came to me: Son o
man, utter a lament over Pharao, the king of Egypt, saying t
him: Lion of the nations, you are destroyed.
You were like a monster in the sea, spouting in your streams
stirring the water with your feet and churning its streams.
3 Thus says the Lord God: I will spread my net over you [with
4 a host of many nations], and draw you up in my seine. | I wil

31, 15-16: Lamenting nature here poetically shares in the fall of the cypress, Egypt.

31, 17-18: There seems to be an allusion to a myth of all Eden's trees (v. 16) descending into the nether world after the sin of man.

32, 1: March 3, 585 B.C.

32, 1-8: This dirge is a literary companion piece to 29, 1-7. The allusion is again to the primeval dragon myth; the dragon was slain by the Babylonian god, Marduk.

leave you on the land; on the open field I will cast you. I will
have all the birds of the air alight on you, and all the beasts of
5 the earth eat their fill of you. | I will leave your flesh on the
6 mountains, and fill the valleys with your carcass. | I will water
the land with what flows from you, and the river beds shall be
7 filled with your blood. | When I snuff you out I will cover the
heavens, and all their stars I will darken; the sun I will cover
8 with clouds, and the moon shall not give its light. | All the shin-
ing lights in the heavens I will darken on your account, and I will
spread darkness over your land, says the Lord God.
9 I will grieve the hearts of many peoples when I lead you cap-
10 tive among the nations, to lands which you do not know. Many
peoples shall be appalled at you, and their kings shall shudder
over you in horror when they see me brandish my sword, and
on the day of your downfall every one of them shall con-
11 tinuously tremble for his own life. | For thus says the Lord
God: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you.
12 I will cut down your horde with the blades of warriors, all
of them the most ruthless of the nations; they shall lay waste
13 the glory of Egypt, and all her hordes shall be destroyed. | I
will have all of her animals perish beside her abundant waters;
the foot of man shall stir them no longer, nor shall the hoof of
14 beast disturb them. | Then will I make their waters clear, and
their streams flow like oil, says the Lord God.
15 When I turn Egypt into a waste, the land shall be devastated
of all that is in it; when I strike all who live there, they shall
16 know that I am the Lord. This is a dirge, and it shall be sung:
the daughters of the nations shall chant it; over Egypt and all
its hordes shall they chant it, says the Lord God.

17 ***Dirge over Egypt*** On the fifteenth day of the first month
18 in the twelfth year, the word of the Lord came to me: Son of
man, lament over the throngs of Egypt, for the mighty nations
have thrust them down to the bottom of the earth, with those
20 who go down into the pit. In the midst of those slain by the sword
shall they fall, and place shall be made with them for all their
hordes. Then from the midst of the nether world, the mighty
19 warriors shall speak to Egypt: "Whom do you excel in beauty?

32, 7-8: These cosmic disturbances are literary filigree, commonly used when God's intervention is described, as here in the downfall of Egypt.

32, 17: April 27, 585.

32, 20-30: The "mighty warriors" of history scornfully greet the newcomer, Egypt, and they themselves pass in review.

21 Come down, you and your allies, lie with the uncircumcised,
with those slain by the sword."
22 There is Assyria with all her company, all of them slain,
23 whose graves have been made in the recesses of the pit; her
company is around Egypt's grave, all of them slain, fallen by
24 the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living. There is
Elam with all her throng about Egypt's grave, all of them slain,
fallen by the sword: they have gone down uncircumcised to the
bottom of the earth, who spread their terror in the land of the
living, and they bear their disgrace with those who go down
25.26 into the pit; in the midst of the slain they are placed. There
are Mosoch and Thubal and all their throng about her grave,
all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, for they spread
their terror in the land of the living.
27 They do not lie with the mighty men fallen of old, who went
down to the nether world with their weapons of war, whose
swords were placed under their heads and whose shields were
laid over their bones, though the mighty men caused terror in
28 the land of the living. But in the midst of the uncircumcised
shall you lie, with those slain by the sword.
29 There are Edom, her kings, and all her princes, who despite
their might have been placed with those slain by the sword; with
the uncircumcised they lie, and with those who go down into the
30 pit. There are all the princes of the north and all the Sidonians,
who have gone down with the slain, because of the terror their
might inspired; they lie uncircumcised with those slain by the
sword and bear their disgrace with those who go down to the
31 pit. When Pharao sees these, he shall be comforted for all his
hordes slain by the sword—Pharao and all his army, says the
32 Lord God. Since he spread his terror in the land of the living,
therefore is he laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those
slain by the sword—Pharao and all his hordes, says the Lord
God.

IV. SALVATION FOR ISRAEL

33

1 ***The Prophet a Watchman*** Thus the word of the Lord
2 came to me: Son of man, speak thus to your countrymen: When
I bring the sword against a country, and the people of this coun-

32, 26-27: *Mosoch and Thubal:* the nations of the north, who "do not lie with the mighty men fallen of old," legendary prehistoric heroes.
32, 30: *Princes of the north:* the Phoenicians and undefined other nations north of Palestine.
33, 1-20: A general repetition of 3, 17-21. See 18, 1-32 n.

3 try select one of their number to be their watchman, | and the
watchman, seeing the sword coming against the country, blows
4 the trumpet to warn the people, | anyone hearing but not heed-
ing the warning of the trumpet and therefore slain by the sword
that comes against him, shall be responsible for his own death.
5 He heard the trumpet blast yet refused to take warning; he is
responsible for his own death, for had he taken warning he
6 would have escaped with his life. But if the watchman sees the
sword coming and fails to blow the warning trumpet, so that
the sword comes and takes anyone, I will hold the watchman
responsible for that person's death, even though that person
is taken because of his own sin.
7 You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of
Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for
8 me. If I tell the wicked man that he shall surely die, and you do
not speak out to dissuade the wicked man from his way, he
[the wicked man] shall die for his guilt, but I will hold you
9 responsible for his death. But if you warn the wicked man, try-
ing to turn him from his way, and he refuses to turn from his
way, he shall die for his guilt, but you shall save yourself.

10 ***Individual Retribution*** As for you, son of man, speak to
the house of Israel: You people say, "Our crimes and our sins
weigh us down; we are rotting away because of them. How can
11 we survive?" | Answer them: As I live, says the Lord God, I
swear I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but
rather in the wicked man's conversion, that he may live. Turn,
turn from your evil ways! Why should you die, O house of
Israel?
12 As for you, son of man, tell your countrymen: The virtue
which a man has practiced will not save him on the day that
he sins; neither will the wickedness that a man has done bring
about his downfall on the day that he turns from his wickedness
13 [nor can the virtuous man, when he sins, remain alive]. Though
I say to the virtuous man that he shall surely live, if he then pre-
sumes on his virtue and does wrong, none of his virtuous deeds
shall be remembered; because of the wrong he has done, he shall
14 die. And though I say to the wicked man that he shall surely die,
if he turns away from his sin and does what is right and just, |
15 giving back pledges, restoring stolen goods, living by the statutes
that bring life, and doing no wrong, he shall surely live, he shall
16 not die. None of the sins he committed shall be held against him;
he has done what is right and just, he shall surely live.
17 Yet your countrymen say, "The way of the Lord is not fair!";
18 but it is their way that is not fair. When a virtuous man turns

19 away from what is right and does wrong, he shall die for it. But
when a wicked man turns away from wickedness and does what
20 is right and just, because of this he shall live. | And still you
say, "The way of the Lord is not fair!"? I will judge every one of
you according to his ways, O house of Israel.

21 ***The Fugitive from Jerusalem*** On the fifth day of the
tenth month, in the twelfth year of our exile, the fugitive came
22 to me from Jerusalem and said, "The city is taken!" The hand
of the Lord had come upon me the evening before the fugitive
arrived, and he opened my mouth when the fugitive reached
me in the morning. My mouth was opened, and I was dumb no
longer.

23 ***The Survivors in Juda*** Thus the word of the Lord came
24 to me: Son of man, they who live in the ruins on the land of
Israel reason thus: "Abraham, though but a single individual,
received possession of the land; we, therefore, being many, have
as permanent possession the land that has been given to us." |
25 Give them this answer: Thus says the Lord God: You eat on the
mountains, you raise your eyes to your idols, you shed blood—
26 yet you would keep possession of the land? You rely on your
sword, you do abominable things, each one of you defiles his
neighbor's wife—yet you would keep possession of the land?
27 Tell them this: Thus says the Lord God: As I live, those who
are in the ruins I swear shall fall by the sword; those who
are in the open field I have given to the wild beasts for food;
and those who are in fastnesses and in caves shall die by the
28 plague. I will make the land a desolate waste, so that its proud
strength will come to an end, and the mountains of Israel shall
29 be so desolate that no one will cross them. Thus they shall know
that I am the Lord, when I make the land a desolate waste be-
cause of all the abominable things they have done.

30 ***The Prophet's False Popularity*** As for you, son of man,
your countrymen are talking about you along the walls and in

33, 21: January 585 B.C. (In Jer 39, 2 the date of Jerusalem's fall is July 587.) *Twelfth year:* some manuscripts read "eleventh" year (January 586). It ordinarily took four months to travel the five hundred fifty miles from Babylon to Jerusalem.

33, 22: *The fugitive:* this is the fugitive spoken of in 24, 26.

33, 23-29: On the occasion of the fugitive's arrival (v. 21), Ezechiel prophesies that the new Israel will belong to the exiles, not to those remaining in Juda. See 11, 14-21 for the same notion.

33, 30-33: The exiles believed Ezechiel more now that his prophecies

the doorways of houses. They say to one another, "Come and
31 hear the latest word that comes from the Lord." My people
come to you as people always do; they sit down before you
and hear your words, but they will not obey them, for lies are
32 on their lips and their desires are fixed on dishonest gain. For
them you are only a ballad singer, with a pleasant voice and a
clever touch. They listen to your words, but they will not obey
33 them. But when it comes—and it is surely coming!—they shall
know that there was a prophet among them.

34

1 ***Parable of the Shepherds*** Thus the word of the Lord
2 came to me: Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of
Israel, in these words prophesy to them [to the shepherds]:
Thus says the Lord God: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who
have been pasturing themselves! Should not shepherds, rather,
3 pasture sheep? You have fed off their milk, worn their wool,
and slaughtered the fatlings, but the sheep you have not pas-
4 tured. You did not strengthen the weak nor heal the sick nor
bind up the injured. You did not bring back the strayed nor
seek the lost, but you lorded it over them harshly and brutally.
5 So they were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and became food
6 for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered | and wandered
over all the mountains and high hills; my sheep were scattered
over the whole earth, with no one to look after them or to search
for them.
7.8 Therefore, shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As I live,
says the Lord God, because my sheep have been given over to
pillage, and because my sheep have become food for every wild
beast, for lack of a shepherd; because my shepherds did not look
after my sheep, but pastured themselves and did not pasture my
9 sheep; because of this, shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:
10 Thus says the Lord God: I swear I am coming against these
shepherds. I will claim my sheep from them and put a stop to
their shepherding my sheep so that they may no longer pasture
themselves. I will save my sheep, that they may no longer be
food for their mouths.
11 For thus says the Lord God: I myself will look after and tend
12 my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself

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of Jerusalem's fall had come true, but they still did not put into practice what he preached. They will learn only after the impenitent people will be punished.

34, 1-16: This passage is similar to Jer 23, 1ff.

34, 2: *Shepherds:* a common biblical and ancient Near Eastern term for leaders and kings of the people.

among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue
them from every place where they were scattered when it was
13 cloudy and dark. I will lead them out from among the peoples
and gather them from the foreign lands; I will bring them back
to their own country and pasture them upon the mountains of
14 Israel [in the land's ravines and all its inhabited places]. In
good pastures will I pasture them, and on the mountain heights
of Israel shall be their grazing ground. There they shall lie down
on good grazing ground, and in rich pastures shall they be pas-
15 tured on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep;
16 I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will
seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up,
the sick I will heal [but the sleek and the strong I will destroy],
shepherding them rightly.

17 ***Separation of the Sheep*** As for you, my sheep, says the
Lord God, I will judge between one sheep and another, between
18 rams and goats. Was it not enough for you to graze on the best
pasture, that you had to trample the rest of your pastures with
your feet? Was is not enough for you to drink the clearest water,
19 that you had to foul the remainder with your feet? Thus my
sheep had to graze on what your feet had trampled and drink
20 what your feet had fouled. | Therefore thus says the Lord
21 God: Now will I judge between the fat and the lean sheep. Be-
cause you push with side and shoulder, and butt all the weak
22 sheep with your horns until you have driven them out, I will
save my sheep so that they may no longer be despoiled, and I
23 will judge between one sheep and another. I will appoint one
shepherd over them to pasture them, my servant David; he
24 shall pasture them and be their shepherd. I, the Lord, will be
their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them.
I, the Lord, have spoken.
25 I will make a covenant of peace with them, and rid the coun-
try of ravenous beasts, that they may dwell securely in the desert
26 and sleep in the forests. I will place them about my hill, sending
27 rain in due season, rains that shall be a blessing to them. The

34, 23-24: Ezechiel foretells a postexilic ruler in Israel's national restoration who will be a good shepherd and not like the kings of the past (34, 1ff). The new David will rule under God (see vv. 10ff) as in the days of the historical David. The actual fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus, who was also God Himself, went beyond Ezechiel's thought.

34, 25-31: An ideal description of the new era of peace and prosperity. The peace is described as that existing in paradise before the fall, where animals and men lived in harmony as in Is 11, 6-9. All these were stylized descriptions of the Messianic era.

trees of the field shall bear their fruits, and the land its crops,
and they shall dwell securely on their own soil. Thus they
shall know that I am the Lord when I break the bonds of
their yoke and free them from the power of those who en-
28 slaved them. They shall no longer be despoiled by the nations or
devoured by beasts of the earth, but shall dwell secure, with no
29 one to frighten them. I will prepare for them peaceful fields for
planting; they shall no longer be carried off by famine in the
30 land, or bear the reproaches of the nations. Thus they shall
know that I, the Lord, am their God, and they are my people,
31 the house of Israel, says the Lord God. [You, my sheep, you are
the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord
God.]

35

1 ***Against Edom*** Thus the word of the Lord came to me:
2 Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy
3 against it. Say to it: Thus says the Lord God: See! I am coming
at you, Mount Seir. I will stretch out my hand against you and
4 make you a desolate waste. Your cities I will turn into ruins, and
you shall be a waste; thus you shall know that I am the Lord.
5 Because you never let die your hatred for the Israelites, whom
you delivered over to the power of the sword at the time of
6 their trouble, when their crimes came to an end, | therefore, as
I live, says the Lord God, you have been guilty of blood, and
7 blood, I swear, shall pursue you. I will make Mount Seir a
8 desolate waste, and cut off from it any traveler. With the slain
I will fill your hills, your valleys, and all your ravines [in them
9 the slain shall fall by the sword]: desolate will I make you for-
ever, and leave your cities without inhabitants; thus you shall
know that I am the Lord.
10 Because you said: The two nations and the two lands have
become mine; we shall possess them—although the Lord was
11 there— | therefore, as I live, says the Lord God, I will deal
with you according to your anger and your envy which you have
exercised [in your hatred] against them. I will make myself
12 known among you when I judge you, and you shall know that
I am the Lord.
I have heard all the contemptuous things you have uttered

35, 1-15: The Edomites, the age-old enemy of the Israelites, helped the Babylonians at the fall of Jerusalem and, after it, they encroached on Juda's southern territory. It is because of this context that the oracle against Edom is placed here.

35, 10: This may reflect Edom's unfulfilled desire of conquering the northern and southern kingdoms of Palestine.

against the mountains of Israel: "They are desolate, they have
13 been given us to devour." I have heard the insolent and wild
14 words you have spoken against me. Thus says the Lord God:
Just as you rejoiced over my land because it was desolate, so will
15 I do to you. In keeping with your glee over the devastation of
the inheritance of the house of Israel, so will I treat you. A
waste shall you be, Mount Seir, you and the whole of Edom.
Thus they shall know that I am the Lord.

36

1 ***Regeneration of the Land*** As for you, son of man,
prophesy to the mountains of Israel: Mountains of Israel, hear
2 the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God: Because the
enemy has said of you, "Ha! the everlasting heights have be-
3 come our possession" [therefore prophesy in these words: Thus
says the Lord God:]; because you have been ridiculed and
despised on all sides for having become a possession for the rest
of the nations, and have become a byword and a popular jeer;
4 therefore, mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord: [Thus
says the Lord God to the mountains and hills, the ravines and
valleys, the desolate ruins and abandoned cities, which have
been given over to the pillage and mockery of the remaining
5 nations round about; | therefore thus says the Lord God:]
Truly, with burning jealousy I speak against the rest of the na-
tions [and against all of Edom] who with wholehearted joy
and utter contempt have considered my land their possession to
6 be delivered over to plunder. [Therefore, prophesy concerning
the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and hills, the ravines
and valleys: Thus says the Lord God:] With jealous fury I
speak, because you have borne the reproach of the nations.
7 Therefore do I solemnly swear that your neighboring nations
should bear their own reproach.
8 As for you, mountains of Israel, you shall grow branches
and bear fruit for my people Israel, for they shall soon return.
9 See, I come to you, it is to you that I turn; you will be tilled
10 and sown, | and I will settle crowds of men upon you, the whole
11 house of Israel; cities shall be repeopled, and ruins rebuilt. I will
settle crowds of men and beasts upon you, to multiply and be
fruitful. I will repeople you as in the past, and be more generous
to you than in the beginning; thus you shall know that I am the
Lord.
12 [My people Israel are the ones whom I will have walk upon
you; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their
heritage. Never again shall you rob them of their children.]

13 Thus says the Lord God: Because they have said of you, "You
are a land that devours men, and you rob your people of their
14 children"; therefore, never again shall you devour men or rob
15 your people of their children, says the Lord God. No more will
I permit you to hear the reproach of nations, or bear insults from
peoples, or rob your people of their children, says the Lord God.

16 ***Regeneration of the People*** Thus the word of the Lord
17 came to me: Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their
land, they defiled it by their conduct and deeds. In my sight
their conduct was like the defilement of a menstruous woman.
18 Therefore I poured out my fury upon them [because of the
blood which they poured out on the ground, and because they
19 defiled it with idols]. I scattered them among the nations, dis-
persing them over foreign lands; according to their conduct and
20 deeds I judged them. But when they came among the nations
[wherever they came], they served to profane my holy name,
because it was said of them: "These are the people of the Lord,
21 yet they had to leave their land." So I have relented because of
my holy name which the house of Israel profaned among the
22 nations where they came. Therefore say to the house of Israel:
Thus says the Lord God: Not for your sakes do I act, house of
Israel, but for the sake of my holy name, which you profaned
23 among the nations to which you came. I will prove the holiness
of my great name, profaned among the nations, in whose midst
you have profaned it. Thus the nations shall know that I am the
Lord, says the Lord God, when in their sight I prove my holiness
24 through you. For I will take you away from among the nations,
gather you from all the foreign lands, and bring you back to
25 your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse
you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will
26 cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit
within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and
27 giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and
make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees.
28 You shall live in the land I gave your fathers; you shall be my
29 people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your
impurities; I will order the grain to be abundant, and I will not
30 send famine against you. I will increase the fruit on your trees
and the crops in your fields; thus you shall no longer bear

36, 13: *A land that devours men:* through internecine wars.

36, 23-26: Parts of this section on the rebirth of the nation are used in the Introit of the Vigil of Pentecost, and applied to the baptismal rebirth through water.

36, 26: *A new heart:* as in Jer 31, 33.

31 among the nations the reproach of famine. Then you shall remember your evil conduct, and that your deeds were not good;
you shall loathe yourselves for your sins and your abominations
32 Not for your sakes do I act, says the Lord God—let this be known to you! Be ashamed and abashed because of your conduct, O house of Israel.
33 Thus says the Lord God: When I purify you from all your crimes, I will repeople the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt;
34 the desolate land shall be tilled, which was formerly a waste-
35 land exposed to the gaze of every passer-by. "This desolate land has been made into a garden of Eden," they shall say. "The cities that were in ruins, laid waste, and destroyed are now repeopled
36 and fortified." Thus the neighboring nations that remain shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt what was destroyed and replanted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have promised, and I will do it.
37 Thus says the Lord God: This also I will be persuaded to do
38 for the house of Israel: to multiply them like sheep. As with sacrificial sheep, the sheep of Jerusalem on its feast days, the cities which were in ruins shall be filled with flocks of men; thus they shall know that I am the Lord.

37

1 ***Vision of the Dry Bones*** The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he led me out in the spirit of the Lord and set me
2 in the center of the plain, which was now filled with bones. He made me walk among them in every direction so that I saw how many they were on the surface of the plain. How dry they were!
3 | He asked me: Son of man, can these bones come to life? "Lord
4 God," I answered, "you alone know that." | Then he said to me: Prophesy over these bones, and say to them: Dry bones,
5 hear the word of the Lord! | Thus says the Lord God to these bones: See! I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to
6 life. I will put sinews upon you, make flesh grow over you, cover you with skin, and put spirit in you so that you may come to life

37, 1-14: Since the exiles were losing hope of returning to the fatherland, Ezechiel describes, in perhaps an imaginary vision, the graveyard of dead bones as symbolic of the national and political dead bones of Israel in exile. This hopeless task throws into relief the fact that nothing is impossible with God who will resurrect Israel to a new national life. Therefore this has nothing to do with a bodily resurrection at the end of the world.

Ezechiel's most impressive scene is found in the frescoes of a third century A.D. synagogue at Dura-Europos on the Euphrates River. The scene also influenced a famous Negro spiritual. Compare T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," which alludes to the scattered bones of the Ego.

7 and know that I am the Lord. I prophesied as I had been told,
and even as I was prophesying I heard a noise; it was a rattling
8 as the bones came together, bone joining bone. I saw the sinews
and the flesh come upon them, and the skin cover them, but
9 there was no spirit in them. Then he said to me: Prophesy to the
spirit, prophesy, son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus says
the Lord God: From the four winds come, O spirit, and breathe
10 into these slain that they may come to life. I prophesied as he
told me, and the spirit came into them; they came alive and
11 stood upright, a vast army. | Then he said to me: Son of man,
these bones are the whole house of Israel. They have been say-
ing, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut
12 off." | Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the
Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you
13 rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then
you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves
14 and have you rise from them, O my people! I will put my spirit
in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land;
thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I
will do it, says the Lord.

15 ***The Two Sticks*** Thus the word of the Lord came to me:
16 Now, son of man, take a single stick, and write on it: Juda and
those Israelites who are associated with him. Then take another
stick and write on it: Joseph [the stick of Ephraim] and all the
17 house of Israel associated with him. Then join the two sticks
18 together, so that they form one stick in your hand. | When
your countrymen ask you, "Will you not tell us what you mean
19 by all this?", | answer them: Thus says the Lord God: [I will
take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and
of the tribes of Israel associated with him, and I will join to it
the stick of Juda, making them a single stick; they shall be one
20 in my hand. The sticks on which you write you shall hold up
21 before them to see. | Tell them: Thus speaks the Lord God:]
I will take the Israelites from among the nations to which they
have come, and gather them from all sides to bring them back
22 to their land. I will make them one nation upon the land, in the
mountains of Israel, and there shall be one prince for them all.

37, 15-28: The prophecy of the political reunion of the northern and southern kingdoms, as in David and Solomon's day, can hardly be said to have ever been fulfilled politically. The reunion may probably be explained as fulfilled in New Testament times in a spiritual reunion made available by the Church to all the Jews and to the rest of the world. This reunion went far beyond the dreams of all the prophets who foretold the reunion of the two kingdoms.

Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall
they be divided into two kingdoms.
23 No longer shall they defile themselves with their idols, their
abominations, and all their transgressions. I will deliver them
from all their sins of apostasy, and cleanse them so that they
24 may be my people and I may be their God. My servant David
shall be prince over them, and there shall be one shepherd for
them all; they shall live by my statutes and carefully observe my
25 decrees. They shall live on the land which I gave to my servant
Jacob, the land where their fathers lived; they shall live on it
forever, they, and their children, and their children's children,
26 with my servant David their prince forever. I will make with
them a covenant of peace; it shall be an everlasting covenant
with them, and I will multiply them, and put my sanctuary
27 among them forever. My dwelling shall be with them; I will be
28 their God, and they shall be my people. Thus the nations shall
know that it is I, the Lord, who makes Israel holy, when my
sanctuary shall be set up among them forever.

38

1 ***First Prophecy against Gog*** Thus the word of the Lord
2 came to me: Son of man, turn toward Gog [the land of Magog],
the chief prince of Mosoch and Thubal, and prophesy against
3 him: Thus says the Lord God: See! I am coming at you, Gog,

37, 24-25: This Messianic text on "my servant David" means the same as the preceding one. See 34, 23-24 n.

37, 26: *An everlasting covenant:* this refers to the same new alliance as in Jer 31, 31-33.

38—39: Either during or after the Babylonian exile, the Jews were smarting under the loss of Yahweh's reputation ("name"). In the eyes of the neighboring pagan nations, Yahweh was powerless to prevent the exile and the subsequent loss of Jewish political independence. To console the Jews, this prophecy was written by Ezechiel or by another inspired prophet. It is also an incipient apocalypse as Is 24—27. The main question is: when will this consolation take place? Experts agree that chs. 38—39 suppose a peaceful postexilic restoration phase (38, 11f). But is the inspired writer speaking of a second complementary phase when God will make His people triumph over all the nations? If so, the meaning of triumph in this opinion would have strong political overtones. The New Testament times would make it clear that the triumph was a spiritual one. Or, does the second phase refer to the end of the world when the struggle between the forces of evil (Antichrist) will oppose God?

38, 2-6: *Gog:* scholars tend to think of Gog not as a definite historical person but as a symbolic name for all the forces of evil, a prototype of Antichrist. *Mosoch and Thubal:* these Black Sea countries, besides Gomer and Beth-Thogorma (v. 6) were known to the Hebrews as existing in the farthest "recesses of the north," the traditional origin of invasions.

4 chief prince of Mosoch and Thubal. I will lead you forth with
all your army, horses and riders all handsomely outfitted, a
great horde with bucklers and shields, all of them carrying
5 swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Phut with them [all with shields
6 and helmets], | Gomer with all its troops, Beth-Thogorma from
the recesses of the north with all its troops, many peoples with
7 you. Prepare yourself, be ready, you and all your horde assem-
8 bled about you, and be at my disposal. After many days you
will be mustered [in the last years you will come] against a na-
tion which has survived the sword, which has been assembled
from many peoples [on the mountains of Israel which were long
a ruin], which has been brought forth from among the peoples
9 and all of whom now dwell in security. You shall come up
like a sudden storm, advancing like a cloud to cover the earth,
you and all your troops and the many peoples with you.
10 Thus says the Lord God: At that time thoughts shall arise
11 in your mind, and you shall devise an evil scheme: "I will go up
against a land of open villages and attack the peaceful people
who are living in security, all of them living without walls,
12 having neither bars nor gates, | to plunder and pillage, turning
my hand against the ruins that were repeopled and against a
people gathered from the nations, a people concerned with cattle
13 and goods, who dwell at the navel of the earth." Saba and
Dedan, the merchants of Tharsis and all her young lions shall
ask you: "Is it for plunder that you have come? Is it for pillage
that you have summoned your horde, to carry off silver and
gold, to take away cattle and goods, to seize much plunder?"
17 Thus says the Lord God: It is of you that I spoke in ancient
times through my servants, the prophets of Israel, who proph-
18 esied in those days that I would bring you against them. But on
that day, the day when Gog invades the land of Israel, says the
19 Lord God, my fury shall be aroused. In my anger | and in my
jealousy, in my fiery wrath, I swear: On that day there shall be a
20 great shaking upon the land of Israel. Before me shall tremble
the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, the beasts of the field
and all the reptiles that crawl upon the ground, and all men
who are on the land. Mountains shall be overturned, and cliffs
21 shall tumble, and every wall shall fall to the ground. Against
him I will summon every terror, says the Lord God, every man's
sword against his brother. I will hold judgment with him in
22 pestilence and bloodshed; flooding rain and hailstones, fire and

38, 12: Many ancient peoples thought that they lived at the earth's center ("navel"). See 5, 5.

38, 13: *Saba and Dedan:* places in Arabia.

brimstone, I will rain upon him, upon his troops, and upon the
23 many peoples with him. I will prove my greatness and holiness
and make myself known in the sight of many nations; thus
they shall know that I am the Lord.

14 *Second Prophecy against Gog* Therefore prophesy, son
of man, and say to Gog: Thus says the Lord God: When my
people Israel are dwelling in security, will you not bestir your-
15 self | and come from your home in the recesses of the north, you
and many peoples with you, all mounted on horses, a great horde
16 and a mighty army? You shall come up against my people Is-
rael like a cloud covering the land. In the last days I will bring
you against my land, that the nations may know of me, when
in their sight I prove my holiness through you, O Gog.

39

1 *Third Prophecy against Gog* Now, son of man, prophesy
against Gog in these words: Thus says the Lord God: See! I
2 am coming at you, Gog, chief prince of Mosoch and Thubal. I
will turn you about, I will urge you on, and I will make you
come up from the recesses of the north; I will lead you against
3 the mountains of Israel. Then I will strike the bow from your
4 left hand, and make the arrows drop from your right. Upon the
mountains of Israel you shall fall, you and all your troops and
the peoples who are with you. To birds of prey of every kind
5 and to the wild beasts I am giving you to be eaten. On the open
field you shall fall, for I have decreed it, says the Lord God.
6 I will send fire upon Magog and upon those who live securely
7 in the coastlands; thus they shall know that I am the Lord. I
will make my holy name known among my people Israel; I will
no longer allow my holy name to be profaned. Thus the nations
8 shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. Yes, it is
coming and shall be fulfilled, says the Lord God. This is the
day I have decreed.
9 Then shall those who live in the cities of Israel go out and
burn weapons: [shields and bucklers,] bows and arrows, clubs
and lances; for seven years they shall make fires with them.
10 They shall not have to bring in wood from the fields or cut it
down in the forests, for they shall make fires with the weapons.
Thus they shall plunder those who plundered them and pillage
those who pillaged them, says the Lord God.
11 On that day I will give Gog for his tomb a well-known place

39, 11: *The valley of Abarim:* mountains east of the Jordan River. *Hamon-Gog:* it means "the horde of God."

in Israel, the valley of Abarim east of the sea [it is blocked to travelers]. Gog shall be buried there with all his horde, and it
12 shall be named "Valley of Hamon-Gog." To purify the land,
13 the house of Israel shall need seven months to bury them. All the people of the land shall bury them and gain renown for it,
14 when I reveal my glory, says the Lord God. Men shall be permanently employed to pass through the land burying those who lie unburied, so as to purify the land. For seven months they
15 shall keep searching. When they pass through, should they see a human bone, let them put up a marker beside it, until others
16 have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-Gog. [Also the name of the city shall be Hamona.] Thus the land shall be purified.
17 As for you, son of man, says the Lord God, say to birds of every kind and to all the wild beasts: Come together, from all sides gather for the slaughter I am about to provide for you, a
18 great slaughter on the mountains of Israel: you shall have flesh to eat and blood to drink. You shall eat the flesh of warriors and drink the blood of the princes of the land [rams, lambs,
19 and goats, bullocks, fatlings of Basan, all of them]. From the slaughter which I will provide for you, you shall eat fat until
20 you are filled and drink blood until you are drunk. You shall be filled at my table with horses and riders, with warriors and soldiers of every kind, says the Lord God.

21 ***Israel's Return*** Thus I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see the judgment I have exe-
22 cuted and the hand I have laid upon them. From that day forward the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord, their
23 God. The nations shall know that because of its sins the house of Israel went into exile; for they transgressed against me, and I hid my face from them and handed them over to their foes,
24 so that all of them fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and their transgressions I dealt with them, hiding my face from them.
25 Therefore, thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have pity on the whole house of Israel,
26 and I will be jealous for my holy name. They shall forget their disgrace and all the times they broke faith with me, when they
27 live in security on their land with no one to frighten them. When I bring them back from among the peoples, I will gather them from the lands of their enemies, and will prove my holiness
28 through them in the sight of many nations. Thus they shall know that I, the Lord, am their God, since I who exiled them among the nations, will gather them back on their land, not
29 leaving any of them behind. No longer will I hide my face from

them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord God.

V. THE NEW ISRAEL

THE NEW TEMPLE

40

1 ***The Man with a Measure*** On the tenth day of the month beginning the twenty-fifth year of our exile, fourteen years after the city was taken, that very day the hand of the Lord
2 came upon me and brought me | in divine visions to the land of Israel, where he set me down on a very high mountain. On
3 it there seemed to be a city being built before me. When he had brought me there, all at once I saw a man whose appearance was that of bronze; he was standing in the gate, holding a linen
4 cord and a measuring rod. | The man said to me, "Son of man, look carefully and listen intently, and pay strict attention to all that I will show you, for you have been brought here so that I might show it to you. Tell the house of Israel all that you see."
5 [Then I saw an outer wall that completely surrounded the temple. The man was holding a measuring rod six cubits long, each cubit being a cubit and a handbreadth; he measured the width and the height of the structure, each of which were found to be one rod.]

6 ***The East Gate*** Then he went to the gate which faced the east, climbed its steps, and measured the gate's threshold, which
7 was found to be a rod wide. The cells were a rod long and a rod wide, and the pilasters between the cells measured five cubits. The threshold of the gate adjoining the vestibule of the gate
8 toward the inside measured one rod. He measured the vestibule
9 of the gate, which was eight cubits, and its pilasters, which were two cubits. The vestibule of the gate was toward the inside. |

40—48: See 8-11 n. Here, too, it is difficult to determine whether this is a real vision or a literary one. The final part of Ezechiel's book is called the "Tora," i.e., the ideal program of sanctity as seen through Jewish spectacles. Most of the "vision" is allotted to the Jerusalem temple, but the ideal boundaries and other features of the postexilic utopian commonwealth are described. The fulfillment of "sanctity" as preached by Christ exceeded the noblest ideals of Ezechiel.

40, 1: April 28, 573 B.C.

40, 5: *A cubit and a handbreadth:* the "ordinary" cubit consisted of six handbreadths; the "great" cubit, of seven. In measuring the temple, a rod six great cubits long was used. The ordinary cubit was about one and a half feet, or, more exactly, 17.5 inches; the large cubit, 20.4 inches.

10 The cells of the east gate were three on either side, of equal size,
11 and the pilasters on either side were also of equal size. He measured the gate's entrance, which was ten cubits wide, while
12 the width of the gate's passage itself was thirteen cubits. The border before each of the cells on both sides was one cubit; the cells themselves were six cubits on either side, from opening to
13 opening. He measured the gate from the back wall of one cell to the back wall of the cell on the opposite side: the width was
14 twenty-five cubits. He measured the vestibule, which was twenty-five cubits. The pilasters adjoining the court on either
15 side were six cubits. The length of the gate from the front entrance to the front of the vestibule on the inside was fifty cubits.
16 Within the gateway on both sides there were splayed windows let into the cells [and into their pilasters]; likewise, within the vestibule on both sides there were windows. The pilasters were decorated with palms.

17 ***The Outer Court*** Then he brought me to the outer court, where there were chambers and a pavement. The pavement was laid all around the court, and the chambers, which were on the
18 pavement, were thirty in number. The pavement lay alongside the gates, as wide as the gates were long; this was the lower
19 pavement. He measured the width of the court from the front of the lower gate to the front of the inner gate; it was one hundred cubits between them.

20 ***The North Gate*** Then he proceeded north, | where, on the outer court, there was a gate facing north, whose length and
21 width he measured. Its cells, three on either side, its pilasters, and its vestibule had the same measurements as those of the first gate; it was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide.
22 Its windows, the windows of its vestibule, and its palm decorations were of the same proportions as those of the gate facing the east. Seven steps led up to it, and its vestibule was toward
23 the inside. The inner court had a gate opposite the north gate, just as the east gate; he measured one hundred cubits from one gate to the other.

24 ***The South Gate*** Then he led me south, to where there was a southern gate, whose cells, pilasters, and vestibule he meas-
25 ured; they were the same size as the others. The gate and its vestibule had windows on both sides, like the other windows.

40, 17: *The outer court:* this refers to the court outside the temple area proper.

26 It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. It was as-
cended by seven steps; its vestibule was toward the inside; and
27 it was decorated with palms here and there on its pilasters. The
inner court also had a southern gate; from gate to gate he
measured one hundred cubits.

28 *Gates of the Inner Court* Then he brought me to the
inner court by the south gate, where he measured the south
29 gate. Its dimensions were the same as the others; its cells, its
pilasters, and its vestibule were the same size as the others. The
gate and its vestibule had windows on both sides; and it was
31 fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. But its vestibule
was toward the outer court; palms were on its pilasters, and it
32 had a stairway of eight steps. Then he brought me to the gate
facing the east, where he measured the gate, whose dimensions
33 were found to be the same. Its cells, its pilasters, and its vestibule
were the same size as the others; the gate and its vestibule had
windows on both sides; it was fifty cubits long and twenty-five
34 cubits wide. But its vestibule was toward the outer court; palms
were on its pilasters here and there, and it had a stairway of
35 eight steps. Then he brought me to the north gate, where he
36 measured the dimensions | of its cells, its pilasters, and its
vestibule, and found them the same. The gate and its vestibule
had windows on both sides; it was fifty cubits long and twenty
37 five cubits wide. Its vestibule was toward the outer court; palms
were on its pilasters here and there, and it had a stairway of
eight steps.

38 *Side Rooms* There was a chamber opening off the vesti-
39 bule of the gate, where the holocausts were rinsed. In the ves-
tibule of the gate there were two tables on either side, on which
40 were slaughtered the sin offerings and guilt offerings. Along
the wall of the vestibule, but outside, near the entrance of the
north gate, were two tables, and on the other side of the vesti-
41 bule of the gate there were two tables. There were four tables
on either side of the gate [eight tables], on which the sacrifices
42 were slaughtered. There were four tables for holocausts, made
of cut stone, one and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits
43 wide, and one cubit high. The ledges, a handbreadth wide, were
set on the inside all around, and on them were laid the instru-
ments with which the holocausts were slaughtered. On the tables
44 themselves the flesh was laid. He then led me to the inner court
where there were two chambers, one beside the north gate, fac-
ing south, and the other beside the south gate, facing north.
45 He said to me, "This chamber which faces south is for the

priests who have charge of the temple, and the chamber which
46 faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar. These
are the Sadocites, the only Levites who may come near to minis-
47 ter to the Lord." Then he measured the court, which was a hun-
dred cubits long and a hundred cubits wide, a perfect square.
The altar stood in front of the temple.

48 ***The Temple Building*** Then he brought me into the vesti-
bule of the temple and measured the pilasters on each side,
which were five cubits. The width of the doorway was fourteen
cubits, and the side walls on either side of the door measured
49 three cubits. The vestibule was twenty cubits wide and twelve
cubits deep; ten steps led up to it, and there were columns by
the pilasters, one on either side.

41

1 Then he brought me to the nave and measured the pilasters,
2 which were six cubits thick on either side. The width of the
entrance was ten cubits, and the walls at either side of it meas-
ured five cubits each. He measured the length of the nave, which
was found to be forty cubits, while its width was twenty.
3 Then he went in beyond and measured the pilasters flanking
that entrance, which were two cubits; the width of the entrance
was six cubits, and the walls at either side of it extended seven
4 cubits each. He measured the space beyond the nave, twenty
cubits long and twenty cubits wide, and said to me, "This is the
holy of holies."
5 Then he measured the wall of the temple, which was six
cubits thick; the side chambers, which extended all the way
6 around the temple, had a width of four cubits. There were thirty
side chambers built one above the other in three stories, and
there were offsets in the outside wall of the temple that enclosed
the side chambers; these served as supports, so that there were
7 no supports in the temple wall proper. There was a broad circu-
lar passageway that led upward to the side chambers, for the
temple was enclosed all the way around and all the way up-
ward; therefore the temple had a broad way running upward
so that one could pass from the lowest to the middle and the

40, 46: The descendants of the priestly line of Sadoc are called "Sadocites."

40, 48—41, 15: This description adheres to the description of Solomon's temple in 3 Kgs 6.

40, 49—41, 4: *Vestibule . . . nave . . . holy of holies:* the three divisions of the temple progress from the less holy section to the holiest. See 3 Kgs 6, 1 n.

8 highest story. About the temple was a raised pavement com
pletely enclosing it—the foundations of the side chambers—
9 full rod of six cubits in extent. The width of the outside wa
which enclosed the side chambers was five cubits. Between th
10 side chambers of the temple | and the chambers of the cou
was an open space twenty cubits wide going all around the tem
11 ple. The side chambers had entrances to the open space, one en
trance on the north and another on the south. The width of th
12 wall surrounding the open space was five cubits. The buildin
fronting the free area on the west side was seventy cubits fro
to back; the wall of the building was five cubits thick all aroun
13 and it measured ninety cubits from side to side. He measure
the temple, which was one hundred cubits long. The free are
together with the building and its walls, was a hundred cubi
14 in length. The façade of the temple, along with the free area, o
15 the east side, was one hundred cubits wide. He measured th
building which lay the length of the free area and behind i
and together with its walls on both sides it was one hundre
cubits.

Interior of the Temple The inner nave and the outer ves
16 tibule | were paneled with precious wood all around, covere
from the ground to the windows. There were splayed window
17 with trellises about them [facing the threshold]. As high as th
lintel of the door, even into the interior part of the temple a
well as outside, on every wall on every side in both the inne
18 and outer rooms were carved | the figures of cherubim an
palmtrees: a palmtree between every two cherubim. Each cheru
19 had two faces: | a man's face looking at a palmtree on on
side, and a lion's face looking at a palmtree on the other; thu
they were figured on every side throughout the whole temple
20 From the ground to the lintel of the door the cherubim an
21 palmtrees were carved on the walls. | The way into the nav
was a square doorframe. In front of the holy place was some
22 thing that looked like | a wooden altar, three cubits in heigh
two cubits long, and two cubits wide. It had corners, and it
base and sides were of wood. He said to me, "This is the tabl
23 which is before the Lord." The nave had a double door, and als
24 the holy place had | a double door. Each door had two movabl
leaves; two leaves were on one doorjamb and two on the othe

41, 12: *The building:* there is no explanation of the function of th
building behind the temple.

41, 22: *A wooden altar:* the altar of incense, which stood at the en
of the nave and at the entrance to the "holy of holies."

25 Carved upon them [on the doors of the nave] were cherubim
and palmtrees, like those carved on the walls. Before the vesti-
26 bule outside was a wooden lattice. | There were splayed win-
dows [and palmtrees] on both side walls of the vestibule, and
the side chambers of the temple. . . .

42

1 ***Other Structures*** Then he led me north to the outer court,
bringing me to some chambers on the north that lay across the
free area and which were also across from the building. Their
length was a hundred cubits on the north side, and they were
3 fifty cubits wide. Across the twenty cubits of the inner court
and the pavement of the outer court, there were three parallel
4 rows of them on different levels. In front of the chambers, to the
inside, was a walk ten cubits broad and a wall of one cubit;
5 but the entrances of the chambers were on the north. The outer-
most chambers were the lowest, for the system of levels set them
at a level lower than the closest chambers and those in between;
6 for they were in three rows and had no foundations to conform
with the foundations of the courts, therefore they were on a
lower terrace of the ground than the closest and the middle
7 chambers. On the far side there was a wall running parallel to
the chambers along the outer court; its length before these
8 chambers was fifty cubits, for the length of the chambers be-
longing to the outer court was fifty cubits, but along its entire
9 length the wall measured one hundred cubits. Below these
chambers there was the way in from the east, so that one could
10 enter from the outer court | where the wall of the court began.
To the south along the side of the free area and the building
11 there were also chambers, before which was a passage. These
looked like the chambers to the north, just as long and just as
12 wide, with the same exits and plan and entrances. Below
the chambers to the south there was an entrance at the beginning
of the way which led to the back wall, by which one could
13 enter from the east. He said to me, "The north and south
chambers which border on the free area are the sanctuary
chambers; here the priests who draw near to the Lord shall eat
the most sacred meals, and here they shall keep the most sacred
offerings: cereal offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings; for
14 it is a holy place. When the priests have once entered, they shall
not leave the holy place for the outer court until they have left

42, 5-6: The three rows of identical chambers, since they rested on different ground levels, necessarily had roofs on correspondingly different levels.

here the clothing in which they ministered, for it is holy. The
shall put on other garments, and then approach the plac
destined for the people."

13 *Measuring the Outer Court* When he had finished mea
uring the inner temple area, he brought me out by way of th
gate which faces east and measured all the limits of the court
16 He measured the east side: five hundred cubits by his measurin
17 rod. Then he turned | and measured the north side: five hun
18 dred cubits by the measuring rod. He turned | to the south an
19 measured five hundred cubits by the measuring rod. Then h
turned to the west and measured five hundred cubits by th
20 measuring rod. Thus he measured it in the four directions, fiv
hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits wide. It was sur
rounded by a wall, to separate the sacred from the profane.

RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE

43

1 *The Return of the Lord* Then he led me to the gat
2 which faces the east, and there I saw the glory of the God o
Israel coming from the east. I heard a sound like the roaring o
3 many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. The visio
was like that which I had seen when he came to destroy th
city, and like that which I had seen by the river Chobar. I fel
4 prone | as the glory of the Lord entered the temple by way o
5 the gate which faces the east, but spirit lifted me up and brough
me to the inner court. And I saw that the temple was fille
6 with the glory of the Lord. Then I heard someone speaking t
7 me from the temple, while the man stood beside me. | Th
voice said to me: Son of man, this is where my throne shall be
this is where I will set the soles of my feet; here I will dwel
among the Israelites forever. Never again shall they and thei
kings profane my holy name with their harlotries and with th
8 corpses of their kings [their high places]. When they place
their threshold against my threshold and their doorpost next t
mine, so that only a wall was between us, they profaned my
holy name by their abominable deeds; therefore I consume

43, 1-2: The prophet sees Yahweh's grand entrance through the eas
gate to take possession of the ideal temple.

43, 3: A reference to 1, 1.

43, 8-9: *They placed their threshold against my threshold:* th
Judean kings had their palace buildings so close to the temple that th
latter became almost a private chapel in which pagan rites were cele
brated. The new temple will be separated from the royal palaces.

9 them in my wrath. From now on they shall put far from me
their harlotry and the corpses of their kings, and I will dwell in
their midst forever.

10 ***The Law of the Temple*** As for you, son of man, de-
scribe the temple to the house of Israel [that they may be
ashamed of their sins], both its measurements and its design;
11 [and if they are ashamed of all that they have done,] make
known to them the form and design of the temple, its exits and
entrances, all its statutes and laws; write these down for them
to see, that they may carefully observe all its laws and statutes.
12 This is the law of the temple: its whole surrounding area on the
mountain top shall be most sacred.

13 ***The Altar*** These were the measurements of the altar in
cubits of one cubit plus a handbreadth. Its base was one cubit
high and one cubit deep, with a rim around its edge of one
14 span. The height of the altar itself was as follows: from its
base at the bottom up to the lower ledge it was two cubits high,
and this ledge was one cubit deep; from the lower to the upper
ledge it was four cubits high, and this ledge also was one
15 cubit deep; the hearth of the altar was four cubits high, and
extending from the top of the hearth were the four horns of the
16 altar. The hearth was a square: twelve cubits long and twelve
17 cubits wide. The upper ledge was also a square: fourteen cubits
long and fourteen cubits wide. The lower ledge, likewise a
square, was sixteen cubits long and sixteen cubits wide, with a
half-cubit rim surrounding it. And there was a base of one
cubit all around. The steps of the altar face the east.
18 Then he said to me: Son of man, thus says the Lord God:
These are the statutes for the altar when it is set up for the
offering of holocausts upon it and for the sprinkling of blood
19 against it. Give a young bull as a sin offering to the priests, the
Levites who are of the line of Sadoc, who draw near me to
20 minister to me, says the Lord God. Take some of its blood and
put it on the four horns of the altar, and on the four corners of
the ledge, and on the rim all around. Thus you shall purify it
21 and make atonement for it. Then take the bull of the sin offer-
ing, which is to be burnt in a designated part of the temple,
22 outside the sanctuary. On the second day present an unblemished

43, 13: *The altar:* of holocausts, in the inner court of the temple area.

43, 15: *Four horns of the altar:* Phoenicians, Arabs, and Greeks also had "horned" altars.

he-goat as a sin offering, to purify the altar as was done wit
23 the bull. When you have finished the purification, bring a
unblemished young bull and an unblemished ram from the flock
24 | and present them before the Lord; the priests shall strew
25 salt on them and offer them to the Lord as holocausts. Dail
for seven days you shall offer a he-goat as a sin offering, and
young bull and a ram from the flock, all unblemished, shall b
26 offered | for seven days. Thus atonement shall be made for th
27 altar, and it shall be purified and dedicated. And when thes
days are over, from the eighth day on, the priests shall offe
your holocausts and peace offerings on the altar. Then I wi
accept you, says the Lord God.

44

1 ***The Closed Gate*** Then he brought me back to the oute
2 gate of the sanctuary, facing the east; but it was closed. | H
said to me: This gate is to remain closed; it is not to be opene
for anyone to enter by it; since the Lord, the God of Israel, ha
3 entered by it, it shall remain closed. Only the prince may s
down in it to eat his meal in the presence of the Lord. He mu
enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and leave by the sam
way.

THE NEW LAW

4 ***Admission to the Temple*** Then he brought me by wa
of the north gate to the façade of the temple, and when I looke
I saw the glory of the Lord filling the Lord's temple, and I fe
5 prone. Then he said to me: Son of man, pay strict attentio
look carefully, and listen intently to all that I will tell yo
about the statutes and laws of the Lord's temple; be attentiv
in regard to those who are to be admitted to the temple and a
6 those who are to be excluded from the sanctuary. Say to thi
rebellious house, the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord Goc
Enough of all these abominations of yours, O house of Israe
7 You have admitted foreigners, uncircumcised both in heart an
flesh, to my sanctuary to profane it when you offered me foo

44, 2: The closed outer gate on the eastern side means that Yahwe entered the temple once and for all and will not leave it again. Th Fathers of the Church accommodated this text to the perpetual virgini of Mary. The biblical text cannot be used as an argument in favor c Mary's perpetual virginity, but the testimony of the Fathers forms a vali argument of tradition in favor of Mary's perpetual virginity.

44, 7-9: In the new temple the Levites will execute humble servic which foreigners performed in the pre-exilic temple.

fat, and blood; thus you have broken my covenant by all your
8 abominations. Instead of caring for the service of my temple,
you have appointed such as these to serve me in my sanctuary
9 in your stead. | Thus says the Lord God: No foreigners, uncir-
cumcised in heart and in flesh, shall ever enter my sanctuary;
none of the foreigners who live among the Israelites.

10 ***Levites*** But as for the Levites who departed from me when
Israel strayed from me to pursue their idols, they shall bear the
11 consequences of their sin. They shall serve in my sanctuary as
gatekeepers and temple servants; they shall slaughter the holo-
causts and the sacrifices for the people, and they shall stand
12 before the people to minister for them. Because they used to
minister for them before their idols, and became an occasion of
sin to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn an oath against
them, says the Lord God: they shall bear the consequences of
13 their sin. They shall no longer draw near me to serve as my
priests, nor shall they touch any of my sacred things, or the
most sacred things. Thus they shall bear their disgrace because
14 of all their abominable deeds. But I will set them to the service
of the temple, for all its work and for everything that is to be
done in it.

15 ***Priests*** As for the Levitical priests, however, the Sadocites
who cared for my sanctuary when the Israelites strayed from
me, they shall draw near me to minister to me, and they shall
stand before me to offer me fat and blood, says the Lord God.
16 It is they who shall enter my sanctuary, they who shall approach
my table to minister to me, and they who shall carry out my
17 service. Whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, they
shall wear linen garments; they shall not put on anything woolen
when they minister at the gates of the inner court or within the
18 temple. They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen
drawers on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any-
19 thing that causes sweat. When they are to go out to the people
in the outer court, they shall take off the garments in which
they ministered and leave them in the chambers of the sanctuary,
putting on other garments; thus they will not transmit holiness
to the people with their garments.
20 They shall not shave their heads nor let their hair hang loose,

44, 10-14: In the new temple Levites were to be demoted to perform menial temple tasks in punishment for their participation in pagan practices at the sanctuaries throughout the land. This regulation was apparently carried out after the exile, because we learn from Esd 8, 15-20 that relatively few Levites wanted to return to Jerusalem.

21 but they shall keep their hair carefully trimmed. No priest shall
22 drink wine when he is to enter the inner court. They shall not take for their wives either widows or divorced women, but only virgins of the race of Israel; however, they may marry women
23 who are the widows of priests. They shall teach my people to distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and make known to them the difference between the clean and the unclean.
24 In capital cases they shall stand as judges, judging them according to my decrees. They shall observe my laws and statutes on all my festivals, and keep my Sabbaths holy.
25 They shall not make themselves unclean by coming near any dead person, unless it be their father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or maiden sister; for these they may make themselves
26 unclean. After a priest has been cleansed, he must wait an
27 additional seven days, and on the day he enters the inner court to minister in the sanctuary, he shall present his sin offering,
28 says the Lord God. They shall have no inheritance, for I am their inheritance; you shall give them no property in Israel, for
29 I am their property. They shall eat the cereal offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; whatever is under the ban in
30 Israel shall be theirs. All the choicest first fruits of every kind, and all the best of your offerings of every kind, shall belong to the priests; likewise the best of your dough you shall give to the
31 priests to bring a blessing down upon your house. The priests shall not eat anything, whether flesh or fowl, that has died of itself or has been killed by wild beasts.

45

1 ***The Sacred Tract*** When you apportion the land into inheritances, you shall set apart a sacred tract of land for the Lord, twenty-five thousand cubits long and twenty thousand
2 wide; its whole area shall be sacred. Of this land a square plot, five hundred by five hundred cubits, surrounded by a free space
3 of fifty cubits, shall be assigned to the sanctuary. Also from this sector measure off a strip, twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide, within which shall be the sanctuary, the holy
4 of holies. This shall be the sacred part of the land belonging to the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who draw near to minister to the Lord; it shall be a place for their homes and
5 pasture land for their cattle. Also there shall be a strip twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide as property for the Levites, the ministers of the temple, that they may have
6 cities to live in. As property of the City you shall designate a

44, 29: *Under the ban:* consecrated to God.

strip five thousand cubits wide and twenty-five thousand long,
parallel to the sacred tract; this shall belong to the whole house
7 of Israel. The prince shall have a section bordering on both
sides of the combined sacred tract and City property, extending
westward on the western side and eastward on the eastern side,
corresponding in length to one of the tribal portions from the
8 western boundary to the eastern boundary | of the land. This
shall be his property in Israel, so that the princes of Israel will
no longer oppress my people, but will leave the land to the
house of Israel according to their tribes.

9 ***Weights and Measures*** Thus says the Lord God: Enough,
you princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and do
what is right and just! Stop evicting my people! says the Lord
10 God. You shall have honest scales, an honest epha, and an
11 honest bath. The epha and the bath shall be of the same size: the
bath equal to a tenth of a homor, and the epha equal to a tenth
12 of a homor; by the homor they shall be determined. The shekel
shall be twenty geras. Twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, plus
fifteen shekels shall be your mina.

13 ***Offerings*** These are the offerings you shall make: one sixth
of an epha from each homor of wheat, and one sixth of an epha
14 from each homor of barley. The regulation for oil: for every
bath of oil, a tenth of a bath, computed by the kor of ten baths
15 [or a homor, for ten baths make a homor]. One sheep from
the flock for every two hundred from the pasturage of Israel,
for sacrifice—holocausts and peace offerings and atonement
16 sacrifices, says the Lord God. All the people of the land shall be
17 bound to this offering [for the prince in Israel]. It shall be the
duty of the prince to provide the holocausts, cereal offerings,
and libations on the feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths, on all the
festivals of the house of Israel. He shall offer the sin offerings,
cereal offerings, holocausts, and peace offerings, to make atone-
ment on behalf of the house of Israel.

45, 10-12: *Epha:* a dry measure. *Bath:* a liquid measure; here they are standardized according to the "homor" (a dry measure of about ten bushels, or eighty gallons). In v. 12, reference is made to the change in value of the "mina"; before the exile it was valued at fifty shekels, but afterward, in imitation of Babylonian practice, the sixty-shekel mina was adopted. The shekel was a unit of weight slightly less than half an ounce. As a monetary unit, the value obviously differed greatly, depending on whether it was a gold or a silver shekel.

45, 14: *Kor:* both a liquid and a dry measure corresponding to the homor.

18 ***The Passover*** Thus says the Lord God: On the first day
of the first month you shall use an unblemished young bull as
19 a sacrifice to purify the sanctuary. Then the priest shall take
some of the blood from the sin offering and put it on the door-
posts of the temple, on the four corners of the ledge of the
altar, and on the doorposts of the gates of the inner court.
20 You shall repeat this on the first day of the seventh month for
those who have sinned through inadvertence or ignorance;
21 thus you shall make atonement for the temple. On the four-
teenth day of the first month you shall observe the feast of the
22 Passover; for seven days unleavened bread is to be eaten. On
that day the prince shall offer on his own behalf, and on behalf
23 of all the people of the land, a bull as a sin offering. On each
of the seven days of the feast he shall offer as a holocaust to the
Lord seven bulls and seven rams without blemish, and as a sin
24 offering he shall offer one male goat each day. As a cereal offer-
ing he shall offer one epha for each bull and one epha for
each ram; and he shall offer one hin of oil for each epha.

25 ***The Feast of Booths*** On the fifteenth day of the seventh
month, the feast day, and for seven days, he shall perform the
same rites, making the same sin offerings, the same holocausts,
the same cereal offerings and offerings of oil.

46

1 ***Sabbaths*** Thus says the Lord God: The gate toward the
east of the inner court shall remain closed throughout the six
working days, but on the Sabbath and on the day of the new
2 moon it shall be open. The prince shall enter from outside by
way of the vestibule of the gate and remain standing at the
doorpost of the gate; then while the priests offer his holocausts
and peace offerings, he shall worship at the threshold of the
gate and then leave; the gate shall not be closed until evening.
3 The people of the land shall worship before the Lord at the
4 door of this gate on the Sabbaths and new moons. The holo-
causts which the prince presents to the Lord on the Sabbath
shall consist of six unblemished lambs and an unblemished
5 ram, together with a cereal offering of one epha for the ram,
whatever he pleases for the lambs, and a hin of oil for each
6 epha. On the day of the new moon he shall provide an un-
blemished young bull, also six lambs and a ram without blemish,
7 with a cereal offering of one epha for the bull and one for the

45, 24: *Him:* the sixth part of a bath.

ram, for the lambs as much as he has at hand, and for each epha a hin of oil.

8 ***Ritual Laws*** The prince shall always enter and depart by
9 the vestibule of the gate. When the people of the land enter the presence of the Lord to worship on the festivals, if they enter by the north gate they shall leave by the south gate, and if they enter by the south gate they shall leave by the north gate; no one shall return by the gate through which he has entered, but
10 he shall leave by the opposite gate. The prince shall be in their midst when they enter, and he shall also leave with them.
11 On the feasts and festivals the cereal offering shall be an epha for a bull, an epha for a ram, but for the lambs as much as one
12 pleases, and a hin of oil with each epha. When the prince makes a freewill offering to the Lord, whether holocausts or peace offerings, the eastern gate shall be opened for him, and he shall offer his holocausts or his peace offerings as on the Sabbath; then he shall leave, and the gate shall be closed after his
13 departure. He shall offer as a daily holocaust to the Lord an unblemished yearling lamb; this he shall offer every morning.
14 With it every morning he shall provide as a cereal offering one sixth of an epha, with a third of a hin of oil to moisten the fine flour. This cereal offering to the Lord is mandatory with the
15 established holocaust. The lamb, the cereal offering, and the oil are to be offered every morning as an established holocaust.

16 ***The Prince and the Land*** Thus says the Lord God: If the prince makes a gift of part of his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons; that property is theirs by in-
17 heritance. But if he makes a gift of part of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall belong to the latter only until the year of release, when it shall revert to the prince. Only the
18 inheritance given to his sons is permanent. | The prince shall not seize any part of the inheritance of the people by evicting them from their property. He shall provide an inheritance for his sons from his own property, so that none of my people will be driven from their property.

19 ***The Temple Kitchens*** Then he brought me by the entrance which is on the side of the gate to the chambers [of the sanctuary, reserved to the priests] which face the north. There, at
20 their west end, I saw a place, | concerning which he said to

46, 17: *The year of release:* the jubilee year.
46, 20: A repetition from 42, 13 regarding the use of these chambers.

me, "Here the priests cook the guilt offerings and the sin offerings, and bake the cereal offerings, so that they do not have to take them into the outer court at the risk of transmitting holiness
21 to the people." Then he led me into the outer court and had me pass around the four corners of the court, and I saw that in each
22 corner there was another court: in the four corners of the court minor courts, forty cubits long and thirty wide, all four of them
23 the same size. A wall of stones surrounded each of the four and hearths were built beneath the stones all the way around
24 | He said to me, "These are the kitchens where the temple ministers cook the sacrifices of the people."

47

1 *The Wonderful Stream* Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water flowing out from beneath the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the façade of the temple was toward the east; the water flowed down from the southern side of the temple, south of the altar.
2 He led me outside by the north gate, and around to the outer gate facing the east, where I saw water trickling from the
3 southern side. Then when he had walked off to the east with a measuring cord in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and had me wade through the water, which was ankle-deep.
4 He measured off another thousand and once more had me wade through the water, which was now knee-deep. Again he measured off a thousand and had me wade; the water was up to
5 my waist. Once more he measured off a thousand, but there was now a river through which I could not wade; for the water had risen so high it had become a river that could not be crossed
6 except by swimming. | He asked me, "Have you seen this, son of man?" Then he brought me to the bank of the river,
7 where he had me sit. Along the bank of the river I saw very
8 many trees on both sides. | He said to me, "This water flows into the eastern district down upon the Araba, and empties
9 into the sea, the salt waters, which it makes fresh. Wherever the river flows, every sort of living creature that can multiply

47, 1-12: The stream flows from the temple and through the whole land. It gives life wherever it flows. The stream empties into the Dead Sea (v. 8) and fecundates it with the life and fishes of the Mediterranean Sea ("Great Sea" v. 10). This stream is a symbol of the life forces flowing from Yahweh in His temple to all the parts of His land. The motif of the life-giving river is seen also in Joel (see Jl 4, 18 n) and Ap 22, 1f.

47, 9: The formula for the Easter blessing of water in the Roman Liturgy is inspired from this text.

shall live, and there shall be abundant fish, for wherever this
10 water comes the sea shall be made fresh. Fisherman shall be
standing along it from En-gaddi to En-gallim, spreading their
nets there. Its kinds of fish shall be like those of the Great Sea,
11 very numerous. Only its marshes and swamps shall not be made
12 fresh; they shall be left for salt. Along both banks of the river,
fruit trees of every kind shall grow; their leaves shall not fade,
nor their fruit fail. Every month they shall bear fresh fruit, for
they shall be watered by the flow from the sanctuary. Their
fruit shall serve for food, and their leaves for medicine."

THE NEW ISRAEL

13 ***Boundaries of the Land*** Thus says the Lord God: These
are the boundaries within which you shall apportion the land
14 among the twelve tribes of Israel [Joseph having two portions].
All of you shall have a like portion in this land which I swore
to give to your fathers, that it might fall to you as your inherit-
15 ance. This is the boundary of the land on the north side: from
the Great Sea in the direction of Hethalon, past Labo of Hamath,
16 to Sedada, | Berotha, and Sabarim, along the frontiers of
Hamath and Damascus, to Hasar-Enon which is on the border
17 of the Hauran. Thus the border shall extend from the sea to
Hasar-Enon, with the frontier of Hamath and Damascus to
18 the north. This is the northern boundary. The eastern boundary:
between the Hauran—toward Damascus—and Galaad on the
one side, and the land of Israel on the other side, the Jordan
shall form the boundary down to the eastern sea as far as
19 Thamar. This is the eastern boundary. | The southern boun-
dary: from Thamar to the waters of Meribath-Cades, thence to
the Wadi of Egypt, and on to the Great Sea. This is the south-
20 ern boundary. The western boundary: the Great Sea forms the
boundary up to a point parallel to Labo of Hamath. This is the
western boundary.

21 ***The Northern Portions*** You shall distribute this land
22 among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You shall
allot it as inheritances for yourselves and for the aliens resident
in your midst who have bred children among you. The latter
shall be to you like native Israelites; along with you they shall

47, 10: *From En-gaddi:* halfway down the western shore of the Dead Sea. *To En-gallim*: at the northern tip of the Dead Sea.
47, 13-20: The boundaries of the new Israel follow closely those of David's kingdom at its fullest extent.

23 receive inheritances among the tribes of Israel. In whatever
tribe the alien may be resident, there you shall assign him his
inheritance, says the Lord God.

48

1 This is the list of the tribes. Dan: at the northern extremity,
adjoining Hamath, all along from the approaches to Hethalon
through Labo of Hamath to Hasar-Enon, on the northerly
border with Damascus, with his possession reaching from the
2 eastern to the western boundary. Aser: on the frontier of Dan,
3 from the eastern to the western boundary. Nephthali: on the
frontier of Aser, from the eastern to the western boundary.
4 Manasse: on the frontier of Nephthali, from the eastern to the
5 western boundary. Ephraim: on the frontier of Manasse, from
6 the eastern to the western boundary. Ruben: on the frontier of
7 Ephraim, from the eastern to the western boundary. Juda: on
the frontier of Ruben, from the eastern to the western boundary.

8 ***The Sacred Tract*** On the frontier of Juda, from the east-
ern to the western boundary there shall be the tract which you
shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits from north to south,
and as wide as one of the tribal portions from the eastern
to the western boundary. In the center of the tract shall be the
9 sanctuary. The tract that you set aside for the Lord shall be
twenty-five thousand cubits across by twenty thousand north
10 and south. In this sacred tract the priests shall have twenty-five
thousand cubits on the north, ten thousand on the west, ten
thousand on the east, and twenty-five thousand on the south;
11 and the sanctuary of the Lord shall be in its center. The con-
secrated priests, the Sadocites, who fulfilled my service and did
12 not stray along with the Israelites as the Levites did, shall have
within this tract of land their own most sacred domain, next to
13 the territory of the Levites. The Levites shall have a territory
corresponding to that of the priests, twenty-five thousand cubits
by ten thousand. The whole tract shall be twenty-five thousand
14 cubits across and twenty thousand north and south. They may
not sell or exchange or alienate this, the best part of the land,
15 for it is sacred to the Lord. The remaining five thousand cubits
along the twenty-five-thousand-cubit line are profane land,
assigned to the City for dwellings and pasture; the City shall be
16 at their center. These are the dimensions of the City: the north

48, 1-29: The distribution of the land among the tribes is theoreti-
cal or ideal, for it disregards geography and relative size of popula-

side, forty-five hundred cubits; the south side, forty-five hundred cubits; the east side, forty-five hundred cubits; and the west side,
17 forty-five hundred cubits. The pasture lands of the City shall extend north two hundred and fifty cubits, south two hundred and fifty cubits, east two hundred and fifty cubits, and west
18 two hundred and fifty cubits. There shall remain an area along the sacred tract, ten thousand cubits to the east and ten thousand to the west, whose produce shall provide food for the workers
19 of the City. The workers in the City shall be taken from all the
20 tribes of Israel. The entire tract shall be twenty-five thousand by twenty-five thousand cubits; as a perfect square you shall set apart the sacred tract together with the City property.
21 The remainder shall belong to the prince: the land on both sides of the sacred tract and the City property, extending from along the twenty-five-thousand-cubit line eastward to the eastern boundary, and westward from along the twenty-five-thousand-cubit line to the western boundary, a territory parallel with the tribal portions for the prince. The sacred tract and the sanctuary
22 of the temple shall be in the middle. Thus, except for the property of the Levites and the City property, which lie in the midst of the prince's property, the territory between the portions of Juda and of Benjamin shall belong to the prince.

23 ***The Southern Portions*** These are the remaining tribes. Benjamin: from the eastern to the western boundary. Simeon:
24 on the frontier of Benjamin, from the eastern to the western
25 boundary. Issachar: on the frontier of Simeon, from the eastern
26 to the western boundary. Zabulon: on the frontier of Issachar,
27 from the eastern to the western boundary. Gad: on the frontier
28 of Zabulon, from the eastern to the western boundary. Along the frontier of Gad shall be the southern boundary, which shall extend from Thamar to the waters of Meribath-Cades, and from there to the Wadi of Egypt, and on to the Great Sea.
29 Such is the land which you shall apportion as inheritances among the tribes of Israel, and these are their portions, says the Lord God.

The Gates of the City These are the exits of the City,
30 | the gates of which are named after the tribes of Israel. On
31 the north side, measuring forty-five hundred cubits, there shall be three gates: the gate of Ruben, the gate of Juda, and the gate
32 of Levi. On the east side, measuring forty-five hundred cubits, there shall be three gates: the gate of Joseph, the gate of
33 Benjamin, and the gate of Dan. On the south side, measuring forty-five hundred cubits, there shall be three gates: the gate

of Simeon, the gate of Issachar, and the gate of Zabulon.
34 On the west side, measuring forty-five hundred cubits, there
shall be three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Aser, and the
35 gate of Nephthali. The perimeter of the City is eighteen thou-
sand cubits. The name of the City shall henceforth be "The
Lord is here."

48, 35: The city's new name symbolizes its new importance and epitomizes the whole prophecy of the New Israel (chs. 40—48).

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Daniel takes its name from an unknown Jewish hero who lived in the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. Actually, the book was written by an anonymous Jew who ascribed the book to the national hero, Daniel, according to the accepted literary device of pseudepigraphy. He may have found the stories about Daniel, or written them himself during the time of persecution by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Syrian king who was bent on Hellenizing the Jews. Since the author fails to mention the purification of the Jerusalem temple on December 25, 164 B.C., he must have written before that date. Hence, the date of the writing is often given as 167-164.

The narrations about Daniel's personal persecutions by different Babylonian kings (chs. 1—6) were intended to make persecuted Jews of the second century put themselves in Daniel's trying situations and draw encouragement from these stories. In the refusal of the youths to eat unclean food (ch. 1), in the refusal to adore Nabuchodonosor's statue (ch. 3) and in Daniel's refusal to stop adoring God (ch. 6), the miraculous escape from death was a symbol of reward promised to faithful followers. This lesson in the face of idolatry is applicable to persecuted Christians of any age.

Most modern authors describe chs. 1—6 as *haggadoth*, the technical Hebrew literary form known as edifying religious stories. They are often compared to stories of Christian martyrs. These stories were common in the Hellenistic world. The author enshrines an edifying lesson within an interesting folkloristic tale. Hence, in chs. 1—6 the stress is not on history but on monotheism and on courage in the face of apostasy.

A brief historical background to Daniel seems imperative. In 175 B.C., Antiochus IV Epiphanes usurped the Seleucid dynastic throne of Syria. As a man, he was gifted and cultured; as a ruler, capable. On the international scene, his main rival was the Egyptian empire ruled by the Ptolemies. The spreading power of Rome he sought to contain. To consolidate his heterogeneous empire, Antiochus wanted to Hellenize it. Hence, the more backward peoples were, the more should they conform to Greek ways. But the Jews subjected to him were divided. Many of the priests and aristocrats were sympathetic to Hellenization like their coreligionists living abroad. But the poorer classes, headed by the Hasidim of the Nehemias-Esdras strict traditions, opposed foreign influence of any sort as infidelity to the Mosaic Law.

The two books of Machabees show graphically how the Machabees and their followers answered with the sword the religious persecution of Antiochus (the first religious persecution in recorded history). The author of Daniel answered with the pen by exhortation to resistance through fidelity and, if necessary, even martyrdom. The second part of Daniel (chs. 7—12) is entirely different. It comprises four apocalyptic visions. Apocalyptic means revelatory of what God did in the past, is

doing in the present, and will do in the future. Like the earlier prophets the apocalyptists claim to be communicating the will of God. Whereas the former were chiefly concerned with contemporary affairs, namely warning, condemning or consoling the men of their time, the latter lay far greater (not exclusive) stress on the future. They stress a catastrophe that will end the present state of things and inaugurate a new era, i.e. all the apocalypses are concerned with eschatology: a definitive end to the existing world order, and the establishment, in one form or another of the Kingdom of God. Thus, prophecy is the genus, apocalypse is its species. It concerns an end-time. A writer before the exile speaks of eschatological end-time, i.e., the restoration after the exile. A writer after the exile speaks of eschatological end-time, i.e., the Messianic era. The end of the world is a Greek, not a Hebrew, idea. Earlier specimens of this literary form are found in Ezechiel, e.g., chs. 38—39, and in the visions of Zacharia, chs. 1—8; in fact, the whole movement has its roots in the doctrine of the Day of Yahweh, which is already familiar to Amos (see Am 5, 18-20 n). But with Daniel, apocalyptic literature reaches its full development. No successor surpasses him till St. John's apocalypse.

Concerning chs. 7—12, the traditional view attributed this section to the sixth century Daniel predicting events from his day to the second century B.C. Nowadays moderns interpret these chapters as an apocalypse by a second century writer who impressively teaches past and present history in the literary dress of prophecies revealed by God. When speaking of the sixth century Babylonian era, he refers to customs of the late Persian and early Greek eras. He did not deceive his audience any more than a writer today were he to "prophesy" the events of World War I, II, and the Korean War, becoming more specific in the naming of men and places as he approaches his own time.

The following are some characteristics of an apocalypse:

1. Pseudonymity. (The New Testament Apocalypse is an exception.) The work has been put under the patronage of some great personage of the past: Adam, Moses, Daniel, etc. The course of history is then presented as a revelation made to the speaker (he is usually warned to keep it secret), and is followed down to the Judgment and the End-time now close at hand.

2. The vision form. In contrast to the Spirit of Yahweh speaking interiorly in a true prophecy, the "revelation" comes through a vision the meaning of which is then explained by an angel.

3. Extensive use of standardized symbols and numbers.

The popularity which the Book of Daniel enjoyed in the art of the catacombs and then in Renaissance art has found its manifestation in the Roman liturgy. Daniel's popularity today continues in the oratorios of Handel, Walton, and in the revival of the twelfth century Latin musical drama, "The Play of Daniel."

Main divisions of the Book of Daniel are:

1. Stories of Daniel and the Kings of Babylon, 1—6
2. Daniel's Visions, 7—12
3. Appendix: Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, 13—14

I. DANIEL AND THE KINGS OF BABYLON

1

1 ***The Food Test*** In the third year of the reign of Joakim,
king of Juda, king Nabuchodonosor of Babylon came and laid
2 siege to Jerusalem. The Lord handed over to him Joakim, king
of Juda, and some of the vessels of the temple of God, which
he carried off to the land of Senaar, and placed in the temple
treasury of his god.
3 The king told Asphenaz, his chief chamberlain, to bring in
some of the Israelites of royal blood and of the nobility, |
4 young men without any defect, handsome, intelligent and wise,
quick to learn, and prudent in judgment, such as could take
their place in the king's palace; they were to be taught the
5 language and literature of the Chaldeans; after three years'
training they were to enter the king's service. The king allotted
them a daily portion of food and wine from the royal table.
6 Among these were men of Juda: Daniel, Anania, Misael, and
7 Azaria. The chief chamberlain changed their names: Daniel to
Baltassar, Anania to Sidrach, Misael to Misach, and Azaria to
Abdenago.
8 But Daniel was resolved not to defile himself with the king's
food or wine; so he begged the chief chamberlain to spare him
9 this defilement. Though God had given Daniel the favor and
10 sympathy of the chief chamberlain, he nevertheless said to
Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king; it is he who allotted
your food and drink. If he sees that you look wretched by com-
parison with the other young men of your age, you will
11 endanger my life with the king." Then Daniel said to the

1, 1-21: The introductory story shows how Daniel received the gift of prophecy, which in the mentality of the second century B.C. is dream interpretation (v. 17), not deliverance of oracles as in the days of the older prophets.

1, 1: A reference to 4 Kgs 24, 1.

1, 2: *Senaar:* the second century author intentionally uses the ancient name for Babylonia.

1, 4-5: The importance given to physical qualities, intelligence, three-year training, etc., accord better in a Persian than in a Babylonian milieu. This anachronism shows that the author does not intend to write true history but an edifying story.

1, 7: The names are changed to denote subjection to Babylon.

1, 8: *Defile himself with the king's food or wine:* to a law-abiding Jew this fare, most likely including meat, was forbidden because the meat might have been offered to idols. Vegetables and water (v. 12) would be safe. The strict observance of dietary laws was not stressed at the time of the Babylonian exile, but later at the time of Esdras. This is another deliberate anachronism. See 1, 4-5 n.

steward whom the chief chamberlain had put in charge o
12 Daniel, Anania, Misael, and Azaria, | "Please test your servant
for ten days. Give us vegetables to eat and water to drink
13 Then see how we look in comparison with the other young
men who eat from the royal table, and treat your servant
14 according to what you see." He acceded to this request, and
15 tested them for ten days; after ten days they looked healthier
and better fed than any of the young men who ate from the
16 royal table. So the steward continued to take away the food and
wine they were to receive, and gave them vegetables.
17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and profi
ciency in all literature and science, and to Daniel the under
18 standing of all visions and dreams. At the end of the time the
king had specified for their preparation, the chief chamberlain
19 brought them before Nabuchodonosor. When the king had
spoken with all of them, none was found equal to Daniel
Anania, Misael, and Azaria; and so they entered the king's
20 service. In any question of wisdom or prudence which the king
put to them, he found them ten times better than all the
21 magicians and enchanters in his kingdom. Daniel remained
there until the first year of king Cyrus.

2

1 ***The King's Dream*** In the second year of his reign, king
Nabuchodonosor had a dream which left his spirit no rest and
2 robbed him of his sleep. So he ordered that the magicians
enchanters, sorcerers, and Chaldeans be summoned to interpret
the dream for him. When they came and presented themselves
3 to the king, | he said to them, "I had a dream which will leave
4 my spirit no rest until I know what it means." The Chaldeans
answered the king [Aramaic]: "O king, live forever! Tell your
5 servants the dream and we will give its meaning." The king
answered the Chaldeans, "This is what I have decided: unless

1, 20: The author, in a clever apologetic way, tells those of his audience who are tempted to be fashionable with Greek ways that a strict observance of the Mosaic Law is not out-of-date, but is rewarded with "knowledge and proficiency in all literature and science . . . understanding of all visions and dreams" (v. 17).

1, 21: *The first year of king Cyrus:* 538 B.C.

2, 1-49: The inspired storyteller does not worry about chronological accuracy. The chronology of v. 1 conflicts with that of vv. 1 and 18 in ch. 1. In v. 25 Daniel seems to be introduced to the king for the first time.

2, 2: *Chaldeans:* probably astrologers.

2, 5: Since Ex 22, 17 decrees death to magicians, the author may be writing a veiled satire here by making the pagan king apply the Law of Moses.

you tell me the dream and its meaning, you shall be cut to
6 pieces and your houses destroyed. But if you tell me the dream
and its meaning, you shall receive from me gifts and presents
and great honors. Now tell me the dream and its meaning."
7 Again they answered, "Let the king tell his servants the
8 dream and we will give its meaning." But the king replied:
"I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, since you
9 know what I have decided. If you do not tell me the dream,
there can be but one decree for you. You have framed a false
and deceitful interpretation to present me with till the crisis is
past. Tell me the dream, therefore, that I may be sure that you
can also give its correct interpretation."
10 The Chaldeans answered the king: "There is not a man on
earth who can do what you ask, O king; never has any
king, however great and mighty, asked such a thing of any
11 magician, enchanter, or Chaldean. What you demand. O king,
is too difficult; there is no one who can tell it to the king
12 except the gods who do not dwell among men." At this the
king became violently angry and ordered all the wise men of
13 Babylon to be put to death. When the decree was issued that the
wise men should be slain, Daniel and his companions were also
sought out.
14 Then Daniel prudently took counsel with Arioch, the captain
of the king's guard, who had set out to kill the wise men of
15 Babylon: "O officer of the king," he asked, "what is the reason
for this harsh order from the king?" When Arioch told him,
16 Daniel went and asked for time from the king, that he might
give him the interpretation.
17 Daniel went home and informed his companions Anania,
18 Misael, and Azaria, | that they might implore the mercy of
the God of heaven in regard to this mystery, so that Daniel
and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise
19 men of Babylon. During the night the mystery was revealed
to Daniel in a vision, and he blessed the God of heaven:
20 "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom
21 and power are his. | He causes the changes of the times and
seasons, makes kings and unmakes them. He gives wisdom to
22 the wise and knowledge to those who understand. | He reveals
deep and hidden things and knows what is in the darkness, for
23 the light dwells with him. | To you, O God of my fathers, I
give thanks and praise, because you have given me wisdom and

2, 10: The author's exaggeration of the magician's inability may be his naive way of satirizing magic.

2, 20-23: Among the repetitions in this canticle, God stands out as the master of hidden wisdom.

power. Now you have shown me what we asked of you, you
have made known to us the king's dream."
24 So Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to
destroy the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not put
the wise men of Babylon to death. Bring me before the king
and I will tell him the interpretation of the dream." Arioch
25 quickly brought Daniel to the king and said, "I have found a
man among the Judean captives who can give the interpretation
26 to the king." The king asked Daniel, whose name was Baltassar,
"Can you tell me the dream that I had, and its meaning?"
27 In the king's presence Daniel made this reply:
"The mystery about which the king has inquired, the wise
men, enchanters, magicians, and astrologers could not explain
28 to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries
and he has shown king Nabuchodonosor what is to happen in
days to come; this was the dream you saw as you lay in bed
29 To you in your bed there came thoughts about what should
happen in the future, and he who reveals mysteries showed you
30 what is to be. To me also this mystery has been revealed; not
that I am wiser than any other living person, but in order that
its meaning may be made known to the king, that you may
understand the thoughts in your own mind.
31 "In your vision, O king, you saw a statue, very large and
exceedingly bright, terrifying in appearance as it stood before
32 you. The head of the statue was pure gold, its chest and arms
33 were silver, its belly and thighs bronze, | the legs iron, its feet
34 partly iron and partly tile. While you looked at the statue, a
stone which was hewn from a mountain without a hand being
put to it, struck its iron and tile feet, breaking them in pieces.
35 The iron, tile, bronze, silver, and gold all crumbled at once, fine
as the chaff on the threshing floor in summer, and the wind blew
them away without leaving a trace. But the stone that struck the
statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
36 "This was the dream; the interpretation we shall also give
37 in the king's presence. You, O king, are the king of kings; to you
the God of heaven has given dominion and strength, power and

2, 31: Very tall statues, like the Colossus of Rhodes, were familiar to the author's audience.

2, 32-33: Statues of composite metals were familiar sights to Greeks and Romans. The gold head represents the Babylonian empire (v. 38) the silver chest and bronze belly and thighs represent the Medes and the Persians (8, 20). The iron legs represent the Hellenistic empire of Alexander the Great (8, 21), the iron and tile feet and toes represent the four empires which split from Alexander's empire after his death (8, 22).

2, 37-43: See 2, 32-33 n.

THE KEY TO DANIEL'S STORIES

THE STATUE 2, 32-33	THE FOUR BEASTS 7, 3-8	RAM AND GOAT 8, 3-12	IDENTIFICATIONS
Gold head	Lion		Babylonian Empire (2, 38)
Silver chest	Bear	Ram { 1st horn	Medes } (8, 20)
Bronze belly	Leopard	Ram { 2nd horn	Persians } (8, 20)
Iron legs	The fourth beast (vv. 7. 19)	He-Goat—1 horn	Alexander the Great (8, 21)
Iron–tile Feet (and toes)		4 horns	4 empires which split from Alexander's empire (8, 22)
	The fourth beast with the ten horns (vv. 7. 20)		Seleucids of Syria (7, 24)
	Little horn (vv. 8. 20)	little horn	Antiochus IV Epiphanes (8, 23)

The identifications given by the Inspired author are generally agreed upon by scholars as presented on the above chart. The central notion that permeates these stories is not history but theology, for Daniel's stories teach that empires will succeed one another, but in the end will come the Kingdom of God. In lasting splendor. (See Dn 2, 44-45.)

38 glory; men, wild beasts, and birds of the air, wherever they ma
dwell, he has handed over to you, making you ruler over then
39 all; you are the head of gold. Another kingdom shall take you
place, inferior to yours, then a third kingdom, of bronze, whicl
40 shall rule over the whole earth. There shall be a fourth kingdom
strong as iron; it shall break in pieces and subdue all thes
others, just as iron breaks in pieces and crushes everything else
41 The feet and toes you saw, partly of potter's tile and partly o
iron, mean that it shall be a divided kingdom, but yet have som
of the hardness of iron. As you saw the iron mixed with cla
42 tile, and the toes partly iron and partly tile, the kingdom shal
43 be partly strong and partly fragile. The iron mixed with cla
tile means that they shall seal their alliances by intermarriage
but they shall not stay united, any more than iron mixes witl
44 clay. In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will se
up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up t
another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdom
45 and put an end to them, and it shall stand forever. That i
the meaning of the stone you saw hewn from the mountai
without a hand being put to it, which broke in pieces the tile
iron, bronze, silver, and gold. The great God has revealed t
the king what shall be in the future; this is exactly what yo
dreamed, and its meaning is sure."

46 Then king Nabuchodonosor fell down and worshiped Danie
47 and ordered sacrifice and incense offered to him. | To Danie
the king said, "Truly your God is the God of gods and Lord o
kings and a revealer of mysteries; that is why you were able t
48 reveal this mystery." He advanced Daniel to a high post, gav
him many generous presents, made him ruler of the whol
province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men o
49 Babylon. At Daniel's request the king made Sidrach, Misach
and Abdenago administrators of the province of Babylon, whil
Daniel himself remained at the king's court.

3

1 ***The Fiery Furnace*** King Nabuchodonosor had a golde
statue made, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, which h
2 set up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then

2, 44-45: The stone hewn from the mountain is the Kingdom o
God.

2, 48: Each edifying story of Daniel and his companions ends with
the reward of political advancement as in the story of Joseph in Gene
sis.

3, 1: *Dura:* Babylonia was studded with several places called Dura
The statue would be about ninety feet high by nine feet wide.

ordered the satraps, prefects, and governors, the counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the officials of the provinces to be summoned to the dedication of the statue which
3 he had set up. The satraps, prefects, and governors, the counselors, treasurers, judges, and magistrates and all the officials of the provinces, all these came together for the dedication and stood before the statue which king Nabuchodonosor had set
4 up. | A herald cried out: "Nations and peoples of every language, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments,
5 you are ordered to fall down and worship the golden statue
6 which king Nabuchodonosor has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship shall be instantly cast into a white-hot
7 furnace." Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments, the nations and peoples of every language all fell down and worshiped the golden statue which king Nabuchodonosor had set up.

8 At that point, some of the Chaldeans came and accused the
9 Jews | to king Nabuchodonosor: "O king, live forever! O
10 king, you issued a decree that everyone who heard the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments should fall down and worship the
11 golden statue; whoever did not was to be cast into a white-hot
12 furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have made administrators of the province of Babylon: Sidrach, Misach, Abdenago; these men, O king, have paid no attention to you; they will not serve your god or worship the golden statue which you set up."

13 Nabuchodonosor flew into a rage and sent for Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, who were promptly brought before the
14 king. | King Nabuchodonosor questioned them: "Is it true, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, that you will not serve my god,
15 or worship the golden statue that I set up? Be ready now to fall down and worship the statue I had made, whenever you hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments; otherwise, you shall be instantly cast into the white-hot furnace; and who is the God

3, 2: Note the anachronisms of Persian governors ("satraps") in a Babylonian setting.

3, 4: The names of the instruments are Greek. *Psaltery:* resembles a harp.

3, 6: In the back of the author's mind there may have been a huge statue of the Chaananite god Moloch with open palms from which sacrificed children rolled into the gaping furnace below.

16 that can deliver you out of my hands?" Sidrach, Misach, and
Abdenago answered king Nabuchodonosor, "There is no need
17 for us to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If our God,
whom we serve, can save us from the white-hot furnace and
18 from your hands, O king, may he save us! But even if he will
not, know, O king, that we will not serve your god or worship
the golden statue which you set up."
19 Nabuchodonosor's face became livid with utter rage against
Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago. He ordered the furnace to be
20 heated seven times more than usual | and had some of the
strongest men in his army bind Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago
21 and cast them into the white-hot furnace. They were bound
and cast into the white-hot furnace with their coats, hats, shoes
22 and other garments, | for the king's order was urgent. So huge
a fire was kindled in the furnace that the flames devoured the
23 men who threw Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago into it. But
these three fell, bound, into the midst of the white-hot furnace.
24 They walked about in the flames, singing to God and blessing
25 the Lord. In the fire Azaria stood up and prayed aloud:
26 "Blessed are you, and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our
27 fathers, and glorious forever is your name. | For you are just in
all you have done; all your deeds are faultless, all your ways
28 right, and all your judgments proper. | You have executed
proper judgments in all that you have brought upon us and
upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our fathers. By a proper judg-
29 ment you have done all this because of our sins; | for we have
sinned and transgressed by departing from you, and we have
30 done every kind of evil. | Your commandments we have not
heeded or observed, nor have we done as you ordered us for
31 our good. | Therefore all you have brought upon us, all you
32 have done to us, you have done by a proper judgment. | You
have handed us over to our enemies, lawless and hateful rebels;
33 to an unjust king, the worst in all the world. | Now we cannot
open our mouths; we, your servants, who revere you, have
become a shame and a reproach.
34 For your name's sake, do not deliver us up forever, or make
35 void your covenant. | Do not take away your mercy from us,

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3, 24-90: These verses were originally composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, but they have been preserved in Greek, from which this English translation is made. The Church regards them as inspired, but the Jews and Protestants do not.

3, 26-45: This is not a personal prayer of Azaria, but a lament of the nation in exile.

3, 29: This verse and vv. 31 and 35 are used in the Introit of the Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

for the sake of Abraham, your beloved, Isaac your servant, and
36 Israel your holy one, | to whom you promised to multiply
their offspring like the stars of heaven, or the sand on the shore
37 of the sea. | For we are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other
nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because
38 of our sins. | We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader,
no holocaust, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer
39 first fruits, to find favor with you. | But with contrite heart and
40 humble spirit let us be received: | as though it were holocausts
of rams and bullocks, or thousands of fat lambs, so let our sacri-
fice be in your presence today as we follow you unreservedly;
41 for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame. | And now
we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you and we pray
42 to you. | Do not let us be put to shame, but deal with us in
43 your kindness and great mercy. | Deliver us by your wonders,
44 and bring glory to your name, O Lord: | let all those be routed
who inflict evils on your servants; let them be shamed and
45 powerless, and their strength broken; | let them know that you
alone are the Lord God, glorious over the whole world."
46 Now the king's men who had thrown them in continued to
stroke the furnace with brimstone, pitch, tow, and faggots.
47.48 The flames rose forty-nine cubits above the furnace, and
49 spread out, burning the Chaldeans nearby. But the angel of
the Lord went down into the furnace with Azaria and his
50 companions, drove the fiery flames out of the furnace, | and
made the inside of the furnace as though a dew-laden breeze
were blowing through it. The fire in no way touched them or
51 caused them pain or harm. Then these three in the furnace with
one voice sang, glorifying and blessing God:
52 "Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, praise-
worthy and exalted above all forever; and blessed is your holy
and glorious name, praiseworthy and exalted above all for all
53 ages. | Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, praise-
54 worthy and glorious above all forever. | Blessed are you on the
throne of your kingdom, praiseworthy and exalted above all
55 forever. | Blessed are you who look into the depths from your
throne upon the cherubim, praiseworthy and exalted above all
56 forever. | Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven, praise-
worthy and glorious forever.
57 Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, praise and exalt

3, 39: This verse is found in the Offertory prayer at Mass.

3, 52-90: This canticle of the three youths in the furnace is an open admission of inability to express gratitude, which forces a recourse to nature. St. Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Creatures sounds like an echo of this prayer.

him above all forever. | Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord,
praise and exalt him above all forever. | You heavens, bless
the Lord, praise and exalt him above all forever. | All you
waters above the heavens, bless the Lord, praise and exalt him
above all forever. | All you hosts of the Lord, bless the Lord;
praise and exalt him above all forever. | Sun and moon, bless
the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. | Stars of
heaven, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. |
Every shower and dew, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him
above all forever. | All you winds, bless the Lord; praise and
exalt him above all forever. | Fire and heat, bless the Lord;
praise and exalt him above all forever. | [Cold and chill, bless
the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. | Dew and
rain, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever.] |
Frost and chill, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all
forever. | Ice and snow, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him
above all forever. | Nights and days, bless the Lord; praise and
exalt him above all forever. | Light and darkness, bless the
Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. | Lightnings and
clouds, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever.
Let the earth bless the Lord, praise and exalt him above all
forever. | Mountains and hills, bless the Lord; praise and exalt
him above all forever. | Everything growing from the earth,
bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. | You
springs, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. |
Seas and rivers, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all
forever. | You dolphins and all water creatures, bless the Lord;
praise and exalt him above all forever. | All you birds of the
air, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. |
All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord; praise and exalt
him above all forever. | You sons of men, bless the Lord; praise
and exalt him above all forever.
O Israel, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all for-
ever. | Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him
above all forever. | Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise
and exalt him above all forever. | Spirits and souls of the just,
bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. | Holy
men of humble heart, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above
all forever. | Anania, Azaria, Misael, bless the Lord; praise and
exalt him above all forever. For he has delivered us from the
nether world, and saved us from the power of death; he has
freed us from the raging flame and delivered us from the fire. |
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures
forever. | Bless the God of gods, all you who fear the Lord;

praise him and give him thanks, because his mercy endures forever."

Hearing them sing, and astonished at seeing them alive, |
91 king Nabuchodonosor rose in haste and asked his nobles, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" "Assuredly, O king,"
92 they answered. | "But," he replied, "I see four men unfettered and unhurt, walking in the fire, and the fourth looks like a son
93 of God." Then Nabuchodonosor came to the opening of the white-hot furnace and called to Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago: "Servants of the most high God, come out." Thereupon Sidrach,
94 Misach, and Abdenago came out of the fire. When the satraps, prefects, governors, and nobles of the king came together, they saw that the fire had had no power over the bodies of these men; not a hair of their heads had been singed, nor were their garments altered; there was not even a smell of fire about them.
95 Nabuchodonosor exclaimed, "Blessed be the God of Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, who sent his angel to deliver the servants that trusted in him; they disobeyed the royal command and yielded their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except
96 their own God. Therefore I decree for nations and peoples of every language that whoever blasphemes the God of Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago shall be cut to pieces and his house destroyed. For there is no other God who can rescue like this."
97 Then the king promoted Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago in the province of Babylon.

98 ***Vision of the Great Tree*** King Nabuchodonosor to the nations and peoples of every language, wherever they dwell on
99 earth: abundant peace! It has seemed good to me to publish the signs and wonders which the most high God has accomplished in my regard.
100 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures through all generations.

4

1 I, Nabuchodonosor, was at home in my palace, content and
2 prosperous. I had a terrifying dream as I lay in bed, and the

3, 92: *A son of God:* a frequent biblical term for angel.

3, 93: *Most high God:* this was the title used by Jews living abroad to differentiate between the one true God and pagan gods. On the lips of a pagan, it meant the name of one more god, the god of the Jews. It is used again in v. 99.

3, 98—4, 34: This passage resembles a letter from Nabuchodonosor to his subjects.

3 images and the visions of my mind frightened me. So I issued
a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought
4 before me to give the interpretation of the dream. When the
magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers had come in,
I related the dream before them; but none of them could tell
5 me its meaning. Finally there came before me Daniel, whose
name is Baltassar after the name of my god, and in whom is
the spirit of the holy God. I repeated the dream to him: |
6 "Baltassar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the
holy God is in you and no mystery is too difficult for you; tell
me the meaning of the visions that I saw in my dream.
7 "These were the visions I saw while in bed: I saw a tree of
8 great height at the center of the world. It was large and strong,
with its top touching the heavens, and it could be seen to the
9 ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit
abundant, providing food for all. Under it the wild beasts
found shade, in its branches the birds of the air nested; all men
10 ate of it. In the vision I saw while in bed, a holy sentinel came
11 down from heaven, | and cried out:
" 'Cut down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its
leaves and scatter its fruit; let the beasts flee its shade, and the
12 birds its branches. | But leave in the earth its stump and roots,
fettered with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field. Let him
be bathed with the dew of heaven; his lot be to eat, among
13 beasts, the grass of the earth. | Let his mind be changed from
the human; let him be given the sense of a beast, till seven years
14 pass over him. | By decree of the sentinels is this decided, by
order of the holy ones, this sentence; that all who live may
know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men: he
can give it to whom he will, or set over it the lowliest of men.'
15 "This is the dream that I, king Nabuchodonosor, had. Now,
Baltassar, tell me its meaning. Although none of the wise men
in my kingdom can tell me the meaning, you can, because the
spirit of the holy God is in you."
16 Then Daniel, whose name was Baltassar, was appalled for
a while, terrified by his thoughts. "Baltassar," the king said to

4, 4: The inspired author may again be satirizing the pagan magicians who never show up favorably in their own field of specialization. See 2, 10 n.

4, 5: See 1, 7 for the change of Daniel's name.

4, 10: *A holy sentinel:* the author makes him play the role of the angel of the Lord as in older biblical texts. In all the Bible this term is found only here.

4, 12: The sudden switch of images from "tree" to "him" is characteristic of apocalyptic style.

17 him, "let not the dream or its meaning terrify you." "My lord,"
Baltassar replied, "this dream should be for your enemies, and
its meaning for your foes. The large, strong tree that you saw,
with its top touching the heavens, that could be seen by the
18 whole earth, | which had beautiful foliage and abundant fruit,
providing food for all, under which the wild beasts lived, and
19 in whose branches the birds of the air dwelt— | you are that tree,
O king, large and strong! Your majesty has become so great as
to touch the heavens, and your rule extends over the whole earth.
20 As for the king's vision of a holy sentinel that came down from
heaven and proclaimed: 'Cut down the tree and destroy it,
but leave in the earth its stump and roots, fettered with iron
and bronze in the grass of the field; let him be bathed with the
dew of heaven, and let his lot be among wild beasts till seven
21 years pass over him'—this is its meaning, O king; this is the
sentence which the Most High has passed upon my lord king:
22 You shall be cast out from among men and dwell with wild
beasts; you shall be given grass to eat like an ox and be bathed
with the dew of heaven; seven years shall pass over you, until
you know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men
23 and gives it to whom he will. The command that the stump
and roots of the tree are to be left means that your kingdom
shall be preserved for you, once you have learned it is heaven
24 that rules. Therefore, O king, take my advice; atone for your
sins by good deeds, and for your misdeeds by kindness to the
poor; then your prosperity will be long."
25.26 All this happened to king Nabuchodonosor. Twelve
months later, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace
27 in Babylon, | the king said, "Babylon the great! Was it not
I, with my great strength, who built it as a royal residence for
28 my splendor and majesty?" While these words were still on the
king's lips, a voice spoke from heaven, "It has been decreed for
you, king Nabuchodonosor, that your kingdom is taken from
29 you! You shall be cast out from among men, and shall dwell
with wild beasts; you shall be given grass to eat like an ox, and

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4, 22: The form of insanity, in consequence of which a person acts like a wolf, is called lycanthropy.

4, 29-33: It is historically certain that Nabuchodonosor was not mentally unbalanced. Perhaps the best explanation given by modern interpreters is this: the inspired storyteller intentionally identifies Nabuchodonosor with Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king. Even at the time of the writing of Daniel in the second century B.C., "ancient" enemies had, in inscriptions, discredited Nabonidus as an incompetent ruler of poor health. For instance, a "prayer of Nabonidus" was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls that speaks of an illness from which Nab-

seven years shall pass over you, until you learn that the Most
High rules over the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he
30 will." | At once this was fulfilled. Nabuchodonosor was cast
out from among men, he ate grass like an ox, and his body was
bathed with the dew of heaven, until his hair grew like the
feathers of an eagle, and his nails like the claws of a bird.
31 When this period was over, I, Nabuchodonosor, raised my
eyes to heaven; my reason was restored to me, and I blessed
the Most High, I praised and glorified him who lives forever.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom
32 endures through all generations. | All who live on the earth
are counted as nothing; he does as he pleases with the powers
of heaven as well as with those who live on the earth. There is
no one who can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you
done?"
33 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the
glory of my kingdom, my majesty and my splendor returned
to me. My nobles and lords sought me out; I was restored to
34 my kingdom, and became much greater than before. Therefore
I Nabuchodonosor, now praise and exalt and glorify the King
of heaven, because all his works are right and his ways just
and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

5

1 ***The Writing on the Wall*** King Belsassar gave a great
banquet for a thousand of his lords, with whom he drank.
2 Under the influence of the wine, he ordered the gold and silver
vessels which Nabuchodonosor, his father, had taken from the
temple in Jerusalem, to be brought in so that the king, his
lords, his wives and his entertainers might drink from them.
3 When the gold and silver vessels taken from the house of God
in Jerusalem had been brought in, and while the king, his

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onidus had suffered for seven years in the Arabian oasis of Thema. However, according to recent studies it cannot be proven historically that Nabonidus suffered from a *mental* illness. The inspired author's story of the demented king may symbolize God's condemnation of Babylonian paganism.

4, 31: See Verdi's opera, *Nabucco* (i.e., Nabuchodonosor) which portray's the king's madness and cure.

5, 1-30: Dramatically, this is the best of the stories.

5, 1: *King Belsassar:* Belsassar was actually the crown prince and son of Nabonidus.

5, 2-3: The importance given to the sacred vessels here and in v. 23 is understandable in an edifying Jewish story.

5, 2: *Nabuchodonosor, his father:* historically, there were several kings of Babylon between Nabuchodonosor and Belsassar.

4 lords, his wives and his entertainers were drinking | wine from
them, they praised their gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron,
wood and stone.
5 Suddenly, opposite the lampstand, the fingers of a human
hand appeared, writing on the plaster of the wall in the king's
palace. When the king saw the wrist and hand that wrote, |
6 his face blanched; his thoughts terrified him, his hip joints
7 shook, and his knees knocked. The king shouted for the en-
chanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers to be brought in. "Who-
ever reads this writing and tells me what it means," he said to
the wise men of Babylon, "shall be clothed in purple, wear a
golden collar about his neck, and be third in the government of
8 the kingdom." But though all the king's men came in, none of
them could either read the writing or tell the king what it
9 meant. Then king Belsassar was greatly terrified; his face went
ashen, and his lords were thrown into confusion.
10 When the queen heard of the discussion between the king
and his lords, she entered the banquet hall and said, "O king,
11 live forever! Be not troubled in mind, nor look so pale! There
is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy God;
during the lifetime of your father he was seen to have brilliant
knowledge and god-like wisdom. In fact, king Nabuchodonosor,
your father, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters,
12 Chaldeans, and astrologers, because of the extraordinary mind
possessed by this Daniel, whom the king named Baltassar. He
knew and understood how to interpret dreams, explain enigmas,
and solve difficulties. Now therefore, summon Daniel to tell
you what this means."
13 Then Daniel was brought into the presence of the king. The
king asked him, "Are you the Daniel, the Jewish exile, whom
14 my father, the king, brought from Juda? I have heard that the
spirit of God is in you, that you possess brilliant knowledge and
15 extraordinary wisdom. Now, the wise men and enchanters were
brought in to me to read this writing and tell me its meaning,
16 but they could not say what the words meant. But I have heard
that you can interpret dreams and solve difficulties; if you are
able to read the writing and tell me what it means, you shall be
clothed in purple, wear a gold collar about your neck, and be
third in the government of the kingdom."
17 Daniel answered the king: "You may keep your gifts, or give

5, 4: The implication is that this was a blasphemous victory feast of the pagan gods over Yahweh. See Is 21, 5 n.

5, 10-13: Even though this scene is not meant historically, it does point up the importance given to the queen mother in oriental and Jewish circles.

your presents to someone else; but the writing I will read for
18 you, O king, and tell you what it means. The Most High God
gave your father Nabuchodonosor a great kingdom and glorious
19 majesty. Because he made him so great, the nations and peoples
of every language dreaded and feared him. Whomever he
wished, he killed or let live; whomever he wished, he exalted or
20 humbled. But when his heart became proud and his spirit
hardened by insolence, he was put down from his royal throne
21 and deprived of his glory; he was cast out from among men
and was made insensate as a beast; he lived with wild asses,
and ate grass like an ox; his body was bathed with the dew of
heaven, until he learned that the Most High God rules over
22 the kingdom of men and appoints over it whom he will. You
his son, Belsassar, have not humbled your heart, though you
23 knew all this; you have rebelled against the Lord of heaven.
You had the vessels of his temple brought before you, so that
you and your nobles, your wives and your entertainers, might
drink wine from them; and you praised the gods of silver and
gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, that neither see nor hear
nor have intelligence. But the God in whose hand is your life-
breath and the whole course of your life, you did not glorify
24 By him were the wrist and hand sent, and the writing set down.
25 "This is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, TEKEL, and
26 PERES. These words mean: | MENE, God has numbered your
27 kingdom and put an end to it; TEKEL, you have been weighed
28 on the scales and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom has been
divided and given to the Medes and Persians."
29 Then by order of Belsassar they clothed Daniel in purple
with a gold collar about his neck, and proclaimed him third in
30 the government of the kingdom. The same night Belsassar, the
Chaldean king, was slain.

5, 18ff: This speech resembles an oracle of the older prophets against the nations insofar as it signifies that Yahweh has the right and power to punish even pagan monarchs.

5, 25: The mystery is heightened because of disconnected words in place of sentences.

5, 26: The author is not explaining literally the meaning of these Aramaic words of weights and money. He interprets them by a play on the words: *Mene,* connected with the verb meaning to number; *Tekel* with the verb meaning to weigh; *Peres,* with the verb meaning to divide.

5, 27: This idea resembles the Egyptian judgment scenes in which the soul of the deceased is "weighed" in the presence of the gods.

5, 28: The author's second century audience most likely understood that it was not Belsassar but Antiochus who would finally be struck down.

6
1 And Darius the Mede succeeded to the kingdom at the age of
sixty-two.

2 ***In the Lions' Den*** Darius decided to appoint over his en-
tire kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to safeguard
3 his interests; these were accountable to three supervisors, one
4 of whom was Daniel. Daniel outshone all the supervisors and
satraps because an extraordinary spirit was in him, and the king
thought of giving him authority over the entire kingdom.
5 Therefore the supervisors and satraps tried to find grounds for
accusation against Daniel as regards the administration. But
they could accuse him of no wrong-doing; because he was
trustworthy, no fault of neglect or misconduct was to be found
6 in him. Then these men said to themselves, "We shall find no
grounds for accusation against this Daniel unless by way of the
7 law of his God." So these supervisors and satraps went throng-
ing to the king and said to him: "King Darius, live forever! |
8 All the supervisors of the kingdom, the prefects, satraps, nobles,
and governors are agreed that the following prohibition ought
to be put in force by royal decree: no one is to address any
petition to god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king;
9 otherwise he shall be cast into a den of lions. Now, O king,
issue the prohibition over your signature, immutable and irrevo-
10 cable under Mede and Persian law." So king Darius signed the
prohibition and made it law.
11 Even after Daniel heard that this law had been signed, he
continued his custom of going home to kneel in prayer and give
thanks to his God in the upper chamber three times a day, with
12 the windows open toward Jerusalem. So these men rushed in
13 and found Daniel praying and pleading before his God. Then
they went to remind the king about the prohibition: "Did you
not decree, O king, that no one is to address a petition to god or
man for thirty days, except to you, O king; otherwise he shall
be cast into a den of lions?" The king answered them, "The

6, 1: *Darius the Mede:* he is not known in secular history.

6, 2: It is historically true that Darius the Persian organized the administration of the Persian empire, but the empire never had one hundred and twenty, but from twenty to thirty satraps.

6, 8: *Cast into a den of lions:* the implied dreadful thought is that the privation of burial was disgraceful not only to Jews, but to other Orientals.

6, 9: *Immutable and irrevocable:* the idea is repeated in vv. 13 and 16; Est 1, 19; 8, 8.

6, 11: This informative verse says that Jewish prayer was offered while kneeling, "three times a day," and "toward Jerusalem."

decree is absolute, irrevocable under the Mede and Persian law."
14 | To this they replied, "Daniel, the Jewish exile, has paid no
attention to you, O king, or to the decree you issued; three times
15 a day he offers his prayer." The king was deeply grieved at this
news and he made up his mind to save Daniel; he worked till
16 sunset to rescue him. But these men insisted. "Keep in mind, O
king," they said, "that under the Mede and Persian law every
17 royal prohibition or decree is irrevocable." So the king ordered
Daniel to be brought and cast into the lions' den. To Daniel he
said, "May your God, whom you serve so constantly, save you."
18 To forestall any tampering, the king sealed with his own ring
and the rings of the lords the stone that had been brought to
block the opening of the den.
19 Then the king returned to his palace for the night; he refused
to eat and he dismissed the entertainers. Since sleep was im-
20 possible for him, the king rose very early the next morning and
21 hastened to the lions' den. As he drew near, he cried out to
Daniel sorrowfully, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has the
God whom you serve so constantly been able to save you from
22 the lions?" Daniel answered the king: "O king, live forever!
23 | My God has sent his angel and closed the lions' mouths so
that they have not hurt me. For I have been found innocent
before him; neither to you have I done any harm, O king!"
24 This gave the king great joy. At his order Daniel was removed
25 from the den, unhurt because he trusted in his God. The king
then ordered the men who had accused Daniel, along with their
children and their wives, to be cast into the lions' den. Before
they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them
and crushed all their bones.
26 Then king Darius wrote to the nations and peoples of every
language, wherever they dwell on the earth: "All peace to you!
27 I decree that throughout my royal domain the God of Daniel
is to be reverenced and feared:

"For he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom
shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be without end.
28 He is a deliverer and savior, working signs and wonders in

6, 17-18: *The lions' den:* a deep pit blocked with a stone.

6, 18: For the ring used as one's signature, see Gn 38, 18 n.

6, 23: This scene symbolically interprets the author's audience: it must have viewed Daniel as the personification of the Jewish people persecuted by Antiochus, but protected by Yahweh and finally declared innocent.

6, 25: Compare this with the Book of Esther where the anti-Semitic Persians are enmeshed by their own snares.

heaven and on earth, and he delivered Daniel from the lions'
power."
29 So Daniel fared well during the reign of Darius and the reign
of Cyrus the Persian.

II. DANIEL'S VISIONS

7
1 ***Vision of the Four Beasts*** In the first year of king Bel-
sassar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream as he lay in bed, and
was terrified by the visions of his mind. Then he wrote down
2 the dream; the account began: In the vision I saw during the
night, suddenly the four winds of heaven stirred up the great
3 sea, | from which emerged four immense beasts, each different
4 from the others. The first was like a lion, but with eagle's wings.
While I watched, the wings were plucked; it was raised from
the ground to stand on two feet like a man, and given a human
5 mind. The second was like a bear; it was raised up on one side,
and among the teeth in its mouth were three tusks. It was given
6 the order, "Up, devour much flesh." | After this I looked and
saw another beast, like a leopard; on its back were four wings
like those of a bird, and it had four heads. To this beast
7 dominion was given. After this, in the visions of the night I
saw the fourth beast, different from all the others, terrifying,
horrible, and of extraordinary strength; it had great iron teeth
with which it devoured and crushed, and what was left it
8 trampled with its feet. I was considering the ten horns it had,
when suddenly another, a little horn, sprang out of their midst,

7—12: For a proper understanding of these "visions," see the Introduction to the Book of Daniel.

7, 3-8: The four beasts represent the four empires of the Babylonians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Greeks, as does the statue in ch. 2. See 2, 32-33 n.

7, 2: *The great sea:* according to primitive ideas, the ocean beneath the earth contained mythological creatures symbolizing chaos which God conquered. See Jb 7, 12 n.

7, 4: *Lion, but with eagle's wings:* a familiar symbol of the Babylonian empire.

7, 5: *Three tusks:* the symbolism is uncertain.

7, 7-8: Most biblical critics agree that the "fourth beast" with its ten horns is the Seleucid king of Syria, and that the "little horn" is Antiochus Epiphanes.

7, 8: "Horns" symbolized destructive power and, finally, divinity, which is why the decorative headgear of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings had horns. *Three of the previous horns were torn away to make room for it:* Antiochus does away with the last three kings prior to himself (see the interpretation in 7, 24 n). *This horn had eyes . . . mouth:* the horn is a part which stands for the whole beast.

and three of the previous horns were torn away to make room
for it. This horn had eyes like a man, and a mouth that spoke
arrogantly.
9 As I watched, thrones were set up and the Ancient One took
his throne. His clothing was snow bright, and the hair on his
head as white as wool; his throne was flames of fire, with
10 wheels of burning fire. | A surging stream of fire flowed out
from where he sat; thousands upon thousands were ministering
to him, and myriads upon myriads attended him.
11 The court was convened, and the books were opened.
I watched, then, from the first of the arrogant words which the
horn spoke, until the beast was slain and its body thrown into
12 the fire to be burnt up. The other beasts, which also lost their
dominion, were granted a prolongation of life for a time and
a season.
13 As the visions during the night continued, I saw one like a
son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven; when he reached
14 the Ancient One and was presented before him, | he received
dominion, glory, and kingship; nations and peoples of every
language serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed.
15 I, Daniel, found my spirit anguished within its sheath of flesh
16 and I was terrified by the visions of my mind. I approached one
of those present and asked him what all this meant in truth.
In answer, he made known to me the meaning of the things:
17 "These four great beasts stand for four kingdoms which shall
18 arise on the earth. But the holy ones of the Most High shall
receive the kingship, to possess it forever and ever."

7, 9f: *The Ancient One:* God. *Fire:* common biblical symbol of judgment.

7, 11: Antiochus is slain.

7, 13f: Just as in ch. 2, 44-45, the kingdoms of this world are replaced by the Kingdom of God, which is here represented by a man "one like a son of man."

7, 16-18: Daniel approaches (v. 16) one of the ministers of v. 10. In v. 18 the author identifies the "one like a son of man" (of v. 13) as "the holy ones," i.e., an individual-collective figure. At the time of the Machabees, when the author of Daniel was writing, the hope for the continuity of Davidic kings from whom one king would emerge as the Messia was dying out. Hence, the author is looking ahead to the Messianic age when God Himself will be the Head of His Messianic Kingdom of saints. To convey this Messianic idea, the author takes his lead from the beasts who, coming from below, are individual-collective representatives (vv. 17 and 23). For this reason, the author makes the individual-collective Messianic figure come from above "on the clouds of heaven" (v. 13). See table: Prophetic and Apocalyptic Messianism, p. 1314.

19 But I wished to make certain about the fourth beast, so very
terrible and different from the others, devouring and crushing
with its iron teeth and bronze claws, and trampling with its
20 feet what was left; about the ten horns on its head, and the
other one that sprang up, before which three horns fell; about
the horn with the eyes and the mouth that spoke arrogantly,
21 which appeared greater than its fellows. For, as I watched, that
horn made war against the holy ones and was victorious |
22 until the Ancient One arrived; judgment was pronounced in
favor of the holy ones of the Most High, and the time came
23 when the holy ones possessed the kingdom. He answered me
thus:

"The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth,
different from all the others; it shall devour the whole earth,
24 beat it down, and crush it. | The ten horns shall be ten kings
rising out of that kingdom; another shall rise up after them,
different from those before him, who shall lay low three kings. |
25 He shall speak against the Most High and oppress the holy ones
of the Most High, thinking to change the feast days and the
law. They shall be handed over to him for a year, two years,
26 and a half-year. | But when the court is convened, and his
27 power is taken away by final and absolute destruction, | then
the kingship and dominion and majesty of all the kingdoms
under the heavens shall be given to the holy people of the Most
High, whose kingdom shall be everlasting: all dominions shall
serve and obey him."

28 The report concluded: I, Daniel, was greatly terrified by my
thoughts, and my face blanched, but I kept the matter to
myself.

8

1 ***Vision of the Ram and He-goat*** After this first vision,
I, Daniel, had another, in the third year of the reign of king

7, 19-23: See 7, 7-8 n.

7, 24: Seven "kings" preceded Antiochus. The three whom he ousted are probably his two nephews and Heliodorus. (See 2 Mc 3, 40 n.)

7, 25: This verse describes the persecution by Antiochus. See 1 Mc 1, 32-64. *For a year, two years, and a half-year:* three and one-half years. A round number, forecasting the length and end of the persecution by Antiochus. See 9, 27 n.

7, 27: The meaning of ch. 7 is: God condemns Antiochus, and the Jews will triumph ("holy people").

7, 28: This verse ends the Aramaic part of the Book of Daniel, begun in 2, 4.

8, 1-27: Instead of the dream of four beasts (ch. 7), here is a vision of only two, conveying the same doctrine in simpler form.

2 Belsassar. In my vision I saw myself in the fortress of Susa
3 in the province of Elam; I was beside the river Ulai. | I looked
up and saw standing by the river a ram with two great horns,
4 the one larger and newer than the other. I saw the ram butting
toward the west, north, and south. No beast could withstand it
or be rescued from its power; it did what it pleased and became
very powerful.
5 As I was reflecting, a he-goat with a prominent horn on its
forehead suddenly came from the west across the whole earth
6 without touching the ground. It approached the two-horned
ram I had seen standing by the river, and rushed toward it with
7 savage force. I saw it attack the ram with furious blows when
they met, and break both its horns. It threw the ram, which had
not the force to withstand it, to the ground, and trampled upon
it; and no one could rescue it from its power.
8 The he-goat became very powerful, but at the height of its
power the great horn was shattered, and in its place came up
9 four others, facing the four winds of heaven. Out of one of
them came a little horn which kept growing toward the south
10 the east, and the glorious country. Its power extended to the
host of heaven, so that it cast down to earth some of the host
11 and some of the stars and trampled on them. It boasted even
against the prince of the host, from whom it removed the daily
12 sacrifice, and whose sanctuary it cast down, | as well as the
host, while sin replaced the daily sacrifice. It cast truth to the
ground, and was succeeding in its undertaking.
13 I heard a holy one speaking, and another said to whichever
one it was that spoke, "How long shall the events of this vision
last concerning the daily sacrifice, the desolating sin which is
14 placed there, the sanctuary, and the trampled host?" | He

8, 2: *Fortress of Susa:* the Persian royal palace in ancient Elam, east of Babylon.

8, 3: *A ram with two great horns:* the conquering empire of the Medes and Persians (v. 4).

8, 5-11: See explanation in vv. 20-22. *A he-goat:* the empire of Alexander (v. 21). The he-goat defeats the ram (the Medes and Persians; vv. 6-7). The shattered horn, broken into four pieces, represents the splitting up of the empire after Alexander's death (v. 8). The "little horn" is Antiochus Epiphanes; the "glorious country" is Palestine (v. 9). The "host" and their "casting down" are not clear (v. 10). The "prince" must be Yahweh Himself. The reference is to the abolition of the Jewish sacrifices (1 Mc 1, 45).

8, 12-14: These are obscure except that "the desolating sin" refers to the statue Antiochus placed in the temple (2 Mc 6, 2).

8, 14: *Two thousand three hundred:* scholars cannot decipher this enigma.

answered him, "For two thousand three hundred evenings and
mornings; then the sanctuary shall be purified."
15 While I, Daniel, sought the meaning of the vision I had seen,
16 a manlike figure stood before me, | and on the Ulai I heard a
human voice that cried out, "Gabriel, explain the vision to this
17 man." When he came near where I was standing, I fell prostrate
in terror. But he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the
18 vision refers to the end time." As he spoke to me, I fell forward
19 in a faint; he touched me and made me stand up. "I will show
you," he said, "what is to happen later in the period of wrath;
for at the appointed time, there will be an end.
20 "The two-horned ram you saw represents the kings of the
21 Medes and Persians. The he-goat is the king of the Greeks,
22 and the great horn on its forehead is the first king. The four
that rose in its place when it was broken are four kingdoms
that will issue from his nation, but without his strength.
23 "After their reign, when sinners have reached their measure,
24 there shall arise a king, impudent and skilled in intrigue. | He
shall be strong and powerful, bring about fearful ruin, and suc-
25 ceed in his undertaking. He shall destroy powerful peoples; | his
cunning shall be against the holy ones, his treacherous conduct
shall succeed. He shall be proud of heart and destroy many by
stealth. But when he rises against the prince of princes, he
26 shall be broken without a hand being raised. | The vision of the
evenings and the mornings is true, as spoken; do you, however,
keep this vision undisclosed, because the days are to be many."
27 I, Daniel, was weak and ill for some days; then I arose and
took care of the king's affairs. But I was appalled at the vision,
which I could not understand.

9

1 ***Gabriel and the Seventy Weeks*** It was the first year that
Darius, son of Xerxes, of the race of the Medes, reigned over
2 the kingdom of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign I,
Daniel, tried to understand in the Scriptures the counting of the
years of which the Lord spoke to the prophet Jeremia: that for
the ruins of Jerusalem seventy years must be fulfilled.
3 I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with

8, 16: *Gabriel:* the first mention of the angel in the Bible.

9, 1: *Darius:* See 6, 1 n.

9, 2: *Seventy years:* Jer 25, 11 n; 29, 10 predicted the span of the Babylonian exile in round numbers. Prophets hardly ever predict with mathematical precision.

9, 3-20: Daniel's prayer is like Azaria's (3, 26-45), a lament on "the sin of my people Israel" (v. 20).

4 fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. I prayed to the Lord, my God,
and confessed, "Ah, Lord, great and awesome God, you who
keep your merciful covenant toward those who love you and
5 observe your commandments! We have sinned, been wicked
and done evil; we have rebelled and departed from your com-
6 mandments and your laws. We have not obeyed your servants
the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes,
7 our fathers, and all the people of the land. Justice, O Lord, is
on your side; we are shamefaced even to this day: the men of
Juda, the residents of Jerusalem, and all Israel, near and far, in
all the countries to which you have scattered them because of
8 their treachery toward you. O Lord, we are shamefaced, like
our kings, our princes, and our fathers, for having sinned
9 against you. But yours, O Lord, our God, are compassion and
10 forgiveness! Yet we rebelled against you | and paid no heed
to your command, O Lord, our God, to live by the law you gave
11 us through your servants the prophets. Because all Israel trans-
gressed your law and went astray, not heeding your voice, the
sworn malediction, recorded in the law of Moses, the servant of
12 God, was poured out over us for our sins. You carried out the
threats you spoke against us and against those who governed
us, by bringing upon us in Jerusalem the greatest calamity that
13 has ever occurred under heaven. As it is written in the law of
Moses, this calamity came full upon us. As we did not appease
the Lord, our God, by turning back from our wickedness and
14 recognizing his constancy, so the Lord kept watch over the
calamity and brought it upon us. You, O Lord, our God, are
just in all that you have done, for we did not listen to your
voice.
15 "Now, O Lord, our God, who led your people out of the
land of Egypt with a strong hand, and made a name for yourself
16 even to this day, we have sinned, we are guilty. O Lord, in
keeping with all your just deeds, let your anger and your wrath
be turned away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain.
On account of our sins and the crimes of our fathers, Jerusalem
and your people have become the reproach of all our neighbors.
17 Hear, therefore, O God, the prayer and petition of your servant;
and for your own sake, O Lord, let your face shine upon your
18 desolate sanctuary. Give ear, O my God, and listen; open your
eyes and see our ruins and the city which bears your name.
When we present our petition before you, we rely not on our
19 just deeds, but on your great mercy. ! O Lord, hear! O Lord,

9, 13: *As it is written:* the first use of this expression in the Bible.

pardon! O Lord, be attentive and act without delay, for your
own sake, O my God, because this city and your people bear
your name!"
20 I was still occupied with my prayer, confessing my sin and
the sin of my people Israel, presenting my petition to the Lord,
21 my God, on behalf of his holy mountain— | I was still occupied
with this prayer, when Gabriel, the one whom I had seen
before in vision, came to me in rapid flight at the time of the
22 evening sacrifice. He instructed me in these words: "Daniel, I
23 have now come to give you understanding. When you began
your petition, an answer was given which I have come to
announce, because you are beloved. Therefore, mark the answer
and understand the vision.
24 "Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and for your holy
city: then transgression will stop and sin will end, guilt will be
expiated, everlasting justice will be introduced, vision and
25 prophecy ratified, and a most holy will be anointed. | Know and
understand this: from the utterance of the word that Jerusalem
was to be rebuilt until one who is anointed and a leader, there
shall be seven weeks. During sixty-two weeks it shall be rebuilt,
26 with streets and trenches, in time of affliction. | After the sixty-
two weeks an anointed shall be cut down when he does not
possess the city; and the people of a leader who will come shall
destroy the sanctuary. Then the end shall come like a torrent;
until the end there shall be war, the desolation that is decreed.

9, 21: *Gabriel . . . seen before in vision:* refers to 8, 16. *Evening sacrifice:* about 3:00 to 4:00 P.M.

9, 24: *Seventy weeks:* because of the persecution of Antiochus, the author of Daniel figures that in a sense the exile of seventy years predicted by Jeremia (see 9, 2 n) is not over. It will end only with victory over Antiochus. Hence, he prolongs the seventy years of Jeremia to seventy weeks of years, i.e., four hundred ninety years. *A most holy will be anointed:* the "seventy weeks" period will end with the cessation of Antiochus' persecutions and with the reconsecration of the temple.

9, 25: *From the utterance of the word . . . rebuilt . . . seven weeks:* from Jeremia's prophecy of the length of the exile, which was forty-nine years, "seven weeks" of years. *Until one who is anointed and a leader:* Cyrus the Persian king who ended the exile, and allowed the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. *During sixty-two weeks:* Jerusalem will remain rebuilt for "sixty-two weeks" of years, i.e., four hundred thirty-four years.

9, 26: *An anointed shall be cut down:* a reference to Onias III who was murdered in 171 (?) B.C. (2 Mc 4, 33ff). As the seventy years of Jeremia represented a round number, so do the "seventy weeks" of years. *And the people of a leader:* the followers of Antiochus who resemble a "torrent."

27 | For one week he shall make a firm compact with the many;
half the week he shall abolish sacrifice and oblation; on the
temple wing shall be the horrible abomination until the ruin
that is decreed is poured out upon the horror."

10

1 ***Vision of the Hellenistic Wars*** In the third year of
Cyrus, king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel, who
had been named Baltassar. The revelation was certain: a great
2 war; he understood it from the vision. In those days, I, Daniel,
3 mourned three full weeks. I ate no savory food, I took no meat
or wine, and I did not anoint myself at all until the end of the
three weeks.
4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month I was on the
5 bank of the great river, the Tigris. As I looked up, I saw a man
6 dressed in linen with a belt of fine gold around his waist. His
body was like chrysolite, his face shone like lightning, his eyes
were like fiery torches, his arms and feet looked like burnished
7 bronze, and his voice sounded like the roar of a multitude. I
alone, Daniel, saw the vision; but great fear seized the men
who were with me; they fled and hid themselves, although they
8 did not see the vision. | So I was left alone, seeing this great
vision. No strength remained in me; I turned the color of death
9 and was powerless. When I heard the sound of his voice, I
fell face forward in a faint.
10 But then a hand touched me, raising me to my hands and
11 knees. "Daniel, beloved," he said to me, "understand the words

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9, 27: *For one week:* seven years. *He:* Antiochus. *Shall make a firm compact with the many:* many Jews shared the Hellenizing views of Antiochus (1 Mc 1, 30). *Half the week:* the last three and one-half years of the last seven years. *Horrible abomination:* a literal translation of what is traditionally translated as "the abomination of desolation." It is used also in 11, 31; 12, 11; 1 Mc 1, 57. It was either an altar or a statue of the god Zeus Ouranios ("lord of heaven") probably with the features of Antiochus himself. *Until the ruin . . . upon the horror:* the "abomination" will remain until Antiochus dies in 163. Of the more than one hundred theories to explain the prophecy of seventy weeks, the Machabean explanation presented above is the most prevalent. In a capsule, the author of Daniel says: once the historical events are verified (vv. 25-27), it will serve as a sign that the Messianic times will arrive (v. 24), i.e., some time after the end of the "seventy weeks." The author did not predict the date of Christ's birth, but the arrival of the Messianic community (see 7, 16-18 n), and this is corroborated by the fact that no New Testament writer ever quoted Daniel's text in this sense.

10—13: This fourth and last vision describes the kingdoms of the world from Cyrus to Antiochus.

10, 5-6: Most probably the same angel Gabriel of 9, 21.

which I am speaking to you; stand up, for my mission now is
12 to you." When he said this to me, I stood up trembling. "Fear
not, Daniel," he continued; "from the first day you made up
your mind to acquire understanding and humble yourself be-
fore God, your prayer was heard. Because of it I started out,
13 | but the prince of the kingdom of Persia stood in my way for
twenty-one days, until finally Michael, one of the chief princes,
came to help me. I left him there with the prince of the kings
14 of Persia, | and came to make you understand what shall hap-
pen to your people in the days to come; for there is yet a vision
concerning those days."

15 While he was speaking thus to me, I fell forward and kept
16 silent. Then something like a man's hand touched my lips;
I opened my mouth and said to the one facing me, "My lord,
17 I was seized with pangs at the vision and I was powerless. How
can my lord's servant speak with you, my lord? For now no
18 strength or even breath is left in me." The one who looked like
19 a man touched me again and strengthened me, saying, "Fear
20 not, beloved, you are safe; take courage and be strong." When
he spoke to me, I grew strong and said, "Speak, my lord, for
you have strengthened me." "Do you know," he asked, "why
I have come to you? Soon I must fight the prince of Persia again.
21 When I leave, the prince of Greece will come; but I shall tell
you what is written in the truthful book.

11

"No one supports me against all these except Michael, your
1 prince, | standing as a reinforcement and a bulwark for me.
2 Now I shall tell you the truth.

"Three kings of Persia are yet to come; and a fourth shall
acquire the greatest riches of all. Strengthened by his riches,
3 he shall rouse all the kingdom of Greece. But a powerful king

10, 12: *Your prayer:* Daniel was praying for his nation.

10, 13: The guardian angel ("the prince") of Persia was dutifully preventing the fall of Persia by obstructing Gabriel from delivering his message to Daniel till Michael, the guardian angel of Juda ("your prince" v. 21), cleared the way. The "twenty-one days" of prevention correspond to Daniel's "three weeks" of fast (v. 3).

10, 20: *Soon I must fight the prince of Persia again:* Gabriel will have sad news of the imminent fall of Persia and will therefore be resisted in delivering it. *When I leave, the prince of Greece will come:* then, the guardian angel of Greece will be happy because of Greece's victories over Persia. All this is explained further in 11, 2ff.

11, 2: *Three kings of Persia are yet to come:* after Cyrus. *A fourth:* most probably Xerxes I is meant.

11, 3: *A powerful king:* Alexander the Great destroyed the Persian empire at Issus in 333 B.C.

shall appear and rule with great might, doing as he pleases.
4 No sooner shall he appear than his kingdom shall be broken
and divided in the four directions under heaven; but not among
his descendants or in keeping with his mighty rule, for his
kingdom shall be torn to pieces and belong to others than they.
5 "The king of the south shall grow strong, but one of his
princes shall grow stronger still and govern a domain greater
6 than his. After some years they shall become allies: the daughter
of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north in
the interest of peace. But her bid for power shall fail: and her
line shall not be recognized, and she shall be given up, together
with those who brought her, her son and her husband. But
7 later | a descendant of her line shall succeed to his rank, and
shall come against the rampart and enter the stronghold of the
8 king of the north, and conquer them. Even their gods, with their
molten images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, he
shall carry away as booty into Egypt. For years he shall have
9 nothing to do with the king of the north. Then the latter shall
invade the land of the king of the south, and return to his own
country.
10 "But his sons shall prepare and assemble a great armed host,
which shall advance like a flood, then withdraw. When it re-
11 turns and surges around the stronghold, | the king of the
south, provoked, shall go out to fight against the king of the
north, whose great host shall make a stand but shall be given
12 into his hand | and be carried off. In the pride of his heart, he
13 shall lay low tens of thousands, but he shall not triumph. For
the king of the north shall raise another army, greater than be-
fore; after some years he shall attack with this large army and
14 great resources. In those times many shall resist the king of the
south, and outlaws of your people shall rise up in fulfillment of
15 vision, but they shall fail. When the king of the north comes,

11, 4: After his death, Alexander's kingdom splintered into four minor kingdoms. The author focuses his interest on two only, namely, the kingdom of the Egyptian Ptolemies ("king of the south" v. 5), and the Seleucid dynasty of Syria ("king of the north" v. 7).

11, 5-9: This is a detailed history of the beginnings of the Seleucid dynasty. Seleucus, the general of Ptolemy I, eventually rules a larger empire than the Egyptian Ptolemies (v. 5).

11, 6: Antiochus II married Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II.

11, 7-8: Ptolemy III plunders Syria.

11, 9: Seleucus II unsuccessfully invades Egypt.

11, 10-20: The author gives an account of the struggle for Palestine between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, in which the latter are victors. The campaigns of Antiochus III the Great all over the Middle East are described in detail.

he shall set up siegeworks and take the fortified city by storm.
The power of the south shall not withstand him, and not even
16 his picked troops shall have the strength to resist. He shall
attack him and do as he pleases, with no one to withstand him.
17 He shall stop in the glorious land, dealing destruction. He shall
set himself to penetrate the entire strength of his kingdom. He
shall conclude an agreement with him and give him a daughter
in marriage in order to destroy the kingdom, but this shall not
18 succeed in his favor. He shall turn to the coastland and take
many, but a leader shall put an end to his shameful conduct, so
19 that he cannot renew it against him. He shall turn to the strong-
holds of his own land, but shall stumble and fall, to be found
20 no more. In his stead one shall arise who will send a tax collector
through the glorious kingdom, but he shall soon be destroyed,
though not in conflict or in battle.
21 "There shall rise in his place a despicable person, to whom
the royal insignia shall not be given. By stealth and fraud he
22 shall seize the kingdom. Armed might shall be completely over-
whelmed by him and crushed, and even the prince of the cove-
23 nant. After allying with him, he shall treacherously rise to power
24 with a small party. By stealth he shall enter prosperous prov-
inces and do that which his fathers or grandfathers never did;
he shall distribute spoil, booty, and riches among them and
25 devise plots against their strongholds; but only for a time. He
shall call on his strength and cleverness to meet the king of the
south with a great army; the king of the south shall prepare
for battle with a very large and strong army, but he shall not
26 succeed because of the plots devised against him. Even his table
companions shall seek to destroy him, his army shall be over-
27 whelmed, and many shall fall slain. The two kings, resolved
on evil, shall sit at table together and exchange lies, but they
shall have no success, because the appointed end is not yet.
28 "He shall turn back toward his land with great riches, his
mind set against the holy covenant; he shall arrange matters
29 and return to his land. At the time appointed he shall come
30 again to the south, but this time it shall not be as before. When
ships of the Chetthim confront him, he shall lose heart and
retreat. Then he shall direct his rage and energy against the

11, 20: *A tax collector:* Heliodorus, the temple thief of 2 Mc 3.
11, 21-45: The inspired author narrates a detailed account of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, especially his persecution, repeating much of the books of the Machabees.
11, 22: *The prince of the covenant:* Onias III. See 9, 26 n.
11, 30: *Chetthim:* the Romans.

holy covenant; those who forsake it he shall once more single
31 out. Armed forces shall move at his command and defile the
sanctuary stronghold, abolishing the daily sacrifice and setting
32 up the horrible abomination. By his deceit he shall make some
who were disloyal to the covenant apostatize; but those who
33 remain loyal to their God shall take strong action. The nation's
wise men shall instruct the many; though for a time they will
become victims of the sword, of flames, exile, and plunder.
34 When they fall, few people shall help them, but many shall
35 join them out of treachery. Of the wise men, some shall fall, so
that the rest may be tested, refined, and purified, until the end
time which is still appointed to come.
36 "The king shall do as he pleases, exalting himself and making
himself greater than any god; he shall utter dreadful blas-
phemies against the God of gods. He shall prosper only till
divine wrath is ready, for what is determined must take place.
37 He shall have no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for
the one in whom women delight; for no god shall he have re-
38 gard, because he shall make himself greater than all. Instead
he shall give glory to the god of strongholds; a god unknown
to his fathers he shall glorify with gold, silver, precious stones
39 and other treasures. To defend the strongholds he shall station
a people of a foreign god. Whoever acknowledges him he shall
provide with abundant honor; he shall make them rule over
the many and distribute the land as a reward.
40 "At the appointed time the king of the south shall come to
grips with him, but the king of the north shall overwhelm
him with chariots and horsemen and a great fleet, passing
41 through the countries like a flood. He shall enter the glorious
land and many shall fall, except Edom, Moab, and the chief
42 part of Ammon, which shall escape from his power. He shall
extend his power over the countries, and not even the land of
43 Egypt shall escape. He shall control the riches of gold and
silver and all the treasures of Egypt; Libya and Ethiopia shall
44 be in his train. When news from the east and the north terrifies
him, he shall set out with great fury to slay and to doom many.
45 He shall pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the sea
and the glorious holy mountain, but he shall come to his end
with none to help him.

11, 45: In vv. 1-44, the inspired author described past history as veiled prophecy. He now describes Antiochus returning through Palestine, and dying between the Mediterranean "Sea" and the "holy mountain" of Jerusalem. This is a hope, not a prediction based on knowledge revealed by God. Historically, Antiochus died in Persia.

12

1 "At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince,
guardian of your people; it shall be a time unsurpassed in dis-
tress since nations began until that time. At that time your
people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book.
2 | Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake;
some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror
3 and disgrace. | But the wise shall shine brightly like the splen-
dor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice
shall be like the stars forever.
4 "As for you, Daniel, keep secret the message and seal the
book until the end time; many shall fall away and evil shall
increase."
5 I, Daniel, looked and saw two others, one standing on either
6 bank of the river. One of them said to the man clothed in linen,
who was upstream, "How long shall it be to the end of these
7 appalling things?" The man clothed in linen, who was upstream,
lifted his right and left hands to heaven; and I heard him swear
by him who lives forever that it should be for a year, two years,
a half-year; and that, when the power of the destroyer of the
holy people was brought to an end, all these things should end.
8 I heard, but I did not understand; so I asked, "My lord, what
9 follows this?" "Go, Daniel," he said, "because the words are
10 to be kept secret and sealed until the end time. Many shall be
refined, purified, and tested, but the wicked shall prove wicked;
none of them shall have understanding, but the wise shall have
11 it. From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the
horrible abomination is set up, there shall be one thousand two
12 hundred and ninety days. Blessed is the man who has patience
and perseveres until the one thousand three hundred and thirty-
13 five days. Go, take your rest, you shall rise for your reward at
the end of days."

12, 1: *At that time:* After the persecution and death of Antiochus, Michael will save those predestined ("found written in the book").

12, 2-3: This text is generally interpreted to mean the bodily resurrection of the saved. The dispute concerns whether it also teaches the bodily resurrection of the damned. See 2 Mc 7, 9 n on the resurrection.

12, 7: *A year, two years, a half-year:* Daniel's question, "How long shall it be to the end" (v. 6) is answered as previously. See 7, 25 n.

12, 11-12: *One thousand two hundred and ninety days . . . one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days:* scholars do not know the meaning of these numbers.

12, 13: The fourth vision crowns the characteristic Hebrew theology of history. History is a wild scramble for power among rivals who destroy men and things, and blaspheme God through pride and forgetfulness of God. God permits these struggles; then He steps on the

III. APPENDIX

13

1 ***Susanna's Virtue*** In Babylon there lived a man named
2 Joakim, who married a very beautiful and God-fearing woman
3 Susanna, the daughter of Helcia; her pious parents had trained
4 their daughter according to the law of Moses. Joakim was very
rich; he had a garden near his house, and the Jews had recourse
to him often because he was the most respected of them all.
5 That year, two elders of the people were appointed judges
of whom the Lord said, "Wickedness has come out of Babylon
from the elders who were to govern the people as judges."
6 These men, to whom all brought their cases, frequented the
7 house of Joakim. When the people left at noon, Susanna used
8 to enter her husband's garden for a walk. When the old men
saw her enter every day for her walk, they began to lust for
9 her. They suppressed their consciences; they would not allow
their eyes to look to heaven, and did not keep in mind just
10 judgments. Though both were enamored of her, they did not
11 tell each other their trouble, for they were ashamed to reveal
12 their lustful desire to have her. Day by day they watched eagerly
13 for her. | One day they said to each other, "Let us be off for
14 home, it is time for lunch." So they went out and parted; | but
both turned back, and when they met again, they asked each
other the reason. They admitted their lust, and then they agreed
to look for an occasion when they could meet her alone.
15 One day, while they were waiting for the right moment, she
entered the garden as usual, with two maids only. She decided
16 to bathe, for the weather was warm. Nobody else was there
except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were
17 watching her. "Bring me oil and soap," she said to the maids
18 "and shut the garden doors while I bathe." They did as she
said; they shut the garden doors and left by the side gate to

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scene at a foreordained date to sweep them away and inaugurate His own everlasting Kingdom in which His faithful are honored.

13—14: These stories were written for the common folk; chs. 1—12 for the educated classes. The behavior of Daniel, laughing before the king (14, 7), is unheard of in chs. 1—6. The Church has always considered these chapters inspired, but the Jews and Protestants do not.

13, 1-64: The Jews transformed an eastern folktale into a religious tale. Most moderns agree it is not intended as history, but their opinions differ on the purpose. Was it written to show the evils of adultery and false testimony? Was it a Pharisee's condemnation of evil Sadducees ("the two wicked elders" of v. 28)? Regardless of the purpose, the focus of attention is not Susanna's temptation, but her victory and abandonment to God.

fetch what she had ordered, unaware that the elders were hidden inside.

19 As soon as the maids had left, the two old men got up and
20 hurried to her. "Look," they said, "the garden doors are shut,
21 and no one can see us; give in to our desire, and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that you dismissed your maids because a young man was here with you."

22 "I am completely trapped," Susanna groaned. "If I yield,
23 it will be my death; if I refuse, I cannot escape your power. Yet it is better for me to fall into your power without guilt than to
24 sin before the Lord." Then Susanna shrieked, and the old men
25 also shouted at her, as one of them ran to open the garden
26 doors. When the people in the house heard the cries from the garden, they rushed in by the side gate to see what had hap-
27 pened to her. At the accusations by the old men, the servants felt very much ashamed, for never had any such thing been said about Susanna.

28 When the people came to her husband Joakim the next day, the two wicked elders also came, fully determined to put
29 Susanna to death. Before all the people they ordered: "Send for Susanna, the daughter of Helcia, the wife of Joakim."
30 When she was sent for, | she came with her parents, children
31 and all her relatives. Susanna, very delicate and beautiful, |
32 was veiled; but those wicked men ordered her to uncover her
33 face so as to sate themselves with her beauty. All her relatives and the onlookers were weeping.

34 In the midst of the people the two elders rose up and laid
35 their hands on her head. Through her tears she looked up to
36 heaven, for she trusted in the Lord wholeheartedly. | The elders made this accusation: "As we were walking in the garden alone, this woman entered with two girls and shut the doors
37 of the garden, dismissing the girls. A young man, who was
38 hidden there, came and lay with her. When we, in a corner of
39 the garden, saw this crime, we ran toward them. We saw them lying together, but the man we could not hold, because he was
40 stronger than we; he opened the doors and ran off. Then we
41 seized this one and asked who the young man was, | but she refused to tell us. We testify to this." The assembly believed them, since they were elders and judges of the people, and they condemned her to death.

42 But Susanna cried aloud: "O eternal God, you know what is hidden and are aware of all things before they come to be:
43 you know that they have testified falsely against me. Here I am about to die, though I have done none of the things with which these wicked men have charged me."

44.45 The Lord heard her prayer. As she was being led to
execution, God stirred up the holy spirit of a young boy named
46 Daniel, | and he cried aloud: "I will have no part in the death
47 of this woman." All the people turned and asked him, "What
48 is this you are saying?" | He stood in their midst and continued,
"Are you such fools, O Israelites! To condemn a woman of
49 Israel without examination and without clear evidence? Return
to court, for they have testified falsely against her."
50 Then all the people returned in haste. To Daniel the elders
said, "Come, sit with us and inform us, since God has given
51 you the prestige of old age." But he replied, "Separate these
two far from one another that I may examine them."
52 After they were separated one from the other, he called one
of them and said: "How you have grown evil with age! Now
53 have your past sins come to term: | passing unjust sentences,
condemning the innocent, and freeing the guilty, although the
Lord says, 'The innocent and the just you shall not put to
54 death.' Now, then, if you were a witness, tell me under what
55 tree you saw them together." "Under a mastic tree," he an-
swered. "Your fine lie has cost you your head," said Daniel;
"for the angel of God shall receive the sentence from him and
56 split you in two." Putting him to one side, he ordered the other
one to be brought. "Offspring of Chanaan, not of Juda," Daniel
said to him, "beauty has seduced you, lust has subverted your
57 conscience. This is how you acted with the daughters of Israel,
and in their fear they yielded to you; but a daughter of Juda did
58 not tolerate your wickedness. Now, then, tell me under what
59 tree you surprised them together." "Under an oak," he said.
"Your fine lie has cost you also your head," said Daniel; "for
the angel of God waits with a sword to cut you in two so as
to make an end of you both."
60 The whole assembly cried aloud, blessing God who saves
61 those that hope in him. They rose up against the two elders,
for by their own words Daniel had convicted them of perjury.
According to the law of Moses, they inflicted on them the
62 penalty they had plotted to impose on their neighbor: | they
put them to death. Thus was innocent blood spared that day.
63 Helcia and his wife praised God for their daughter Susanna,
as did Joakim her husband and all her relatives, because she
64 was found innocent of any shameful deed. And from that day
onward Daniel was greatly esteemed by the people.

13, 45: *Daniel:* See Ez 14, 4 n.
13, 57: The writer is evidently a Judean.
13, 64: Most of the Susanna story forms the Epistle of the Mass of

14

1 ***Bel and the Dragon*** After king Astyages was gathered
to his fathers, Cyrus the Persian succeeded to his kingdom.
2 Daniel was the king's favorite and was held in higher esteem
3 than any of the friends of the king. The Babylonians had an
idol called Bel, and every day they provided for it six barrels
4 of fine flour, forty sheep, and six measures of wine. The king
worshiped it and went every day to adore it; but Daniel adored
5 only his God. When the king asked him, | "Why do you not
adore Bel?" Daniel replied, "Because I worship not idols made
with hands, but only the living God who made heaven and
6 earth and has dominion over all mankind." | Then the king
continued, "You do not think Bel is a living god? Do you not
7 see how much he eats and drinks every day?" Daniel began to
laugh. "Do not be deceived, O king," he said; "it is only clay
inside and bronze outside; it has never taken any food or drink."
8 Enraged, the king called his priests and said to them, "Unless
you tell me who it is that consumes these provisions, you shall
9 die. But if you can show that Bel consumes them, Daniel shall
die for blaspheming Bel." Daniel said to the king, "Let it be as
10 you say!" | There were seventy priests of Bel, besides their
wives and children.

When the king went with Daniel into the temple of Bel, |
11 the priests of Bel said, "See, we are going to leave. Do you, O
king, set out the food and prepare the wine; then shut the door
12 and seal it with your ring. If you do not find that Bel has eaten
it all when you return in the morning, we are to die; otherwise
13 Daniel shall die for his lies against us." They were not per-

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the Saturday before the Fourth Sunday of Lent, paralleling the story of the woman taken in adultery from Jn 8. In both, it is a question of adultery, but in one the innocent woman is saved through justice, and in the other the guilty woman is saved through mercy.

14, 1-42: The story of Bel (vv. 1-22) and the dragon (vv. 23-42). These stories are naively disguised satires on the Egyptian religion.

14, 1: *King Astyages:* Cyrus the Persian defeated Astyages, the last Median king in 550 B.C.

14, 2: Another variant Greek reading is: "There was once a priest, Daniel by name, the son of Abal, a favorite of the king of Babylon." This may represent an earlier form of the story, before it was attached to the Book of Daniel.

14, 3: *Bel:* this was at first the name of the god of the city Nippur. Later, Bel became identified with Marduk, the supreme god of Babylon.

14, 6: Historically, king Cyrus and the pagans did not believe that idols ate and drank, but this is the final and foolish conclusion of pagan worship as seen through the eyes of an inspired Jewish writer.

turbed, because under the table they had made a secret entrance
14 through which they always came in to consume the food. After
they departed the king set the food before Bel, while Daniel
ordered his servants to bring some ashes, which they scattered
through the whole temple; the king alone was present. Then
they went outside, sealed the closed door with the king's ring,
15 and departed. The priests entered that night as usual, with
their wives and children, and they ate and drank everything.
16 Early the next morning, the king came with Daniel. |
17 "Are the seals unbroken, Daniel?" he asked. And Daniel an-
18 swered, "They are unbroken, O king." | As soon as he had
opened the door, the king looked at the table and cried aloud,
19 "Great you are, O Bel; there is no trickery in you." But Daniel
laughed and kept the king from entering. "Look at the floor,"
20 he said; "whose footprints are these?" "I see the footprints of
21 men, women, and children!" said the king. The angry king
arrested the priests, their wives, and their children. They showed
him the secret door by which they used to enter to consume
22 what was on the table. He put them to death, and handed Bel
over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple.

23 There was a great dragon which the Babylonians worshiped.
24 "Look!" said the king to Daniel, "you cannot deny that this
25 is a living god, so adore it." But Daniel answered, "I adore the
26 Lord, my God, for he is the living God. Give me permission, O
king, and I will kill this dragon without sword or club." "I give
27 you permission," the king said. Then Daniel took some pitch,
fat, and hair; these he boiled together and made into cakes. He
put them into the mouth of the dragon, and when the dragon
ate them, he burst asunder. "This," he said, "is what you
worshiped."

28 When the Babylonians heard this, they were angry and
turned against the king. "The king has become a Jew," they
said; "he has destroyed Bel, killed the dragon, and put the
29 priests to death." They went to the king and demanded: "Hand
30 Daniel over to us, or we will kill you and your family." When
he saw himself threatened with violence, the king was forced to
31 hand Daniel over to them. They threw Daniel into a lions'
32 den, where he remained six days. In the den were seven lions
and two carcasses and two sheep had been given to them daily.
But now they were given nothing, so that they would devour
Daniel.

14, 28-32: This is another version of Daniel in the lions' den as told in ch. 6.

33 In Judea there was a prophet, Habacuc; he mixed some bread
in a bowl with the stew he had boiled, and was going to bring
34 it to the reapers in the field, when an angel of the Lord told
him, "Take the lunch you have to Daniel in the lions' den at
35 Babylon." | But Habacuc answered, "Babylon, sir, I have
36 never seen, and I do not know the den!" The angel of the Lord
seized him by the crown of his head and carried him by the hair;
with the speed of the wind, he set him down in Babylon above
37 the den. "Daniel, Daniel," cried Habacuc, "take the lunch
38 God has sent you." "You have remembered me, O God," said
39 Daniel; "you have not forsaken those who love you." While
Daniel began to eat, the angel of the Lord at once brought
Habacuc back to his own place.
40 On the seventh day the king came to mourn for Daniel. As
he came to the den and looked in, there was Daniel, sitting
41 there! | The king cried aloud, "You are great, O Lord, the
42 God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!" Daniel he
took out, but those who had tried to destroy him he threw into
the den, and they were devoured in a moment before his eyes.

14, 33-39: This seems to be one of several Habacuc stories that were then in circulation.

THE BOOK OF OSEE

INTRODUCTION

Osee (or Hosea) preached about 750-725 B.C. This was just before the fall of Samaria and the northern kingdom of Israel in 722-21 B.C. The backdrop of Samaria's doomsday is briefly this: in 745 B.C. Tiglath Pileser III ascended the Assyrian throne. He was determined to conquer the whole Middle East. The harsh Assyrian rule was to last for over a century, until 612 B.C. In Israel, the death of Jeroboam II in 743(?) opened the doors to anarchy. Then Manahem taxed the people heavily to pay a tribute to Tiglath Pileser III in 738. Manahem's son ruled till Phacee assassinated him. The Assyrians annexed the northern fronts of Israel and deported people during the reign of Phacee (737-732 B.C.). Osee, the last king of Israel (the same name as the prophet), refused to pay the tribute. Hence, the new Assyrian king, Salmanasar V, besieged Samaria. Sargon II, his son and successor, presided over the fall of Samaria.

Osee was a northerner by birth, and perhaps a priest. His contemporary, Amos, was a Judean whose preaching went unheeded in Israel and Osee's was not to fare any better. Osee is called the prophet of divine love in contrast to Amos, the prophet of divine justice. Osee's emotional nature, which could swiftly pass from deepest affection (e.g., 11 1-4) to red hot ire (11, 5-7), made him a model choice to express God's love for man. Osee's task was to arouse a self-complacent people who were assured of God's material help because, so they thought, their exterior worship guaranteed it. This misunderstanding of God's love wounded deeply the prophet of divine pathos. Although the aristocracy was the main target of his preaching, he placed the blame of the people's ignorance of God's love at the doorstep of the prophets and especially the priests. To impress upon the people the genuine love God bear toward them, Osee resorts to the imagery of the father's love for his son (11, 1ff), to the love of husband for wife, but particularly to his own love for his unfaithful wife. Osee became the incarnation of his message. He was a lover pursuing his beloved, thus symbolizing God pursuing His beloved wayward people. This bold metaphor is perhaps the highest point of love of God for man in the Old Testament. It is appreciably surpassed only by love incarnate, Christ. But God's love is flouted, and the onslaught of the Assyrian hordes brings about the fall of Samaria. Yet a note of hope pulls down the curtain on the book: the hope of a better world under the aegis of the Davidic dynasty.

Osee's disciple(s)-editor most probably arranged his prophecies in Jerusalem after the fall of Samaria. The book is divided into two main sections, which may have originally been two separate collections. The arrangement is fragmentary. Scholars believe Osee himself wrote 3, 1-5 the hinge of the book's two parts. The text is probably the most poorly preserved in the entire Hebrew Bible. Some verses yield hardly any meaning. Small wonder that modern translations differ so widely. Yet the basic message of love is crystal clear.

Osee's analogy of husband and wife to express God's love for man has made an indelible impression on the Canticle of Canticles as well as on subsequent prophets (Jeremia, Ezechiel, Isaia), and in the New Testament it is applied by John and Paul to Christ and His Church. The Roman Liturgy uses thirty-nine verses of Osee, e.g., Os 6, 1-6, in the Mass of Good Friday. Christian mystics applied this analogy to Christ and the individual soul.

Main divisions of the Book of Osee are:

1. The Prophet's Marriage and Its Lesson, 1—3
2. The Prophet's Preaching of Israel's Guilt and Punishment, 4—14

I. THE PROPHET'S MARRIAGE AND ITS LESSON

1

1 ***Marriage with an Unfaithful Wife*** The word of the Lord that came to Osee, the son of Beeri, in the days of Ozia, Joatham, Achaz, Ezechia, kings of Juda, and in the days of Jero-
2 boam, son of Joas, king of Israel. In the beginning of the Lord's speaking to Osee, the Lord said to Osee:

Go, take a harlot wife and harlot's children, for the land gives itself to harlotry, turning away from the Lord.

3 So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Debelaim; and
4 she conceived and bore him a son. Then the Lord said to him:

Give him the name Jezrael, for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed at Jezrael and bring to an

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1—3: In prophetic literature, this is one of the most discussed passages with ever so many divergent interpretations.

1, 1: See the historical background in the Introduction.

1, 2-9: This is an inspired writer's biographical account of Osee's marriage. The text does not necessarily mean that Gomer was a harlot before her marriage to Osee. A common interpretation of "take a harlot wife and harlot's children" (v. 2) is that Gomer becomes unfaithful after marriage, although Osee recognizes that her immoral tendencies had existed before marriage. This view is here based on the Hebrew expression for "harlot," which interprets harlot in its final results, i.e., she bears Osee three children fathered by another man. Osee gives them symbolic names. It need not necessarily mean that God directly ordered this marriage. Osee, years after, could have interpreted his marriage, through a divine inspiration, as something suited to the Divine Plan insofar as it symbolized God's relations to His people, namely: just as Osee pursues an unfaithful wife out of love, so does God pursue unfaithful Israel.

1, 4: *Jezrael:* Jehu exterminated the Omri dynasty in the valley of Jezrael in northern Israel about 841 B.C. (4 Kgs 9—10). *I will punish the house of Jehu:* this prophecy may be considered fulfilled in the murder of the last king of Jehu's dynasty (4 Kgs 15, 8-10). *And bring to an end the kingdom of the house of Israel:* this takes place in 722-21 B.C.

5 end the kingdom of the house of Israel; | on that day I will
break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezrael.
6 When she conceived again and bore a daughter, the Lord
said to him:
Give her the name Lo-ruhama; I no longer feel pity for the
7 house of Israel: rather, I abhor them utterly. | Yet for the
house of Juda I feel pity; I will save them by the Lord, their
God; but I will not save them by war, by sword or bow, by
horses or horsemen.
8 After she weaned Lo-ruhama, she conceived and bore a
9 son. Then the Lord said:
Give him the name Lo-ammi, for you are not my people
and I will not be your God.

2

4 ***Israel's Punishment and Restoration*** Protest against your
mother, protest! for she is not my wife, and I am not her
husband. Let her remove her harlotry from before her, her
5 adultery from between her breasts, | or I will strip her naked
leaving her as on the day of her birth; I will make her like the
desert, reduce her to an arid land, and slay her with thirst.
6 I will have no pity on her children, for they are the children of
7 harlotry. | Yes, their mother has played the harlot; she that
conceived them has acted shamefully. "I will go after my
lovers," she said, "who give me my bread and my water, my
wool and my flax, my oil and my drink."

1, 6: *Lo-ruhama:* "she is not pitied."

1, 7: An editor may have inserted this verse here after the fall of the northern kingdom in 722-21 when Osee's prophecies were being circulated in the southern kingdom of Juda. *But I will not save them by war . . . horsemen:* in a probable allusion to Jerusalem's deliverance from Sennacherib (4 Kgs 19, 35ff), the meaning is: God's power is self-sufficient and does not need human help.

1, 8: *Lo-ammi:* "not my people."

2, 4-25: The CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) translators have inserted 2, 1-3 after 3, 5. Osee has God apply here the example of the adulteress Gomer to God Himself and Israel. Just as Gomer deserted Osee so Israel, God's adulterous spouse, chases after the pagan gods. Because of this comparison or allegory, a minority view considers Osee's marriage to Gomer an allegory, not a true marriage. As in so many other scriptural passages, the essential point is the message, which remains the same whether it is true history or a figure of speech.

2, 5: There are documents of the era showing that this was the customary penalty for adultery.

2, 7: Osee has God say that the idolatrous Israelites attributed the produce of the land to their "lovers," the local fertility deities rather than to Him (v. 10).

10 Since she has not known that it was I who gave her the
grain, the wine, and the oil, and her abundance of silver, and
11 of gold, which they used for Baal, | therefore I will take back
my grain in its time, and my wine in its season; I will snatch
away my wool and my flax, with which she covers her naked-
12 ness. | So now I will lay bare her shame before the eyes of her
13 lovers, and no one can deliver her out of my hand. | I will
bring an end to all her joy, her feasts, her new moons, her Sab-
14 baths, and all her solemnities. | I will lay waste her vines and
fig trees, of which she said, "These are the hire my lovers have
given me"; I will turn them into rank growth and wild beasts
15 shall devour them. | I will punish her for the days of the Baals,
for whom she burnt incense while she decked herself out with
her rings and her jewels, and, in going after her lovers, forgot
me, says the Lord.

8 Therefore, I will hedge in her way with thorns and erect a
9 wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. | If she
runs after her lovers, she shall not overtake them; if she looks
for them she shall not find them. Then she shall say, "I will
go back to my first husband, for it was better with me then than
now."

16 So I will allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak
17 to her heart. | From there I will give her the vineyards she
had, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. She shall
respond there as in the days of her youth, when she came up
from the land of Egypt.

18 On that day, says the Lord, she shall call me "My husband,"
19 and never again "My baal." | Then will I remove from her
mouth the names of the Baals, so that they shall no longer be
20 invoked. | I will make a covenant for them on that day, with
the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the
things that crawl on the ground. Bow and sword and war I

2, 15: Local shrine celebrations in honor of Baal.

2, 8-9: God sent the famine (vv. 11-14) to make Israel return to Him.

2, 16-17: Of all the history of the people, Osee considered the journey in the Sinai desert as the most faithful era of the people's history (see Jer 2, 2-7). Consequently, Osee uses this period as a symbol of reconciliation between God and His people. Because prosperity made Israel forget her God, the suffering of the exile will bring her back. This deep truth seems to be the threat in ch. 2 and in the whole book.

2, 18: *My baal:* the word means "lord, master." It was commonly used by women of their husbands, but it must be shunned as a title for the Lord because of its association with the pagan god Baal. Probably it had been so used by many Israelites, who saw little if any difference between the worship of the Lord and the worship of Baal.

2, 20: See 4, 3 n.

will destroy from the land, and I will let them take their rest in
security.
21 I will espouse you to me forever: I will espouse you in right
22 and in justice, in love and in mercy; | I will espouse you in
23 fidelity, and you shall know the Lord. | On that day I will
respond, says the Lord; I will respond to the heavens, and
24 they shall respond to the earth; | the earth shall respond
to the grain, and wine, and oil, and these shall respond to
25 Jezrael. | I will sow him for myself in the land, and I will
have pity on Lo-ruhama. I will say to Lo-ammi, "You are my
people," and he shall say, "My God!"

3

1 ***Triumph of Love*** Again the Lord said to me: Give your
love to a woman beloved of a paramour, an adulteress; even
as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other
gods and are fond of raisin cakes.
2 So I brought her for fifteen pieces of silver and a homor and
3 a lethec of barley. Then I said to her:
"Many days you shall wait for me; you shall not play the
harlot or belong to any man; I in turn will wait for you." |
4 For the people of Israel shall remain many days without king

2, 21: *In right and in justice:* two favorite terms of Amos and Osee, especially when the latter condemns social and legal injustice. The terms here mean correct conduct in general. *Love:* in Hebrew, *hesed.* This is the most characteristic idea of Osee's preaching. It refers to the exclusive covenant-love of Ex 34, 5-8 n. *Mercy:* this word brings out a mother's pity toward weak children, and forgiving love.

2, 22: *And you shall know the Lord:* another favorite expression used in 4, 1; 5, 4; 6, 3 and 6. To Osee, this expression means a total commitment to God. *Fidelity:* the bond of all the qualities of love in v. 21.

2, 23-24: God's promise of the fertility of the land is traced from God to the rain ("heavens"), to the earth, the produce, and finally to Jezrael, the valley representing all Israel.

2, 25: *Him:* Jezrael. The meaning of these names is opposite to that given them in 1, 4-9. Here they mean: God will favor His people once again.

3, 1-3: This is an autobiographical account of Osee's marriage: see 1, 2-9 n for the biographical account. (A minority view interprets 3, 1-3 as a repetition of 1, 2-9.) Gomer left Osee to become a slave prostitute at a pagan shrine. Osee brought her back, or he divorced her and then remarried her (against Dt 24, 1-4). He punished her by imposing a period of chaste living before reinstating her as his wife.

3, 1: *Raisin cakes:* offerings to the fertility goddess Ashera, the female counterpart of Baal.

3, 2: *Homor:* about ten bushels. *Lethec:* a half-homor.

3, 4: *Sacred pillar:* a stone, originally perhaps a phallic symbol, representing Baal. *Ephod:* an instrument used in consulting the deity.

or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or
5 household idols. | Then the people of Israel shall turn back
and seek the Lord, their God, and David, their king; they shall
come trembling to the Lord and to his bounty, in the last days.
2,1 The number of the Israelites shall be like the sand of the
sea, which can be neither measured nor counted. Whereas they
were called, "Lo-ammi," they shall be called, "Children of
2,2 the living God." | Then the people of Juda and of Israel shall
be gathered together; they shall appoint for themselves one head
and come up from other lands, for great shall be the day of
2,3 Jezrael. | Say to your brothers, "Ammi," and to your sisters,
"Ruhama."

II. ISRAEL'S GUILT AND PUNISHMENT

4

1 ***Crimes of Israel*** Hear the word of the Lord, O people of
Israel, for the Lord has a grievance against the inhabitants
of the land: there is no fidelity, no mercy, no knowledge of
2 God in the land. | False swearing, lying, murder, stealing and
adultery! in their lawlessness, bloodshed follows bloodshed. |
3 Therefore the land mourns, and everything that dwells in it
languishes: the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and
even the fish of the sea perish.

4 ***Guilt of the Priests*** But let no one protest, let no one com-
5 plain; with you is my grievance, O priests! | You shall stumble
in the day, and the prophets shall stumble with you at night;

Household idols: images regarded as the tutelary deities of the household.

2, 1-3: If Gomer will remain chaste, Osee will change the names of his children. Note the changed order of chapter and verses.

4—14: These disorderly fragmentary eleven chapters of reprimands and threats deal with various times when Osee preached. Hence, they are not assembled in the chronological order of his preaching. In sharp contrast to former times, the vast majority of scholars today believe that these are all from Osee's preaching ministry, and not additions by writers after Osee. All admit random editorial words and verses.

4, 1: *Hear the word of the Lord:* a familiar opening prophetic phrase.

4, 3: A typical biblical notion is the sympathy of nature with man's lot. See Am 8, 8 n for another example.

4, 4: *O priests:* the priests have led the kingdom of Israel away from Yahweh's law. Osee vents his anger on them.

4, 5: *Your mother:* probably means the priestly caste.

6 I will destroy your mother. | My people perish for want of
knowledge! Since you have rejected knowledge, I will reject
you from my priesthood; since you have ignored the law of
7 your God, I will also ignore your sons. | One and all they sin
8 against me, exchanging their glory for shame. | They feed on
9 the sin of my people, and are greedy for their guilt. | The
priests shall fare no better than the people: I will punish them
10 for their ways, and repay them for their deeds. | They shall
eat but not be satisfied, they shall play the harlot but not
11 increase, because they have abandoned the Lord | to practice
harlotry.

Old wine and new deprive my people of understanding!
12 They consult their piece of wood, and their wand makes pro-
nouncements for them, for the spirit of harlotry has led them
13 astray; they commit harlotry, forsaking their God. | On the
mountaintops they offer sacrifice and on the hills they burn
incense, beneath oak and poplar and terebinth, because of their
pleasant shade. That is why your daughters play the harlot
14 and your daughters-in-law are adulteresses. | Am I then to
punish your daughters for their harlotry, your daughters-in-
law for their adultery? You yourselves consort with harlots
and with prostitutes you offer sacrifice! So must a people
without understanding come to ruin.

15 Though you play the harlot, O Israel, let not Juda become
guilty! Come not to Galgal, nor up to Beth-Aven, to swear
16 "As the Lord lives!" For Israel is as stubborn as a heifer; will
the Lord now give them broad pastures as though they were
17 lambs? | Ephraim is an associate of idols, let him alone
18 | When their carousing is over, they give themselves to harlotry

4, 7: *Their glory:* of the priesthood.

4, 8: A caustic verse.

4, 10: The general meaning of this obscure verse is that they will not be able to fulfill their desires.

4, 12: *Wood . . . wand:* an idol used in divination.

4, 14: *You yourselves:* the men in general. The persons addressed in vv. 11b-19 are the people in general since v. 11 states "my people." Osee says that the common sin of adultery committed by the women is not as disgusting as the ritual prostitution practiced by the men at Chanaanite shrines and introduced in sanctuaries of the Lord Himself.

4, 15: *Let not Juda become guilty:* a warning to Juda. *Galgal:* this is not the southern Galgal, but a sanctuary of prophets north of Bethel. *Beth-Aven:* translated literally, it means "house of iniquity." This was probably Osee's contemptuous epithet hurled at Bethel, a center for worship in opposition to the temple at Jerusalem (3 Kgs 12, 26-30).

4, 17: *Ephraim:* this was always the most important section of the northern kingdom, and during Osee's public life it was the only place in Israel not captured by the Assyrians.

19 in their arrogance they love shame. | The wind has bound them
up in its pinions; they shall have only shame from their altars.

5

1 ***Guilt of the Leaders*** Hear this, O priests, pay attention,
O house of Israel, O household of the king, give ear! It is you
who are called to judgment. For you have become a snare at
2 Maspha, and a net spread upon Thabor. | In their perversity
they have sunk into wickedness, and I am rejected by them all.
I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me; now
4 Ephraim has played the harlot, Israel is defiled. | Their deeds
do not allow them to return to their God; for the spirit of
harlotry is in them, and they do not recognize the Lord.
5 The arrogance of Israel bears witness against him; Ephraim
6 stumbles in his guilt, and Juda stumbles with them. | With
their flocks and their herds they shall go to seek the Lord, but
they shall not find him; he has withdrawn himself from them.
7 | They have been untrue to the Lord, for they have begotten
illegitimate children; now shall the new moon devour them
together with their fields.

8 ***Political Upheavals*** Blow the horn in Gabaa, the trumpet
in Rama! Sound the alarm in Beth-Aven: "Look behind you, O
9 Benjamin." | Ephraim shall become a waste on the day of
chastisement: against the tribes of Israel I announce what is
10 sure to be. | The princes of Juda have become like those
that move a boundary line; upon them I will pour out my
wrath like water.
11 Is Ephraim maltreated, his rights violated? No, he has will-

4, 19: When they will be blown away into exile, they will admit the futility of idolatrous sacrifices.

5, 1: *Maspha:* probably the Maspha in Jordan. *Thabor:* the mountain that dominates the valley of Jezrael.

5, 7: A pungent statement. Since the nation apostatized, their children are spiritually illegitimate. *The new moon . . . fields:* scholars differ in their translation because the verse is not clear in the original Hebrew.

5, 8-14: These verses refer to the Syro-Ephraimite war of 735-34 B.C. See 4 Kgs 16, 5-9. The Arameans and the Israelites attacked Juda. Assyria came to the aid of Juda and defeated her attackers. Osee blamed both Israel and Juda for the war.

5, 8: A poetic announcement of an invasion from Gabaa and Rama (of northern Juda) into Israel.

5, 10: This may allude to Juda's taking advantage of Israel's defeat by annexing some of Israel's southern territory.

5, 11-12: *Gone after filth:* by allying himself with Aram. *Moth . . .*

12 ingly gone after filth! | I am like a moth for Ephraim, like
13 maggots for the house of Juda. | When Ephraim saw his
infirmity, and Juda his sore, Ephraim went to Assyria, and
Juda sent to the great king. But he cannot heal you nor take
14 away your sore. | For I am like a lion to Ephraim, like a young
lion to the house of Juda; it is I who rend the prey and depart,
I carry it away and no one can save it from me.

15 ***Insincere Conversion*** I will go back to my place until they
pay for their guilt and seek my presence.

6

1 In their affliction, they shall look for me: "Come, let us
return to the Lord, for it is he who has rent, but he will heal
2 us; he has struck us, but he will bind our wounds. | He will
revive us after two days; on the third day he will raise us up,
3 to live in his presence. | Let us know, let us strive to know
the Lord; as certain as the dawn is his coming, and his judg-
ment shines forth like the light of day! He will come to us
like the rain, like spring rain that waters the earth."
4 What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you,
Juda? Your piety is like a morning cloud, like the dew that
5 early passes away. | For this reason I smote them through
6 the prophets, I slew them by the words of my mouth; | for it
is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather
7 than holocausts. | But they, in their land, violated the cove-
nant; there they were untrue to me.
8.9 Galaad is a city of evildoers, tracked with blood. | As brig-
ands ambush a man, a band of priests slay on the way to
10 Sichem, committing monstrous crime. | In the house of Israel
I have seen a horrible thing: there harlotry is found in Ephraim,
11 Israel is defiled. | For you also, O Juda, a harvest has been
appointed.

maggots: internal corruption will be the Lord's punishment of Israel and Juda.

5, 13: *Ephraim went . . . the great king:* Israel's king Manahem, as a vassal of Tiglath Pileser III (4 Kgs 15, 19f), had to pay tribute to the Assyrian king in 738 B.C. Likewise, king Achaz, fearing an invasion by the Syro-Ephraimite alliance, placed himself under the protection of Tiglath Pileser (4 Kgs 16, 7-9). "The great king" was the title used by the Assyrian kings.

5, 15: The Lord is here pictured as withdrawing Himself from Israel in order to bring the nation to repentance.

6, 2: *After two days; on the third day:* after a short period of time.

6, 4: *Piety:* this same word is translated "love" in 2, 21 and in v. 6 of this chapter.

6, 11: *Harvest:* the time when Juda will gather in the fruits of its sins.

7

1 When I would bring about the restoration of my people, when
I would heal Israel, the guilt of Ephraim stands out, the wicked-
ness of Samaria; they practice falsehood, thieves break in,
2 bandits plunder abroad. | Yet they do not remind themselves
that I remember all their wickedness. Even now their crimes
surround them, present to my sight.

3 ***Failure of the Monarchy*** In their wickedness they regale
4 the king, the princes too, with their deceits. | They are all
kindled to wrath like a blazing oven, whose fire the baker
desists from stirring once the dough is kneaded until it has
5 risen. | On the day of our king, the princes are overcome with
the heat of wine. He extends his hand among dissemblers; |
6 the plotters approach with hearts like ovens. All the night
their anger sleeps; in the morning it flares like a blazing fire. |
7 They are all heated like ovens, and consume their rulers. All
their kings have fallen; none of them calls upon me.

8 ***Foreign Alliances*** Ephraim mingles with the nations,
9 Ephraim is a hearth cake unturned. | Strangers have sapped
his strength, but he takes no notice of it; of gray hairs, too,
10 there is a sprinkling, but he takes no notice of it. | The arro-
gance of Israel bears witness against him; yet they do not return
to the Lord, their God, nor seek him, for all that.
11 Ephraim is like a dove, silly and senseless; they call upon
12 Egypt, they go to Assyria. | Even as they go I will spread my
net around them, like birds in the air I will bring them down.
In an instant I will send them captive from their land.

13 ***Perversity of Israel*** Woe to them, they have strayed from
me! Ruin to them, they have sinned against me! Though I
14 wished to redeem them, they spoke lies against me. | They have

7, 3-7: In about two decades between the death of Jeroboam II and the fall of Samaria, there were four dynasties on the throne of Israel. The nobles are compared to an overheated oven that burned and destroyed the nation instead of baking it into a finished product.

7, 3: *Regale:* with wine. See v. 5.

7, 6: As a fire will smoulder through the night, only to break out afresh in the morning, so too open rebellion breaks out on the strength of disgruntled plots and plans laid only the night before.

7, 8: *A hearth cake unturned:* Israel's foreign policy is as valuable as an unturned hearth cake, i.e., half-baked.

7, 14: *They lacerated themselves:* this form of entreaty to the divinities, although outlawed by the Jews (Dt 14, 1), was common among other oriental peoples (3 Kgs 18, 28).

not cried to me from their hearts when they wailed upon their
beds; for wheat and wine they lacerated themselves, while they
15 rebelled against me. | Though I trained and strengthened their
16 arms, yet they devised evil against me. | They have again
become useless, like a treacherous bow. Their princes shall
fall by the sword because of the insolence of their tongues;
thus they shall be mocked in the land of Egypt.

8

1 A trumpet to your lips, you who watch over the house of
the Lord! Since they have violated my covenant, and sinned
2 against my law, | while to me they cry out, "O God of Israel,
3 we know you!" The men of Israel have thrown away what is
good; the enemy shall pursue them.
4 They made kings, but not by my authority; they established
princes, but without my approval. With their silver and gold
5 they made idols for themselves, to their own destruction. | Cast
away your calf, O Samaria! my wrath is kindled against them;
how long will they be unable to attain innocence in Israel? |
6 The work of an artisan, no god at all, destined for the flames—
such is the calf of Samaria!
7 When they sow the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind;
the stalk of grain that forms no ear can yield no flour; even if
8 it could, strangers would swallow it. | Israel is swallowed up;
9 he is now among the nations a thing of no value. | They went
up to Assyria—a wild ass off on its own—Ephraim bargained
10 for lovers. | Even though they bargain with the nations, I will
now gather an army; king and princes shall shortly succumb
under the burden.
11 When Ephraim made many altars to expiate sin, his altars

7, 16: *Thus they shall be mocked in the land of Egypt:* this may allude to Ephraim's unfruitful request for aid against Assyria.

8, 1-3: Yahweh commands that the alarm be sounded because the Assyrian ("enemy") will punish Israel as God's instrument for having broken the covenant.

8, 4-6: Israel's monarchy in opposition to the divinely approved Davidic dynasty, and establishment of her sanctuary separate from the temple in Jerusalem are both signs of her rebellion against Yahweh. The calf image set up by Jeroboam I in the royal shrines prevented Israel from attaining innocence (vv. 5f).

8, 7-10: The general sense is a repudiation of the alliances with Gentiles, because these alliances showed a lack of trust in God.

8, 9: *Ephraim bargained for lovers:* for the "nations" of v. 10.

8, 10: In spite of their foreign alliances, God will punish them.

8, 11: The numerous local Yahweh shrines were "Chanaanized," so that Yahweh was identified with the god Baal. Thus the invectives of the

12 became occasions of sin. | Though I write for him my many
13 ordinances, they are considered as a stranger's. | Though they offer sacrifice, immolate flesh and eat it, the Lord is not pleased with them. He shall still remember their guilt and punish their
14 sins; they shall return to Egypt. | Israel has forgotten his maker and built palaces. Juda, too, has fortified many cities; but I will send fire upon his cities, to devour their castles.

9

1 ***Exile without Worship*** Rejoice not, O Israel, exult not like the nations! For you have been unfaithful to your God, loving
2 a harlot's hire upon every threshing floor. | Threshing floor and wine press shall not nourish them, the new wine shall fail them.
3 They shall not dwell in the Lord's land; Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and in Assyria they shall eat unclean food. |
4 They shall not pour libations of wine to the Lord, or proffer their sacrifices before him. Theirs will be like mourners' bread, that makes unclean all who eat of it; such food as they have shall be for themselves; it cannot enter the house of the Lord.
5 What will you do on the festival day, the day of the Lord's
6 feast? | When they go from the ruins, Egypt shall gather them in, Memphis shall bury them. Weeds shall overgrow their silver treasures, and thorns invade their tents.

7 ***The Prophet Ridiculed*** They have come, the days of punishment! they have come, the days of recompense! Let Israel know it! "The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is mad!" Because your iniquity is great, great, too, is your hostility.
8 A prophet is Ephraim's watchmen with God, yet a fowler's snare is on all his ways, hostility in the house of his God. |

prophets influenced the Deuteronomic writers to restrict the sacrifice to the one temple of Jerusalem.

8, 13: *They shall return to Egypt:* a threat of annulling the Covenant of Sinai.

9, 1: *Upon every threshing floor:* an allusion to harvest festivals in honor of Baal to whom the Israelites had attributed the fertility of the land (see 2, 7 n).

9, 3: See 8, 13 n, on the same idea.

9, 4: *Mourner's bread:* bread eaten at funeral rites.

9, 5: *The Lord's feast:* the autumn Feast of Booths, the most important of all the Israelite feasts.

9, 6: When they abandon their ruined homes, they will perish in Egypt while their treasures in Israel decay.

9, 7-9: The general meaning often given this obscure passage is that this is the people's verdict on Osee who is barred from preaching.

9 They have sunk to the depths of corruption, as in the days of
Gabaa; he shall remember their iniquity and punish their sins.

10 ***Crime of Baal-Phogor*** Like grapes in the desert, I found
Israel; like the first fruits of the fig tree in its prime, I considered
your fathers. When they came to Baal-Phogor and consecrated
themselves to the Shame, they became as abhorrent as the thing
11 they loved. | The glory of Ephraim flies away like a bird: no
birth, no carrying in the womb, no conception. Were they to
12 bear children, I would slay the darlings of their womb. | Even
though they bring up their children, I will make them childless,
till not one is left. Woe to them when I turn away from them!
13 | Ephraim, as I saw, was like Tyre, planted in a beauteous spot;
14 but Ephraim shall bring out his children to the slayer. | Give
them, O Lord! give them what? Give them an unfruitful womb,
and dry breasts!

15 ***Crime of Galgal*** All their wickedness is in Galgal; yes,
there they incurred my hatred. Because of their wicked deeds
I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no longer;
16 all their princes are rebels. | Ephraim is stricken, their root
is dried up; they shall bear no fruit.
17 My God will disown them because they have not listened to
him; they shall be wanderers among the nations.

10

1 ***Punishment of Idolatry*** Israel is a luxuriant vine whose
fruit matches its growth. The more abundant his fruit, the
more altars he built; the more productive his land, the more
2 sacred pillars he set up. | Their heart is false, now they pay for
their guilt; God shall break down their altars and destroy
3 their sacred pillars. | If they would say, "We have no king"—

9, 9: *The days of Gabaa:* a reference to the crime committed at Gabaa. See Jgs 19, 22-30.

9, 10-14: God is represented as choosing His people with the same surprised joy as a nomad finding grapes and figs in the desert (v. 10a). The punishment of sterility (vv. 11-13), expressed as a curse (v. 14) is described as suitable to the crime of the "illicit relations with the Moabite women" (Nm 25, 1) committed at Baal-Phogor, where the Israelites consecrated themselves to Baal, called "Shame" (v. 10b).

9, 15-17: The rejection of the northern kingdom.

9, 15: *Galgal:* see 4, 15.

9, 17: *They shall be wanderers among the nations:* this may allude to the curse of Cain (Gn 4, 14).

10, 1: The richer the people grew, the more idolatrous they became. See 2, 16-17 n. *Sacred pillars:* see 3, 4 n.

since they do not fear the Lord, what can the king do for them?
4 | Nothing but make promises, swear false oaths, and make
alliances, while justice grows wild like wormwood in a plowed
field!
5 The inhabitants of Samaria fear for the calf of Beth-Aven;
the people mourn for it and its priests wail over it, because the
6 glory has departed from it. | It too shall be carried to Assyria,
as an offering to the great king. Ephraim shall be taken into
captivity, Israel be shamed by his schemes.
7 The king of Samaria shall disappear, like foam upon the
8 waters. | The high places of Aven shall be destroyed, the sin
of Israel; thorns and thistles shall overgrow their altars. Then
they shall cry out to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the
hills, "Fall upon us!"
9 Since the days of Gabaa you have sinned, O Israel. There
they took their stand; war was not to reach them in Gabaa. |
10 Against the wanton people I came and I chastised them; I
gathered troops against them when I chastised them for their
two crimes.

11 ***Time to Seek the Lord*** Ephraim was a trained heifer, will-
ing to thresh; I myself laid a yoke upon her fair neck; Ephraim
was to be harnessed. Juda was to plow, Jacob was to break his
12 furrows; | "Sow for yourselves justice, reap the fruit of piety;
break up for yourselves a new field, for it is time to seek the
13 Lord, till he come and rain down justice upon you." | But you
have cultivated wickedness, reaped perversity, and eaten the
fruit of falsehood.
Because you have trusted in your chariots, and in your many
14 warriors, | turmoil shall break out among your tribes and all
your fortresses shall be ravaged as Salman ravaged Beth-Arbel
15 in time of war, smashing mothers and their children. | So shall

10, 4: The last kings of Israel are here indicted for their unjust rule.
10, 5: *Glory:* a probable reference to the golden plating of the idol calf of Beth-Aven, mentioned in 4, 15. See 8, 4-6 n.
10, 6: *Israel be shamed by:* the inability of the god to save them from the Assyrians.
10, 10: *Two crimes:* a probable allusion to the introduction of kingship (1 Sm 10, 23f), and the immoral deed described in Jgs 19.
10, 11: This may allude to the first entrance into the Promised Land.
10, 14: *As Salman ravaged Beth-Arbel:* allusion to an invasion not otherwise mentioned in the Bible. Salman may have been the Moabite king of this name mentioned in an inscription of Tiglath Pileser III. There were several Beth-Arbels in Palestine; this was probably in Jordan.
10, 15: *At dawn:* at the beginning of the king's reign.

it be done to you, Bethel, because of your utter wickedness: at
dawn the king of Israel shall perish utterly.

11

1 ***When Israel Was a Child*** When Israel was a child I
2 loved him, out of Egypt I called my son. | The more I called
them, the farther they went from me, sacrificing to the Baals
3 and burning incense to idols. | Yet it was I who taught Ephraim
4 to walk, who took them in my arms; | I drew them with human
cords, with bands of love; I fostered them like one who raises
an infant to his cheeks; yet, though I stooped to feed my child
they did not know that I was their healer.
5 He shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be his
6 king; | the sword shall begin with his cities and end by con-
suming his solitudes. Because they refused to repent, their own
7 counsels shall devour them. | His people are in suspense about
returning to him; and God, though in unison they cry out to
him, shall not raise them up.

8 ***End of the Exile*** How could I give you up, O Ephraim
or deliver you up, O Israel? How could I treat you as Adama
or make you like Seboim? My heart is overwhelmed, my pity is
9 stirred. | I will not give vent to my blazing anger, I will not
destroy Ephraim again; for I am God and not man, the Holy
One present among you; I will not let the flames consume you.
10 They shall follow the Lord, who roars like a lion; when he

11, 1-4: It is a moot question whether God's love for man is expressed more profoundly in the Bible through the analogy of husband and wife, or father and son. Regardless, this is the most tender expression in the Bible of God's love as a father for his son, Israel. Behind the metaphor is the teaching of man's unmerited divine love and God's immutable love, even though man has rebuffed God from his youth.

11, 1: *Out of Egypt I called my son:* this could also mean a love of election, i.e., God called His people out of Egypt to the dignity of being His son. According to some, Mt 2, 15 quotes Osee's text in the typical sense of Jesus' exile-flight into Egypt.

11, 4: *I drew them . . . with bands of love:* not forcing them like draft animals.

11, 8-9: From his own experience as an offended lover, Osee knows that God is just and therefore He must punish sinners. Yet God, because of His everlasting love, will not exterminate His beloved people like "Adama and Seboim," the two cities destroyed with Sodom and Gomorra (Dt 29, 22).

11, 10-11: The roaring lion usually is a symbol of divine anger. It is here used to call the exiles home.

11, 10: *From the west:* some scholars omit this phrase.

11 roars, his sons shall come frightened from the west. | Out of
Egypt they shall come trembling, like sparrows, from the land
of Assyria, like doves; and I will resettle them in their homes,
says the Lord.

12

1 ***Infidelity of Israel*** Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,
the house of Israel, with deceit; Juda is still rebellious against
2 God, against the Holy One, who is faithful. | Ephraim chases
the wind, ever pursuing the gale. His lies and falsehoods are
many: he comes to terms with Assyria, and carries oil to Egypt.
3 The Lord has a grievance against Israel: he shall punish
Jacob for his conduct, for his deeds he shall repay him. |
4 In the womb he supplanted his brother, and as a man he con-
5 tended with God; | he contended with the angel and triumphed,
entreating him with tears. At Bethel he met God and there he
6 spoke with him: | the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord is his
7 name! | You shall return by the help of your God, if you
remain loyal and do right and always hope in your God.
8 A merchant who holds a false balance, who loves to defraud!
9 | Though Ephraim says, "How rich I have become; I have made
a fortune!" All his gain shall not suffice him for the guilt of
10 his sin. | I am the Lord, your God, since the land of Egypt; I
will again have you live in tents, as in that appointed time. |
11 I granted many visions and spoke to the prophets, through
12 whom I set forth examples. | In Galaad is falsehood, they have
come to nought, in Galgal they sacrifice to bullocks; their altars
are like heaps of stones in the furrows of the field.
13 When Jacob fled to the land of Aram, he served for a wife;
14 for a wife Israel tended sheep. | By a prophet the Lord brought
Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet they were protected. |
15 Ephraim has exasperated his Lord; therefore he shall cast his
blood-guilt upon him and repay him for his outrage.

13

1 Ephraim's word caused fear, for he was exalted in Israel;
but he sinned through Baal and died.

12, 2: *He comes . . . Egypt:* allusion to the commercial and military pacts with the great powers.

12, 3-7: Contemporary Israel and the Israel represented by its ancestor Jacob (Israel) are here spoken of interchangeably. Osee's recall of the Jacob story as described in Genesis differs in some details.

12, 4: A reference to Gn 25, 26; 32, 25.

12, 13: Refers to Gn 28, 5; 29, 20.

12, 14: *A prophet:* Moses.

2 ***Punishment for Ingratitude*** Now they continue to sin,
making for themselves molten images, silver idols according
to their fancy, all of them the work of artisans. "To these,"
3 they say, "offer sacrifice." Men kiss calves! | Therefore, they
shall be like a morning cloud or like the dew that early passes
away, like chaff storm-driven from the threshing floor or like
smoke out of the window.
4 I am the Lord, your God, since the land of Egypt; you know
5 no God besides me, and there is no savior but me. | I fed you
6 in the desert, in the torrid land. | They ate their fill; when
7 filled, they became proud of heart and forgot me. | Therefore
I will be like a lion to them, like a panther by the road I will
8 keep watch. | I will attack them like a bear robbed of its young
and tear their hearts from their breasts; I will devour them
on the spot like a lion, as though a wild beast were to rend them.
9 Your destruction, O Israel! who is there to help you?
10 Where now is your king, that he may rescue you in all your
cities? And your rulers, of whom you said, "Give me a king
11 and princes"? | I give you a king in my anger, and I take him
away in my wrath.
12 The guilt of Israel is wrapped up, his sin is stored away.
13 The birth pangs shall come for him, but he shall be an unwise
child; for when it is time he shall not present himself where
14 children break forth. | Shall I deliver them from the power of
the nether world? shall I redeem them from death? Where are
your plagues, O death! where is your sting, O nether world!
My eyes are closed to compassion.
15 Though he be fruitful among his fellows, an east wind shall
come, a wind from the Lord, rising from the desert, that shall
dry up his spring, and leave his fountain dry. It shall loot his
land of every precious thing.

14

1 Samaria shall expiate her guilt, for she has rebelled against
her God. They shall fall by the sword, their little ones shall
be dashed to pieces, their expectant mothers shall be ripped
open.

2 ***Sincere Conversion*** Return, O Israel, to the Lord, your
3 God; you have collapsed through your guilt. | Take with you
words, and return to the Lord; say to him, "Forgive all iniquity

13, 12-13: Israel deserves complete destruction (v. 12) because it refuses to repent. It will die prematurely (v. 13).
13, 14: A firm assertion of God's determination to destroy Israel

and receive what is good, that we may render as offerings the
4 bullocks from our stalls. | Assyria will not save us, nor shall
we have horses to mount; we shall say no more, 'Our god,'
to the work of our hands; for in you the orphan finds
compassion."
5 I will heal their defection, I will love them freely; for my
6 wrath is turned away from them. | I will be like the dew for
Israel: he shall blossom like the lily; he shall strike root like the
7 Lebanon cedar, | and put forth his shoots. His splendor shall
be like the olive tree and his fragrance like the Lebanon cedar. |
8 Again they shall dwell in his shade and raise grain; they shall
blossom like the vine, and his fame shall be like the wine of
Lebanon.
9 Ephraim! What more has he to do with idols? I have humbled
him, but I will prosper him. "I am like a verdant cypress tree"
—because of me you bear fruit!

* * *

0 Let him who is wise understand these things; let him who is
prudent know them. Straight are the paths of the Lord, in them
the just walk, but sinners stumble in them.

14, 10: A later addition in the style of the wisdom literature.

THE BOOK OF JOEL

INTRODUCTION

Many recent scholars date the Book of Joel after the sixth century exile, about 400-350 B.C. The unity of the book is more debated, but the majority's opinion is that Joel wrote all of it himself.

Commonly, the events described in chs. 1—2 are interpreted as a real plague of locusts (not a literary invention). A minority's belief is that chs. 1—2 were written as a liturgical piece for an end to the plague. On the occasion of the real plague, Joel calls for repentance and describes the Day of Yahweh in chs. 3—4. He reinterprets the real plague as a rehearsal, or symbol, of the world-wide catastrophe which will occur in the last days, i.e., at the Day of the Lord. Joel injects into these chapters all his beliefs concerning the last days.

Main divisions of the Book of Joel are:

1. The Land Invaded, 1, 1-12
2. Call to Penance, 1, 13-20
3. The Day of the Lord, 2, 1-17
4. Blessings for God's People, 2, 18—3, 5
5. Judgment upon the Nations, 4, 1-16
6. Salvation for God's Elect, 4, 17-21

1

1 ***The Land Invaded*** The word of the Lord which came to
Joel, the son of Phathuel.
2 Hear this, you elders! Pay attention, all you who dwell in
the land! Has the like of this happened in your days, or in the
3 days of your fathers? | Tell it to your children, and your chil-
dren to their children, and their children to the next generation.
4 | What the cutter left, the locust swarm has eaten; what the
locust swarm left, the grasshopper has eaten; and what the grass-
hopper left, the devourer has eaten.
5 Wake up, you drunkards, and weep; wail, all you drinkers
of wine, because the juice of the grape will be withheld from
6 your mouths. | For a people has invaded my land, mighty and
without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and his
7 molars those of a lioness. | He has laid waste my vine, and
blighted my fig tree; he has stripped it, sheared off its bark; its
branches are made white.

1, 1: This is all we know of Joel's personal life.

1, 2-20: Locust plagues were common, but, on the occasion of an extraordinarily severe plague (2-12), Joel delivers his first sermon in which he calls for penance (13-20).

1, 4: *Cutter . . . locust . . . grasshopper . . . devourer:* these are approximate translations of various species of locusts.

1, 6: *A people:* the locusts.

8 Lament like a virgin girt with sackcloth for the spouse of her
9 youth. | Abolished are offering and libation from the house of
the Lord; in mourning are the priests, the ministers of the Lord.
10 | The field is ravaged, the earth mourns, because the grain is
ravaged, the must has failed, the oil languishes.
11 Be appalled, you husbandmen! wail, you vinedressers! Over
the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field has
12 perished. | The vine has dried up, the fig tree is withered; the
pomegranate, the date palm also, and the apple, all the trees of
the field are dried up; yes, joy has withered away from among
mankind.

13 ***Call to Penance*** Gird yourselves and weep, O priests!
wail, O ministers of the altar! Come, spend the night in sack-
cloth, O ministers of my God! The house of your God is
14 deprived of offering and libation. | Proclaim a fast, call an
assembly; gather the elders, all who dwell in the land, into the
house of the Lord, your God, and cry to the Lord!
15 Alas, the day! for near is the day of the Lord, and it comes
16 as ruin from the Almighty. | From before our very eyes has not
the food been cut off; and from the house of our God, joy and
17 gladness? | The casks rot away under their lids, the stores are
destroyed, the barns are broken down, for the grain has failed.
18 | How the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are bewildered!
Because they have no pasturage, even the flocks of sheep have
perished.
19 To you, O Lord, I cry! for fire has devoured the pastures of
the plain, and flame has enkindled all the trees of the field. |
20 Even the beasts of the field cry out to you; for the streams of
water are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the
plain.

2

1 ***The Day of the Lord*** Blow the trumpet in Sion, sound

1, 9: The locust plague is severe enough to stop sacrifices at the temple. See v. 13.

1, 14: *Call an assembly:* this corresponds to a proclamation of a national day of mourning in our days.

1, 15: *The day of the Lord:* in this context, the expression means the visitation of the Lord through a locust plague. See Am 5, 18-20 n.

1, 19: This refers to fires occasioned by dryness.

2, 1-17: Joel's second sermon deals with the Day of the Lord. The "day" is depicted as the Lord punishing His people while He leads the army of locusts (v. 11). See 1, 15 n. Though most scholars believe that Joel is describing the same plague as in ch. 1, some believe he speaks of

the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all who dwell in the land
2 tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; | yes, it is near, a
day of darkness and of gloom, a day of clouds and somberness!
Like dawn spreading over the mountains, a people numerous
and mighty! Their like has not been from of old, nor will it be
3 after them, even to the years of distant generations. | Before
them a fire devours, and after them a flame enkindles; like the
garden of Eden is the land before them, and after them a desert
waste; from them there is no escape.
4 Their appearance is that of horses; like steeds they run. |
5 As with the rumble of chariots they leap on the mountaintops;
as with the crackling of a fiery flame devouring stubble; like a
6 mighty people arrayed for battle. | Before them peoples are in
torment, every face blanches.
7 Like warriors they run, like soldiers they scale the wall; they
advance, each in his own lane, without swerving from their
8 paths. | No one crowds another, each advances in his own
track; though they fall into the ditches, they are not checked.
9 They assault the city, they run upon the wall, they climb into
10 the houses; in at the windows they come like thieves. | Before
them the earth trembles, the heavens shake; the sun and the
moon are darkened, and the stars withhold their brightness.
11 The Lord raises his voice at the head of his army; for
immense indeed is his camp, yes, mighty, and it does his bidding.
For great is the day of the Lord, and exceedingly terrible; who
12 can bear it? | Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with
your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; |
13 rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord,
your God. For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich
14 in kindness, and relenting in punishment. | Perhaps he will
again relent and leave behind him a blessing, offerings and
libations for the Lord, your God.
15 Blow the trumpet in Sion! proclaim a fast, call an assembly;
16 | gather the people, notify the congregation; assemble the elders,
gather the children and the infants at the breast; let the bride-
17 groom quit his room, and the bride her chamber. | Between the

a plague of locusts afar off in the first sermon (1, 2-20), and then of the locusts' invasion of the city itself in the second sermon (2, 1-17).

2, 1: *Sion . . . holy mountain:* Jerusalem.

2, 10: The influence of Ezechiel, Jeremia, Amos, Sophonia, Jona is seen in vv. 10, 11, 13, 14.

2, 12-17: On the occasion of the plague, the people are summoned to penance.

2, 13: *Rend your hearts, not your garments:* this verse is frequently used in the Roman Lenten liturgy.

2, 17: The priests stood in the open space between the outdoor

porch and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord,
weep, and say, "Spare, O Lord, your people, and make not
your heritage a reproach, with the nations ruling over them!
Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' "

18 ***Blessings for God's People*** Then the Lord was stirred
19 to concern for his land and took pity on his people. The Lord
answered and said to his people:

See, I will send you grain, and wine, and oil, and you shall
be filled with them; no more will I make you a reproach among
20 the nations. | No, the northerner I will remove far from you,
and drive him out into a land arid and waste, with his van
toward the eastern sea, and his rear toward the western sea;
and his foulness shall go up, and his stench shall go up.
21 Fear not, O land! exult and rejoice! for the Lord has done
22 great things. | Fear not, beasts of the field! for the pastures of
the plain are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and the
vine give their yield.
23 And do you, O children of Sion, exult and rejoice in the Lord,
your God! He has given you the teacher of justice: he has made
the rain come down for you, the early and the late rain as before.
24 | The threshing floors shall be full of grain and the vats shall
overflow with wine and oil.
25 And I will repay you for the years which the locust has eaten,
the grasshopper, the devourer, and the cutter, my great army
26 which I sent among you. | You shall eat and be filled, and
shall praise the name of the Lord, your God, because he has

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altar of holocausts and the temple building, facing the latter to thereby look toward God present in the Holy of Holies. This description held true for Solomon's temple also. See chart: The Temple of Solomon, p. 576.

2, 19: *See, I will send you . . . among the nations:* see 4, 1-2 n. Most scholars consider this verse the turning point of Joel's booklet: the pivot, turning from the sadness of the people to God's pity on them.

2, 20: *The northerner:* the locusts are compared to an invading army, which in Palestine came from the north. *Eastern sea:* the Dead Sea. *Western sea:* the Mediterranean.

2, 23: *O children of Sion:* the people of Jerusalem and of the rest of Judea. *The teacher of justice:* the rain sent by God to show fidelity to His promises, and to teach the people to be faithful to His commandments. See Dt 11, 14 and Jl 4, 1-2 n. There is also a pun between the Hebrew word *moreh* (teacher) and the Hebrew word *yoreh* (the early reign). This metaphorical expression does not refer to the founder of the Essene sect of Qumran (second century B.C.) who was known as the "teacher of justice." *The early and the late rain:* the autumn rain (October-November) and the spring rain (March-April). In Palestine the crops are planted in autumn and harvested in spring.

2, 25: *The grasshopper, the devourer, and the cutter:* see 1, 4 n.

dealt wondrously with you; my people shall nevermore be put
27 to shame. | And you shall know that I am in the midst of
Israel; I am the Lord, your God, and there is no other; my people
shall nevermore be put to shame.

3

1 Then afterward I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind:
Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall
2 dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; | even upon
the servants and the handmaids, in those days, I will pour
out my spirit.
3 And I will work wonders in the heavens and on the earth:
4 blood, fire, and columns of smoke; | the sun will be turned to
darkness, and the moon to blood, at the coming of the Day of
5 the Lord, the great and terrible day. | Then everyone shall be
rescued who calls on the name of the Lord; for on Mount Sion
there shall be a remnant, as the Lord has said, and in Jeru-
salem survivors whom the Lord shall call.

4

1 ***Judgment upon the Nations*** Yes, in those days, and at

3—4: These two chapters are "apocalyptic." See Introduction to the Book of Daniel.

3, 1-5: On the occasion of the real locust plague of chs. 1—2, (see Introduction to the Book of Joel), the prophet peers into the hazy future and describes the Day of the Lord, when God will pour out His "spirit" abundantly. Joel dips back into history for the idea of spirit (Gn 1, 2—God's spirit creates; the spirit coming upon the judges and upon the Messia—Is 11, 2). The prophet has not given a photographic picture of Pentecost, but Peter, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2, 17-21), interprets Joel's prediction as fulfilled in the abundant presence of the Spirit Himself, a phenomenon far beyond Joel's wildest expectations. From this description of the Day of the Lord, and from the rest of chs. 3—4, it is clear that Joel's Day of the Lord is not a soul-searching day as in Amos, but a day of restoring glory to the Chosen People and of punishing the pagans.

3, 3-4: Joel does not really mean that these cosmic disturbances will accompany the effusion of the spirit in the future Day of the Lord. He and the prophets before him use these customary figures of speech because they constitute part of the dramatic machinery to accompany a great intervention of God in history, and on the Day of the Lord. In this context, God will intervene with "the spirit." Peter understood this well, for he proclaims Joel's day fulfilled even though there were no such cataclysmic phenomena on Pentecost.

3, 5: Joel continues the former prophetic doctrine of the remnant (see Am 5, 15 n), namely, on the Day of the Lord there will be a group remaining loyal to Yahweh.

4, 1-2: In this and many similar Old Testament passages, the prophet and the people may have hoped for a restoration of the material

that time, when I would restore the fortunes of Juda and
2 Jerusalem, | I will assemble all the nations and bring them
down to the Valley of Josaphat, and I will enter into judgment
with them there on behalf of my people and my inheritance,
Israel; because they have scattered them among the nations,
3 and divided my land. | Upon my people they have cast lots;
they gave a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for the wine they
drank.
4 Moreover, what are you to me, Tyre and Sidon, and all
the regions of Philistia? Would you take vengeance upon me
by some action? But if you do take action against me, swiftly,
5 speedily, I will return your deed upon your own head. You took
my silver and my gold, and brought my precious treasures into
6 your temples! You sold the people of Juda and Jerusalem to the
7 Greeks, removing them far from their own country! See, I will
rouse them from the place into which you have sold them, and
8 I will return your deed upon your own head. I will sell your sons
and your daughters to the people of Juda, who shall sell them to
the Sabeans, a nation far off. Indeed, the Lord has spoken.
9 Declare this among the nations: proclaim a war, rouse the
warriors to arms! Let all the soldiers report and march! |
10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into
spears; let the weak man say, "I am a warrior!"
11 Hasten and come, all you neighboring peoples, assemble
12 there! [Bring down, O Lord, your warriors!] | Let the nations
bestir themselves and come up to the Valley of Josaphat; for

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and political pre-eminence of the nation. In the New Testament times, however, it became clear that these blessings were to be interpreted as spiritual blessings of the Messianic age. *Valley of Josaphat:* Joel has God symbolically convoke a last judgment where He will reprove the Gentile nations for the invasions of Palestine and the cruel treatment of His people (vv. 3-8). Josaphat means "Yahweh judges." The prophet is not speaking of a real place here, but of a symbolic "valley of decision" (v. 14). The popular fallacious notion understands this as the Valley of Cedron in Jerusalem as the site for the Last Judgment at the end of the world.

4, 5: This is a general reference to the plundering Phoenicians and Philistines who hoarded their booty in their own temples, the treasury buildings of antiquity.

4, 6: Scholars can only guess at this historical slave trading incident, in which the Phoenicians and Philistines (v. 4) sold Judeans to the Greeks. See Am 1, 6 and 9 for a similar accusation of selling slaves.

4, 8: *Sabeans:* a famous commercial people of southern Arabia.

4, 9-12: God ironically orders His herald to tell the nation to proclaim war on Him (v. 9) in the "Valley of Josaphat" (v. 12). V. 10 uses this imagery for war, whereas Is 2, 4 and Mi 4, 3 use it for peace.

4, 11: *Warriors:* the angels.

there will I sit in judgment upon all the neighboring nations.
13 Apply the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come and tread, for
the wine press is full; the vats overflow, for great is their
14 malice. | Crowd upon crowd in the valley of decision; for near
15 is the day of the Lord in the valley of decision. | Sun and
moon are darkened, and the stars withhold their brightness. |
16 The Lord roars from Sion, and from Jerusalem raises his voice;
the heavens and the earth quake, but the Lord is a refuge to his
people, a stronghold to the men of Israel.

17 ***Salvation for God's Elect*** Then shall you know that I,
the Lord, am your God, dwelling on Sion, my holy mountain;
Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall pass through her
no more.
18 And then, on that day, the mountains shall drip new wine,
and the hills shall flow with milk; and the channels of Juda
shall flow with water: a fountain shall issue from the house of
19 the Lord; to water the Valley of Sattim. | Egypt shall be a
waste, and Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to
the people of Juda, because they shed innocent blood in their
20 land. | But Juda shall abide forever, and Jerusalem for all
21 generations. | I will avenge their blood, and not leave it un-
punished. The Lord dwells in Sion.

4, 13-16: The use of warlike weapons against Juda's enemies on the Day of the Lord is likened to an attack on the fields and vines at harvest time.

4, 15: See 3, 3-4 n.

4, 16: The idealized Valley (v. 12) designated for "war" is in Jerusalem.

4, 17: *Strangers:* invaders. See 4, 1-2 n.

4, 18: Am 9, 13-14 has a similar imagery of future prosperity. See Jl 4, 1-2 n for the interpretation. *A fountain:* this may be an allusion to Ezechiel and Zacharia. See Ez 47, 1-12 n; Za 14, 8. *Valley of Sattim:* Joel is probably thinking of a part of the Cedron Valley in Jerusalem, but he means an ideal valley like the Valley of Josaphat.

4, 19: This may be interpreted as an unknown episode(s) of Egyptians and Edomites massacring exiled Judeans.

4, 20: Since the eternity of Jerusalem and Juda is contrasted with the destruction of Egypt and Edom, it may mean that Juda will ultimately triumph over her enemies.

THE BOOK OF AMOS

INTRODUCTION

Amos, the gloomy shepherd who was "all business" about the oracles of Yahweh, came from Thecua six miles south of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet resembles a typical modern Bedouin; he is fiery and, though uneducated, eloquent and intelligent. He preached during the second half of the reign of Jeroboam II (783-743?), ruler of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Israel enjoyed economic prosperity and political prestige because it had regained the extent of the kingdom as it was in the time of David and Solomon. This territorial expansion marked the last time Israel reached this peak of glory. The distinction between the wealthy landowners and the poor exploited tenant farmers was outrageous. The clergy of the northern kingdom (dissociated from the Jerusalem temple liturgy) was associated with the wealthy. Both the clergy and the wealthy relied on the external observance of religion for God's protection.

Amos, from the southern kingdom of Juda, preached in the northern kingdom. What we now have is a partially disordered collection of some of his preaching written up by his disciple(s), in rustic Hebrew, reflecting the pastoral background of the prophet. From his anthology of speeches the prophet's message rings out clearly. It shows him as the prophet of justice. This does not mean that he preached a social justice attempting to organize the poor against the rich. What was uppermost in Amos' mind in preaching was: just as God treated us mercifully, as persons, in giving us the Mosaic Law with its "Covenant-love," so must we treat each other as persons. Now when evil men (not because they are rich but because they are unjust) exploit or oppress the poor, they are not treating the latter as persons. Therefore, the justice that Amos preached meant fidelity to God's law, which connoted more than external formal sacrificing. The prophet preached that punishment would be meted out to the nation because of its widespread sins of "injustice." Therefore, Amos' perennial message is: social justice has its roots in God Himself. The wealthy must live up to their responsibilities. Worship devoid of "justice" is not pleasing to God. Amos' justice was an explication of the Code of the Covenant. See Ex 20, 22—23, 19 n.

Main divisions of the Book of Amos are:

1. Judgment of the Nations, 1—2
2. Words and Woes for Israel, 3—6
3. Symbolic Visions: Threats and Promises, 7, 1—9, 8a
4. Epilogue: Messianic Perspective, 9, 8b-15

I. JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

1

1 The words of Amos, a shepherd from Thecua, which he received in vision concerning Israel, in the days of Ozia, king of Juda, and in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joas, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake:

2 The Lord will roar from Sion, and from Jerusalem raise his voice: the pastures of the shepherds will languish, and the summit of Carmel wither.

3 ***Aram*** Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke my word; because they threshed
4 Galaad with sledges of iron, | I will send fire upon the house
5 of Hazael, to devour the castles of Benadad. | I will break the bar of Damascus; I will root out those who live in the Valley of Aven, and the sceptered ruler of Beth-Eden; the people of Aram shall be exiled to Kir, says the Lord.

6 ***Philistia*** Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of Gaza, and

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1, 1: This superscription was probably added by an editor after Amos to state the prophet's native village, occupation, and date of his preaching. *Earthquake:* several centuries later Zacharia (14, 5) refers to it.

1, 2: The key image of the book is the depiction of God as a lion roaring from His Jerusalem temple. His anger is represented through drought.

The eight speeches that follow v. 2 are examples of oracles against the nations. These oracles denounce crimes performed by the pagans. The prophet preached them to show that Yahweh is also the God of the pagans and that He punishes all men for all crimes. Here He is punishing His people through the Assyrian armies. Since these oracles were not preached to the Gentile nations, the prophet does not say how the pagans were responsible to God for their crimes. After Amos' oracles against the nations became a popular type of sermon among other subsequent prophets.

1, 3: *Thus says the Lord:* the standard opening formula. *For three crimes . . . four:* a familiar Hebraism, borrowed by former Israelite poets from the Chanaanites, meaning "Because of many crimes." *I will not revoke my word:* God will not withdraw His threat of punishment against each of these nations. *They threshed Galaad:* the people of Aram under king Hazael had devastated Galaad (see 4 Kgs, 10, 32f).

1, 4: *Hazael . . . Benadad:* kings of the Arameans whose capital was Damascus (v. 5); they fought against Israel (4 Kgs 13, 3), and had long occupied the region of Galaad (v. 3).

1, 5: *Bar of Damascus:* the beam securing the main gate of the city against invaders, symbol of its defenses. *Valley of Aven . . . Beth-Eden:* Aramean territory from southwest to northeast.

1, 6: *Took captive . . . to Edom:* this may refer to the Philistines selling slaves to the Edomites.

for four, I will not revoke my word; because they took captive
7 whole groups to hand over to Edom, | I will send fire upon
the wall of Gaza, to devour her castles; I will root out those
who live in Azotus, and the sceptered ruler of Ascalon; |
8 I will turn my hand against Accaron, and the last of the
Philistines shall perish, says the Lord God.

9 *Tyre* Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of Tyre, and for
four, I will not revoke my word; because they delivered whole
groups captive to Edom, and did not remember the pact of
10 brotherhood, | I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre, to devour
her castles.

11 *Edom* Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of Edom, and
for four, I will not revoke my word; because he pursued his
brother with the sword, choking up all pity; because he per-
12 sisted in his anger and kept his wrath to the end, | I will send
fire upon Theman, and it will devour the castles of Bosra.

13 *Ammon* Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of the Am-
monites, and for four, I will not revoke my word; because
they ripped open expectant mothers in Galaad, while extending
14 their territory, | I will kindle a fire upon the wall of Rabba,
and it will devour her castles amid clamor on the day of battle
15 and stormwind in a time of tempest. | Their king shall go into
captivity, he and his princes with him, says the Lord.

2

1 *Moab* Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of Moab, and
for four, I will not revoke my word; because he burned to
2 ashes the bones of Edom's king, | I will send fire upon Moab,
to devour the castles of Carioth; Moab shall meet death amid
3 uproar and shouts and trumpet blasts. | I will root out the
judge from her midst, and her princes I will slay with him, says
the Lord.

1, 9: *Pact of brotherhood:* Hiram of Tyre had made a pact with Solomon and called him brother (3 Kgs 5, 12).

1, 11-12: For the age-old rivalry between Edom and Juda, see the whole prophecy of Abdia.

1, 12: *Theman . . . Bosra:* two of the chief cities in Edom.

1, 13: A reference to the cruelty in warfare (4 Kgs 8, 12).

2, 1: Here the prophet stresses the gravity of Moab's violation of the Semitic custom of providing honorable burial for the dead.

4 *Juda* Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of Juda, and
for four, I will not revoke my word; because they spurned the
law of the Lord, and did not keep his statutes; because the lies
5 which their fathers followed have led them astray, | I will send
fire upon Juda, to devour the castles of Jerusalem.

6 *Israel* Thus says the Lord: For three crimes of Israel, and
for four, I will not revoke my word; because they sell the just
man for silver, and the poor man for a pair of sandals.
7 They trample the heads of the weak into the dust of the earth
and force the lowly out of the way. Son and father go to the
8 same prostitute, profaning my holy name. | Upon garments
taken in pledge they recline beside any altar; and the wine of
those who have been fined they drink in the house of their god.
9 Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorrites before them, who
were as tall as the cedars, and as strong as the oak trees.
10 destroyed their fruit above, and their roots beneath. | It was
who brought you up from the land of Egypt, and who led you
through the desert for forty years, to occupy the land of the
11 Amorrites; | I who raised up prophets among your sons, and
Nazirites among your young men. Is this not so, O men of
12 Israel? says the Lord. | But you gave the Nazirites wine to
drink, and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.
13 Beware, I will crush you into the ground as a wagon
14 crushes when laden with sheaves. | Flight shall perish from the
swift, and the strong man shall not retain his strength; the
15 warrior shall not save his life, | nor the bowman stand his
ground; the swift of foot shall not escape, nor the horseman

2, 4-5: Nowadays, the majority view is that Amos authored all the speeches in chs. 1—2 except this one against Juda, which was added later.

2, 4: *The lies:* false gods. Juda's crimes are infidelity and idolatry.

2, 6-16: The prophetic books usually have oracles against the Chosen People, and then the oracles against the nations. Amos is almost unique in placing the oracles against the nations first. See 3, 1-5 n. His purpose is to cast in bolder relief the guilt of the Chosen People who should have known better because God gave them more.

2, 8: *Upon garments . . . any altar:* usurers kept the garment taken as pledges from the poor; but instead of restoring them to the owners before nightfall (Ex 22, 25), they used them in idolatrous worship. *Wine . . . their god:* under the guise of a religious ceremony they drink the wine obtained through unjust fines.

2, 9: A reference to Nm 21, 24.

2, 10: A reference to Ex 14, 21.

2, 12: *Nazirites:* they vowed to abstain from wine. See Nm 6, 1ff.

16 save his life. | And the most stouthearted of warriors shall flee
naked on that day, says the Lord.

II. WORDS AND WOES FOR ISRAEL

1 *First Word* Hear this word, O men of Israel, that the Lord
pronounces over you, over the whole family that I brought up
from the land of Egypt:
2 You alone have I favored, more than all the families of the
earth; therefore I will punish you for all your crimes.
3,4 Do two walk together unless they have agreed? | Does a
lion roar in the forest when it has no prey? Does a young lion
5 cry out from its den unless it has seized something? | Is a bird
brought to earth by a snare when there is no lure for it? Does
a snare spring up from the ground without catching anything?
6 | If the trumpet sounds in a city, will the people not be
frightened? If evil befalls a city, has not the Lord caused it? |
7 Indeed, the Lord God does nothing without revealing his plan
to his servants, the prophets.
8 The lion roars—who will not be afraid! The Lord God speaks
—who will not prophesy!
9 Proclaim this in the castles of Azotus, in the castles of the
land of Egypt: "Gather about the mountain of Samaria, and see
the great disorders within her, the oppression in her midst." |
10 For they know not how to do what is right, says the Lord,
storing up in their castles what they have extorted and robbed. |
11 Therefore, thus says the Lord God: An enemy shall surround
the land, and strip you of your strength, and pillage your castles.
12 Thus says the Lord: As the shepherd snatches from the
mouth of the lion a pair of legs or the tip of an ear of his sheep,
so the Israelites who dwell in Samaria shall escape with the
corner of a couch or a piece of a cot.

2, 16: *On that day:* the Day of the Lord. See 5, 18-20 n.

3, 1—6, 14: These words and woes for Israel are more threats than definite predictions. They were spoken in different places and on different occasions. It is a hopeless task to arrange them chronologically.

3, 6: In attributing *everything* to God, the sacred writers never distinguished between God causing something directly and allowing something to happen, e.g., evil.

3, 8: The key image of the book, Yahweh as the angry roaring lion, is repeated here. See 1, 2 n.

3, 9: The prophet invites the Philistines ("Azotus") and the Egyptians to witness the sins of God's people, Israel.

3, 11: *An enemy:* the enemy here, as throughout the book, is Assyria.

13 Hear and bear witness against the house of Jacob, says the
Lord God, the God of hosts:
14 On the day when I punish Israel for his crimes, I will visit
also the altars of Bethel: the horns of the altar shall be broken
15 off and fall to the ground. | Then will I strike the winter house
and the summer house; the ivory apartments shall be ruined
and their many rooms shall be no more, says the Lord.

4

1 *Second Word* Hear this word, women of the mountain of
Samaria, you cows of Basan, you who oppress the weak and
abuse the needy; who say to your lords, "Bring drink for us!"
2 | The Lord God has sworn by his holiness: Truly the days are
coming upon you when they shall drag you away with hooks
3 the last of you with fishhooks; | you shall go out through the
breached walls each by the most direct way, and you shall be
cast into the mire, says the Lord.
4 Come to Bethel and sin, to Galgal, and sin the more; each
morning bring your sacrifices, every third day, your tithes;
5 burn leavened food as a thanksgiving sacrifice, proclaim publicly
your freewill offerings, for so you love to do, O men of Israel,
says the Lord God.
6 Though I have made your teeth clean of food in all your
cities, and have made bread scarce in all your dwellings, yet
you returned not to me, says the Lord.
7 Though I also withheld the rain from you when the harvest
was still three months away; I sent rain upon one city but not
upon another; one field was watered by rain, but another with-
8 out rain dried up; | though two or three cities staggered to one
city for water that did not quench their thirst; yet you returned
not to me, says the Lord.
9 I struck you with blight and searing wind; your many
gardens and vineyards, your fig trees and olive trees the locust
devoured; yet you returned not to me, says the Lord.
10 I sent upon you a pestilence like that of Egypt, and with the
sword I slew your young men; your horses I let be captured

3, 15: *Ivory apartments:* rooms containing furniture inlaid in ivory similar to the pieces discovered in the excavations at Samaria.

4, 1: *Basan:* the region east of the Sea of Galilee, famous for its rich pasture and fattened herds, to which Amos likens the indolent women of Samaria.

4, 4-5: This invitation to the sanctuaries of the northern kingdom is ironical, because of what took place there, as described in 5, 21-24.

4, 6: *Though I . . . your cities:* in spite of the famine.

4, 10: *Stench of your camps:* caused by the unburied bodies.

to your nostrils I brought the stench of your camps; yet you returned not to me, says the Lord.
11 I brought upon you such upheaval as when God overthrew
Sodom and Gomorra: you were like a brand plucked from the
fire; yet you returned not to me, says the Lord.
12 So now I will deal with you in my own way, O Israel! and
since I will deal thus with you, prepare to meet your God, O
13 Israel: | him who formed the mountains, and created the wind,
and declares to man his thoughts; who made the dawn and the
darkness, and strides upon the heights of the earth: the Lord,
the God of hosts by name.

5

1 ***Third Word*** Hear this word which I utter over you, a
2 lament, O house of Israel: | she is fallen, to rise no more, the
virgin Israel; she lies abandoned upon her land, with no one
to raise her up.
3 For thus says the Lord God: The city that marched out with
a thousand shall be left with a hundred, another that marched
out with a hundred shall be left with ten, of the house of Israel.
4 For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: Seek me, that
5 you may live, | but do not seek Bethel; do not come to Galgal,
and do not cross to Bersabee. For Galgal shall be led into exile,
6 and Bethel shall become nought. | Seek the Lord, that you may
live, lest he come upon the house of Joseph like a fire that shall
8 consume, with none to quench it for the house of Israel: | he
who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns darkness into
dawn, and darkens day into night; who summons the waters
of the sea, and pours them out upon the surface of the earth; |
9 who flashes destruction upon the strong, and brings ruin upon
the fortress; whose name is Lord.

7 ***First Woe*** Woe to those who turn judgment to worm-
10 wood and cast justice to the ground! | They hate him who
reproves at the gate and abhor him who speaks the truth. |

5, 2: *The virgin Israel:* the nation is personified for the first time as a virgin who dies so young that she does not experience the joys of marriage.
5, 4: *Seek me:* see 5, 6 n.
5, 5: See 4, 4-5 n.
5, 6: *Seek the Lord:* a Hebraic way of saying: "do the will of God." See Wis 1, 1 n. *House of Joseph:* the kingdom of Israel or northern kingdom, the chief tribes of which were descended from Ephraim and Manasse, the sons of Joseph.
5, 10: *At the gate:* in the court of justice, carried out in the space inside the city gate. See vv. 12 and 15.

11 Therefore, because you have trampled upon the weak and
exacted of them levies of grain, though you have built houses
of hewn stone, you shall not live in them! Though you have
12 planted choice vineyards, you shall not drink their wine! | Yes,
I know how many are your crimes, how grievous your sins:
oppressing the just, accepting bribes, repelling the needy at the
13 gate! | Therefore the prudent man is silent at this time, for it is
an evil time.
14 Seek good and not evil, that you may live; then truly will the
15 Lord, the God of hosts, be with you as you claim! | Hate evil
and love good, and let justice prevail at the gate; then it may
be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will have pity on the
remnant of Joseph.
16 Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:
In every square there shall be lamentation, and in every stree
they shall cry, Alas! Alas! They shall summon the farmers t
17 wail and professional mourners to lament, | and in every
vineyard there shall be lamentation when I pass through you
midst, says the Lord.

18 *Second Woe* Woe to those who yearn for the day of the
Lord! What will this day of the Lord mean for you? Darknes
19 and not light! | As if a man were to flee from a lion, and a bea
should meet him; or as if on entering his house he were to res

5, 15: *The remnant of Joseph:* the northern kingdom. Althoug this is the first mention of the remnant in the prophets, it is used a though it was an old and known doctrine. The basic meaning of th doctrine is that a loyal group of Yahweh's followers in each cr escapes the contemporary danger. The subsequent prophets, when usin this term remnant, will specify the danger of their age. In other word there will always be a faithful remnant to carry on God's law an promises to the remnant of Messianic times.

5, 17: *When I pass through your midst:* when your destructio comes. See Ex 12, 12.

5, 18-20: *Day of the Lord:* the prosperous times probably heightene the popular notion, perhaps originating in Dt 7, 6-8 (God elects th nation) that some day in the Utopian future God will political establish the Israelites over all other nations. Thus, before the time o Amos, that "day" was awaited as a day of joy. Amos rocked the natio when he preached, and he perhaps coined the phrase that "the Da of the Lord" will manifest Him by His punishing them through th exile of 722-21 B.C. for oppressing the poor. Therefore, althoug the basic meaning of this technical expression, "the Day of the Lord was God's intervention, it was always interpreted as a joyful interve tion until Amos came who interpreted it as a day of punishment. Th prophets after Amos kept this basic meaning, but with varying interpr tations suited to the problem of their historical situation.

20 his hand against the wall, and a snake should bite him. | Will
not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light, gloom with-
out any brightness?
21 I hate, I spurn your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solem-
22 nities; | your cereal offerings I will not accept, nor consider
23 your stall-fed peace offerings. | Away with your noisy songs! I
will not listen to the melodies of your harps. But if you would
24 offer me holocausts, | then let justice surge like water, and
25 goodness like an unfailing stream. | Did you bring me sacrifices
and offerings for forty years in the desert, O house of Israel? |
26 You will carry away Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan, your
27 star god, the images that you have made for yourselves; | for
I will exile you beyond Damascus, say I, the Lord, the God of
hosts by name.

6

1 ***Third Woe*** Woe to the complacent in Sion, to the over-
confident on the mount of Samaria, leaders of a nation favored
from the first, to whom the people of Israel have recourse! |
2 Pass over to Chalane and see, go from there to Hamath the
great, and down to Geth of the Philistines! Are you better than
3 these kingdoms, or is your territory wider than theirs? | You
would put off the evil day, yet you hasten the reign of violence!
4 Lying upon beds of ivory, stretched comfortably on their
couches, they eat lambs taken from the flock, and calves from
5 the stall! | Improvising to the music of the harp, like David,

5, 21-27: Amos is not condemning ritual worship as such. He is most probably condemning the belief that ritual worship, if correctly carried out, will oblige Yahweh to keep His Covenant promises of prosperity. The Israelites may have been influenced by the neighboring pagans who "controlled" their local gods through proper ritual. This fundamental misunderstanding of the Covenant may have been at the root of the materialistic interpretation of the "Day of the Lord."

5, 25: One interpretation is that during the forty years' wandering in the desert, the simple, rudimentary worship of God was accompanied by the practice of justice, in contrast to the elaborate ritual unaccompanied by works of justice in the prophet's time.

5, 26: *Sakkuth . . . star god:* although the text is uncertain, it seems quite probable that reference is made to the Assyrian deities, Sakkuth, god of war and light, and Kaiwan, the planet Saturn. The people will go into exile, from which these gods have been unable to save them.

6, 1-7: The luxury of the people in Samaria will be punished by exile. They fail to learn the lesson from Chalane, Hamath, and Geth at the approach of the powerful and warlike Assyrians.

6, 1: *The complacent in Sion . . . the overconfident . . . of Samaria:* the proud and self-interested rulers of Juda and Israel.

6 they devise their own accompaniment. | They drink wine from
bowls and anoint themselves with the best oils; yet they are not
7 made ill by the collapse of Joseph! | Therefore, now they shall
be the first to go into exile, and their wanton revelry shall be
done away with.
8 The Lord God has sworn by his very self, say I, the Lord, the
God of hosts: I abhor the pride of Jacob, I hate his castles,
9 and I give over the city with everything in it; | should there
10 remain ten men in a single house, these shall die. | Only a few
shall be left to carry the dead out of the houses; if one says to a
man inside a house, "Is anyone with you?" and he answers, "No
one," then he shall say, "Silence!" for no one must mention the
11 name of the Lord. | Indeed, the Lord has given the command
to shatter the great house to bits, and reduce the small house
to rubble.
12 Can horses run across a cliff? or can one plow the sea with
oxen? Yet you have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit
13 of justice into wormwood. | You rejoice in Lodebar, and say,
"Have we not, by our own strength, seized for ourselves
14 Carnaim?" | Beware, I am raising up against you, O house of
Israel, say I, the Lord, the God of hosts, a nation that shall
oppress you from Labo of Hamath even to the Wadi Araba.

III. SYMBOLIC VISIONS: THREATS AND PROMISES

7

1 *Vision of Locusts* This is what the Lord God showed me:
He was forming a locust swarm when the late growth began to
2 come up (the late growth after the king's mowing). While they
were eating all the grass in the land, I said: Forgive, O Lord
3 God! How can Jacob stand? He is so small! | And the Lord
repented of this. "It shall not be," said the Lord God.

6, 6: *Yet they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph:* they should be worried about the imminent disaster of the fall of Israel.

6, 10: *For no one must mention the name of the Lord:* perhaps or of fear that the mention of the Lord's name, which was forbidden, would cause more deaths.

6, 12: Just as the two examples show that you cannot change nature, neither can you change justice into injustice.

6, 13: *Lodebar . . . Carnaim:* in Jordan. The cities had been captured by the Israelites.

6, 14: *A nation:* Assyria. *From Labo of Hamath even to the Wadi Araba:* from your most northern border to your most southern.

7, 1: *The king's mowing:* the first mowing, a portion of which was payable to the king as a tax.

4 ***Vision of Fire*** Then the Lord God showed me this: he
called for a judgment by fire. It had devoured the great abyss,
5 and was consuming the land, | when I said: Cease, O Lord
6 God! How can Jacob stand? He is so small! | The Lord
repented of this. "This also shall not be," said the Lord God.

7 ***Vision of the Plummet*** Then the Lord God showed me
8 this: he was standing by a wall, plummet in hand. | The Lord
asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" And when I answered,
"A plummet," the Lord said: See, I will lay the plummet in the
9 midst of my people Israel; I will forgive them no longer. | The
high places of Isaac shall be laid waste, and the sanctuaries of
Israel made desolate; I will attack the house of Jeroboam with
the sword.

10 ***Amos and Amasia*** Amasia, the priest of Bethel, sent word
to Jeroboam, king of Israel: "Amos has conspired against you
here within Israel; the country cannot endure all his words.
11 For this is what Amos says: Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel shall surely be exiled from its land."
12 To Amos, Amasia said: "Off with you, visionary, flee to the
13 land of Juda! There earn your bread by prophesying, | but never
again prophesy in Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary and a
14 royal temple." Amos answered Amasia, "I was no prophet, nor
have I belonged to a company of prophets; I was a shepherd
15 and a dresser of sycamores. The Lord took me from following

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7, 4: *Fire:* understood by many as a burning drought. *Abyss:* the primeval "Deep" as described in Gn 1, 2.

7, 7: *Plummet in hand:* signifying that God is about to withdraw His mercy from His people and that the nation is to be measured for destruction.

7, 9: Amos' prayers stayed God's punishment in the first two visions, but not in this one nor in the next two visions. The main thrust of Amos' message here is: since you did not learn your lesson from the two natural punishments (the first two visions of the locusts and drought), God will proceed to your total destruction (three other visions). Scholars dispute whether these five visions are literary or true visions. If true visions, they may be understood as explained, according to the modern opinion, in the Introduction to the Prophetical Books.

7, 10: *Bethel:* Jeroboam I also set up a rival sanctuary at Dan, to keep his northerners from going to the Jerusalem temple, thereby indirectly fostering ties of political reunion with Juda (3 Kgs 12, 29).

7, 12-15: Amasia thought Amos was a *nabi,* a class of prophets who tailor-made prophecies to suit their clients, and so he tells him to go and preach in his own country, Juda. In fact, the evils Amos saw in Israel were also thriving in Juda. But Amos simply answers that God sent him to preach in Israel.

16 the flock, and said to me, | Go, prophesy to my people Israel.
Now hear the word of the Lord!"
You say: prophesy not against Israel, preach not against the
17 house of Isaac. | Now thus says the Lord: Your wife shall be
made a harlot in the city, and your sons and daughters shall
fall by the sword; your land shall be divided by measuring
line, and you yourself shall die in an unclean land; Israel shall
be exiled far from its land.

8

1 ***Vision of the Fruit Basket*** This is what the Lord God
2 showed me: a basket of ripe fruit. | "What do you see, Amos?"
he asked. I answered, "A basket of ripe fruit." Then the Lord
said to me: The time is ripe to have done with my people Israel
3 I will forgive them no longer. | The temple songs shall become
wailings on that day, says the Lord God. Many shall be the
corpses, strewn everywhere.—Silence!

4 ***Against Greed*** Hear this, you who trample upon the
5 needy and destroy the poor of the land! | "When will the
New Moon be over," you ask, "that we may sell our grain,
and the Sabbath, that we may display the wheat? We will
diminish the epha, add to the shekel, and fix our scales for
6 cheating! | We will buy the lowly man for silver, and the poor
man for a pair of sandals; even the refuse of the wheat we will
sell!"
7 The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Never will
8 forget a thing they have done! | Shall not the land tremble
because of this, and all who dwell in it mourn, while it rises up
and tosses like the Nile, and settles back like the river of Egypt
9 On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun set at
midday and cover the earth with darkness in broad daylight.
10 I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into

7, 17: *Your wife shall be made a harlot in the city:* to earn her living.
Unclean land: soiled by idols.

8, 4-14: There is no adequate explanation for the position of these verses which interrupt the narrative of the visions.

8, 5: *Epha:* a standard of measure, about 45 pounds.

8, 7: *The pride of Jacob:* the sinful pride detested by God (6, 8), in contrast to God Himself who is the true pride of Jacob.

8, 8: According to the characteristic biblical manner of making nature sympathize with the lot of man, the prophet says that the land, because of its unfair treatment of the poor, tosses about like the Nile at its annual flood.

8, 9-10: *On that day:* it is also repeated in v. 13. See Day of the Lord 5. 18-20 n.

lamentations. I will cover the loins of all with sackcloth and make every head bald. I will make them mourn as for an only son, and bring their day to a bitter end.

11 Yes, days are coming, says the Lord God, when I will send famine upon the land: not a famine of bread, or thirst for
12 water, but for hearing the word of the Lord. | Then shall they wander from sea to sea and rove from the north to the east in search of the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.
13 On that day, fair virgins and young men shall faint from
14 thirst; | those who swear by the shameful idol of Samaria, "By the life of your god, O Dan!" "By the life of your love, O Bersabee!" those shall fall, never to rise again.

9

1 *Vision of the Altar* I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and he said:

Strike the bases, so that the doorjambs totter till you break them off on the heads of them all! Those who are left I will slay with the sword; not one shall flee, no survivor shall escape.

2 Though they break through to the nether world, even from there my hand shall bring them out; though they climb to the
3 heavens, I will bring them down; | though they hide on the summit of Carmel, there too I will hunt them out and take them away; though they hide from my gaze in the bottom of the
4 sea, I will command the serpent there to bite them; | though they are led into captivity by their enemies, there will I command the sword to slay them. I will fix my gaze upon them for
5 evil, and not for good, I, the Lord God of hosts.

I melt the earth with my touch, so that all who dwell on it mourn, while it all rises up like the Nile, and settles back like
6 the river of Egypt; | I have built heaven, my upper chamber, and established my vault over the earth; I summon the waters of the sea and pour them out upon the surface of the earth, I, the Lord by name.

7 Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O men of Israel, says the Lord? Did I not bring the Israelites from the land of Egypt

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8, 11-12: The famine of God's prophetic word and directions.

8, 14: *Dan . . . Bersabee:* the extreme northern and southern limits of the country where idolatrous worship was offered.

9, 1-8: There will be no escape from God's punishment, symbolized here by the destruction of a building, probably the schismatic temple at Bethel.

9, 3: *Serpent:* an allusion to God conquering a legendary sea monster, a figure expressing His creation. See explanation in Jb 7, 12 n.

9, 7: *The Ethiopians . . . the Philistines . . . the Arameans:* by nature Israel is not different from any other nation. It was not because

as I brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans
8 from Kir? | The eyes of the Lord God are on this sinful
kingdom: I will destroy it from off the face of the earth.

Epilogue: Messianic Perspective But I will not destroy
9 the house of Jacob completely, says the Lord. | For see, I have
given the command to sift the house of Israel among all the
nations, as one sifts with a sieve, letting no pebble fall to the
10 ground. | By the sword shall all sinners among my people die,
11 those who say, "Evil will not reach or overtake us." | On that
day I will raise up the fallen hut of David; I will wall up its
breaches, raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old, |
12 that they may conquer what is left of Edom and all the nations
that shall bear my name, say I, the Lord, who will do this.
13 Yes, days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman
shall overtake the reaper, and the vintager, him who sows the
seed; the juice of grapes shall drip down the mountains, and
14 all the hills shall run with it. | I will bring about the restoration
of my people Israel; they shall rebuild and inhabit their ruined

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of any merit on Israel's part that God delivered them from Egypt. *Caphtor:* Crete. *Kir:* uncertain place.

9, 8: *This sinful kingdom:* Israel and Juda. *The house of Jacob completely:* the previous eight passages speaking of total destruction are here (and in 3, 12; 5, 3 and 15 "the remnant of Joseph") modified to the salvation of a remnant of Israel, the northern kingdom.

9, 9: The pebbles remaining in the sieve represent the saved remnant.

9, 11: *On that day:* a vague day of Utopia for Israel, the northern kingdom. *I will raise up the fallen hut of David:* the more common opinion teaches that this section, 9, 8-15, was not preached by Amos in the eighth century when Juda was rather strong and far from a fallen kingdom, but by a later inspired editor at the time of the Babylonian exile of 587-538, which is after Amos' prediction of the fall of both kingdoms. This kind of salvation oracle is rare before the exile, but common after it. Hence, the advocators of this view translate "fallen," i.e., the Davidic dynasty fell. A less common opinion translates it: the "tottering" hut of David, and says Amos himself preached this prophecy which refers to 734-732 B.C., when the northern kingdom lost to the Assyrian armies all its territory except Ephraim and western Manasse, and many important persons went into exile according to 4 Kgs 15, 29. The southern kingdom would be included in the "hut of David" because of the Assyrian threats at this time. This opinion sees no difficulty in including the northern kingdom in the "hut of David." James in Acts 15, 16-18 applies this text (v. 12 is quoted according to the Septuagint and, therefore, differs slightly) to the conversion of the Gentiles. *I will wall up . . . days of old:* a metaphorical reference to the greatest extent of the united monarchy under David.

9, 13-14: Jl 4, 18 and other prophets used similar stereotyped expressions to signify material prosperity, especially agricultural fer-

cities, plant vineyards and drink the wine, set out gardens and
15 eat the fruits. | I will plant them upon their own ground; never
again shall they be plucked from the land I have given them,
say I, the Lord, your God.

tility. In New Testament times this must have been interpreted as spiritual blessings of the Messianic age.

9, 15: The country shall never again fall under foreign domination. Yet, in 70 A.D., the Jewish nation ended. Hence, this v. 15 can be interpreted to mean that the people were not worthy of God's promises.

THE BOOK OF ABDIA

INTRODUCTION

This book is a vigorous cry for vengeance made in the name of Juda against its lifelong enemy, Edom. Most scholars admit that the historical background to this cry in the Book of Abdia (or Obadiah) is the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The Edomites saw that the neo-Babylonian masters, after having devastated Judea, did not transport people there as the Assyrians did in the northern kingdom. Hence, with or without the approval of the neo-Baylonians, the Edomites began to bite into the southern territory of defenseless Judea.

This twenty-one verse prophecy, the shortest book in the Old Testament, is now commonly held to have been written between 580 to 450 B.C. This period extends from the time of the Babylonian exile to the difficult period when the repatriates were rebuilding their nation.

A scholarly debate is trying to clear these questions: did Abdia borrow about ten verses from Jeremia (Jer 49, 7-22), or did Jeremia borrow them from Abdia, or did both depend on a common source? No sufficiently established opinion exists.

The unity of the book is disputed. Some experts believe that the book resulted from the work of several authors, each of whom wrote in a different era and each of whom contributed a few verses. According to this opinion, Abdia was the author of only a portion of the book. Others maintain that it was written all in one piece, except the conclusion (vv. 15-21), which is believed to be a later addition.

The unchristian tone of vengeance against Edom is better understood if we recall this: the Jews had not yet received the revelation of eternal punishment. They still knew only temporal punishment. Behind the wish for vengeance was a deep faith in a just God who punishes, according to the law of retaliation, the evils of *all* nations. It is this rock-bottom theology which differentiates the cry of these monotheists from the cry of nationalistic polytheists.

Main divisions of the Book of Abdia are:

1. Title and Theme, 1, 1
2. Edom Shall Perish, 1, 2-9
3. The Cause of Edom's Fall, 1, 10-14
4. Judgment upon the Nations, 1, 15-16
5. Juda Shall Be Restored, 1, 17-21

[1] ***Title and Theme*** The vision of Abdia. [Thus says the Lord God:] Of Edom we have heard a message from the Lord,

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1, 1: *The vision:* this term is used here as a synonym for the whole booklet of Abdia. *Abdia:* nothing is known about his life. This verse is paralleled in Jer 49, 14. *Message:* this refers to all that follows, namely, vv. 2-21. *A herald . . . against him:* God is poetically described as summoning the peoples of the world to wage war on Edom.

and a herald has been sent among the nations: "Up! let us go to war against him!"

2 ***Edom Shall Perish*** See, I make you small among the
3 nations; you are held in dire contempt. | The pride of your heart has deceived you: you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose abode is in the heights, who say in your heart, "Who will
4 bring me down to earth?" | Though you go as high as the eagle, and your nest be set among the stars, from there will
5 I bring you down, says the Lord. | If thieves came to you, if robbers by night—how are you ravaged!—would they not steal till they had enough? If vintagers came to you, would they not
6 leave some gleanings? | How they search Esau, seek out his
7 hiding places! | To the border they drive you—all your allies; they deceive you, they overpower you—those at peace with you; those who eat your bread lay snares beneath you: there is no
8 understanding in him! | Shall I not, says the Lord, on that day make the wise men disappear from Edom, and understanding
9 from the mount of Esau? | Your warriors, O Theman, shall be crushed, till all on Mount Esau are destroyed.

10 ***The Cause*** Because of violence to your brother Jacob, dis-
11 grace shall cover you and you shall be destroyed forever. | On

1, 2: This is a forecast of Edom's disgrace in v. 10.

1, 3-4: *Clefts . . . heights:* part of Edom was the one hundred mile mountainous chain between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. The Edomites were proud of living in a mountainous fortress-like kingdom of interlaced grottoes and canyons. Petra, the hilly capital of roseate sandstone, was and still is a sight of rare natural beauty. *"Who will bring me down to earth?":* the sacred writer expresses the Edomites' pride in this poetic flight which continues in v. 4.

1, 5: The sense is: God is more thorough in a devastating punishment than robbers and vintagers can ever be.

1, 6: *Esau:* the ancestor's name is used for his descendants, the Edomites. This verse wants to show the thoroughness in the pillage of Edom down to the dark corners of its cavernous "hiding places."

1, 7-8: Your own allies evict you from your land. *There is no understanding in him!:* the writer makes the allies say that Edom is not intelligent enough to defend itself adequately. There is a tone of sarcasm here and in v. 8 because the wisdom of the Edomites was proverbial.

1, 9: *O Theman:* one of Edom's principal cities is poetically made to represent the entire country. *Mount Esau:* a synonym for Edom. See 1, 6 n.

1, 10: *Because of violence:* see vv. 11-14. *To your brother Jacob:* Esau, also called Edom, and Jacob, the father of Juda, were the sons of Isaac (Gn 25, 24ff). *Disgrace . . . destroyed forever:* eventually Edom was destroyed.

1, 11-14: The Edomites joined the neo-Babylonians in the sack of

the day when you stood by, on the day when aliens carried off
his possessions, and strangers entered his gates and cast lots
12 over Jerusalem, you too were one of them. | Gaze not upon
the day of your brother, the day of his disaster; exult not over
the children of Juda on the day of their ruin; speak not
13 haughtily on the day of distress! | Enter not the gate of my
people on the day of their calamity; gaze not, you at least, upon
his misfortune on the day of his calamity; lay not hands upon
14 his possessions on the day of his calamity! | Stand not at the
crossroads to slay his refugees; betray not his fugitives on the
day of distress!

15 ***Judgment upon the Nations*** For near is the day of the
Lord for all the nations! As you have done, so shall it be done
16 to you, your deed shall come back upon your own head; | as you
have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations
drink continually. Yes, they shall drink and swallow, and shall
become as though they had not been.

17 ***Juda Shall Be Restored*** But on Mount Sion there shall
be a portion saved; the mountain shall be holy, and the house
of Jacob shall take possession of those that dispossessed them.
18 The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a
flame; the house of Esau shall be stubble, and they shall set
them ablaze and devour them; then none shall survive of the
19 house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken. | They shall occupy the
Negeb, the mount of Esau, and the foothills of the Philistines;
and they shall occupy the lands of Ephraim and the lands of
20 Samaria, and Benjamin shall occupy Galaad. | The captives of

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Jerusalem and then invaded Juda's southern territory, the Negeb (see Introduction).

1, 15: *Day of the Lord:* this famous biblical expression means here the imminent day of punishment. The sense is that God will punish all the Gentile countries deserving punishment, and Edom also.

1, 16: Under the familiar biblical metaphor of drinking from the goblet of God's wrath, God, addressing the Jerusalemites and the people of Juda, says: "Just as you were punished so will the other nations be punished." *Holy mountain:* Jerusalem.

1, 17-20: "Mount Sion," "mountain," "house of Jacob," are synonyms for the Jews. In spite of centuries of wars a "portion" or remnant of the Jews will remain. *Shall take possession of those that dispossessed them:* the Jews will reconquer Edom (v. 18), and the southern part of Judea, including the Negeb which the Edomites invaded, as well as the rest of Chanaan taken by other enemies (19-20).

1, 18: *The house of Jacob:* the southern kingdom of Juda will be destroying "fire" as regards Edom. *The house of Joseph:* the northern kingdom.

this host of the children of Israel shall occupy the Chanaanite land as far as Sarephta, and the captives of Jerusalem who are
21 in Sepharad shall occupy the cities of the Negeb. | And saviors shall ascend Mount Sion to rule the mount of Esau, and the kingship shall be the Lord's.

1, 21: The victorious remnant (or "portion" in v. 17) will symbolically rule Edom (who will not even have a remnant, as v. 18 says) from Jerusalem under God as king. Whenever God Himself (not His Messia) is represented as ruling in the final days, as in this text, scholars label this strand "Messianism without a Messia." The term also has other meanings.

THE BOOK OF JONA

INTRODUCTION

A long standing interpretation asserts that Jona wrote the book that bears his name. This, according to Jona's prophecy of the victories of king Jeroboam II (4 Kgs 14, 25), would date the work from the eighth century. All details, or at least many of them, are interpreted historically—even Jona's miraculous sojourn in the belly of the large fish for three days and three nights supposedly happened as such; the conversion of docile, pagan Ninive, which took Jona three days to traverse, is interpreted as instantaneous and miraculous.

The Book of Jona has been interpreted by Catholic scholars for the last twenty-five years as a parable. The reason for this interpretation is not the reluctance to admit miracles, it is rather the convergence of indications, none of which, considered singly, would suffice to prove the non-historicity of the work. However, if all are considered together, a great probability exists that the Holy Spirit and the sacred writer mean this work as a parable. Here are some of the arguments advanced by these modern scholars:

1. Unlike the other prophets, Jona never appears as the author, but he is always cited in the third person. How different from the direct and frequent "thus says the Lord" of the other prophets!

2. Ninive, the Assyrian capital, was at the apex of its power at the time of king Jeroboam II (783-743? B.C.) but the author seems to speak of the city in a reminiscent tone: "Now Ninive was an enormously large city. . . ." Ninive is so much in the distant past that in the eyes of the author it assumes colossal proportions, which are historically most unlikely: "It took three days to go through it" (3, 3). After its fall in 612 B.C., Ninive disappeared completely. (Its site was not found until 1160 A.D.) Popular imagination had embroidered upon the proportions of the city, and the author of the Book of Jona seems to reflect this tradition, which would date the composition of it after 612 B.C. (in contradistinction to the eighth-century date mentioned above).

3. The main argument is: the Hebrew language of the Book of Jona reveals an era after the sixth century exile, but before the Greek era (which began in the fourth century), because there is no Greek influence in the text. When all the linguistic indications are examined, the fifth century B.C. seems a most likely date.

4. The author's sympathy for the pagans and his polemic attitude are most conveniently explained in this fifth-century context when universalism and nationalism were at loggerheads. Narrow-minded Jews were contending that God wanted to save only the Jews (nationalism); but others, as the author of the Book of Jona, asserted: God wants to save *all* men, even the worst pagan enemies of the Jews, namely, the Assyrians (universalism).

5. After the exile, the sacred writers were fond of teaching under the guise of "history" to make their doctrine more attractive. (The Book of Daniel, for instance.)

6. The accumulation of unlikely ordinary things. Among these the following are mentioned:

a) An aquatic monster brings Jona safely to the shore (2, 11).

b) None of the Lord's prophets ever received a mission to go among the pagans.

It is incongruous to perceive an eighth-century Hebrew prophet appearing suddenly as a threatening preacher ("Forty days more and Ninive shall be destroyed!" [3, 4]) in the market place of Ninive whose haughty population ruled the world!

c) If a miraculous conversion of that extent (3, 5-10) really happened, how could one explain that it left no trace in the Bible, nor in the Assyrian annals?

The sudden conversion of "more than 120,000 persons . . ." (4, 11) in one mighty sweep reaches that ideal which the prophets never achieved in Israel. Reflect for a moment: the Jewish prophets had been preaching for centuries to the Jews and had been rejected for centuries—Amos and Osee at Bethel's sanctuary, Isaia and Jeremia in Jerusalem. Then comes a rebel prophet, very unholy when compared with the other prophets, who, in a flash, converts a pagan nation with no previous knowledge of Yahweh!

On the other hand, the proponents of the historicity of Jona's book claim that our Lord quoted, and meant, the conversion of the Ninivites to be as historically true as the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (Mt 12, 39-42). This claim is not cogent. Jesus uses the accounts of Jona's plight and deliverance figuratively in referring to His own burial and resurrection: "For even as Jona was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Furthermore, Jesus contrasts the conversion of the Ninivites with the condemnation of the incredulous Jews: "The men of Ninive will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jona. . . ." Therefore, the meaning given by Jesus did not necessitate the historical interpretation of Jona's story.

In fine, the less strained interpretation is: a fifth century author taught, by means of a satirical parable, that God desires to save *all* men.

Main divisions of the Book of Jona are:

1. The First Mission, 1, 1—2, 2
2. Psalm of Thanksgiving, 2, 3-11
3. Conversion of Ninive, 3, 1-10
4. Jona's Anger: God's Reproof, 4, 1-11

1

1 ***The First Mission*** This is the word of the Lord that came
2 to Jona, son of Amathi: "Set out for the great city of Ninive,
and preach against it; their wickedness has come up before

1, 1: *The word of the Lord:* this phrase is the common stamp used by a prophet. Under the form of a satirical parable (see Introduction)

me." But Jona made ready to flee to Tharsis away from the
Lord. He went down to Joppe, found a ship going to Tharsis,
paid the fare, and went aboard to journey with them to Tharsis,
away from the Lord.
4 The Lord, however, hurled a violent wind upon the sea,
and in the furious tempest that arose the ship was on the point
5 of breaking up. Then the mariners became frightened and each
one cried to his god. To lighten the ship for themselves, they
threw its cargo into the sea. Meanwhile, Jona had gone down
6 into the hold of the ship, and lay there fast asleep. | The
captain came to him and said, "What are you doing asleep?
Rise up, call upon your God! Perhaps God will be mindful of
us so that we may not perish."
7 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots to
find out on whose account we have met with this misfortune."
8 So they cast lots, and thus singled out Jona. | "Tell us," they
said, "what is your business? Where do you come from? What is
9 your country, and to what people do you belong?" "I am a
Hebrew," Jona answered them; "I worship the Lord, the God
of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."
10 Now the men were seized with great fear and said to him:
"How could you do such a thing!"—They knew that he was
11 fleeing from the Lord, because he had told them.—"What shall
we do with you," they asked, "that the sea may quiet down
12 for us?" For the sea was growing more and more turbulent

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the author presents Jona as a prophet whom God sends on a mission. *Jona:* in Hebrew "dove," which was a symbol of Israel. This technique blends well with a parable, for the content shows Jona as the personification of the bitter nationalistic Jews (see Introduction). *Son of Amathi:* the author artistically refers to the historical prophet in 2 Kgs 14, 25.

1, 3: *Tharsis:* any of several places in the Mediterranean basin. *Joppe:* modern Jaffa. The only seaport of ancient Palestine on the Mediterranean coastline. The author already adumbrates the parabolic nature of his work in that he introduces his readers to a prophet who disobeys his missionary call to Ninive in the East by sailing in the exact opposite direction to the West. Moreover, the author begins here to show Jona's poor knowledge of God because a flight from Israel is not a flight from God; if God were not in pagan Tharsis, why would he be in pagan Ninive? Jona's flight has its modern parallel in Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven." For the lesson of obedience in Jonah see the "Sermon on Jonas" in Melville's "Moby Dick."

1, 5-6: With a dash of satire, the author has a pagan captain command a sleeping monotheistic Jew to join his crew in fervent prayer.

1, 12-14: The satirical element here is that only a pagan would offer himself to be thrown overboard to placate God (v. 12). This contrasts sharply with the delicate and hesitating conscience of pagans in carrying out Jona's wish (vv. 13-14).

Jona said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea,
that it may quiet down for you; since I know it is because of me
that this violent storm has come upon you."
13 Still the men rowed hard to regain the land, but they could
14 not, for the sea grew ever more turbulent. Then they cried to
the Lord: "We beseech you, O Lord, let us not perish for taking
this man's life; do not charge us with shedding innocent blood,
15 for you, Lord, have done as you saw fit." Then they took Jona
16 and threw him into the sea, and the sea's raging abated. Struck
with great fear of the Lord, the men offered sacrifice and made
vows to him.

2

1 But the Lord sent a large fish, that swallowed Jona; and he
remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.
2 From the belly of the fish Jona said this prayer to the Lord,
his God:

3 ***Psalm of Thanksgiving*** Out of my distress I called to
the Lord, and he answered me; from the midst of the nether
4 world I cried for help, and you heard my voice. | For you cast
me into the deep, into the heart of the sea, and the flood
enveloped me; all your breakers and your billows passed over
me.
5 Then I said, "I am banished from your sight! yet would I
6 again look upon your holy temple." | The waters swirled
about me, threatening my life; the abyss enveloped me; sea-
7 weed clung about my head. | Down I went to the roots of the

1, 15: *The sea's raging abated:* the artificiality of the sudden tempest (v. 4), its increasing tempo, and its abating after the human (Jona's) sacrifice form part of the machinery of a parable.

2, 1: *A large fish:* in spite of the popular idea, the Hebrew words literally say "a large fish," and not a "whale." It is useless to try to classify it according to known species. Unhappily, the three verses on the "whale" are more popularly known than the teaching of the entire book. Those who interpret Jona as history try to find in real life examples of sea monsters who swallowed and expelled a person alive. Of all the stories told, of a great fish swallowing people alive from classical Greco-Roman times through the Middle Ages, it is doubted if one has ever been proven. *Three days and three nights:* this expression when used in the Bible is not to be interpreted strictly.

2, 3-10: This psalm is a cento or mosaic of snatches of about twelve different psalms. The psalm is cast in the mold of a thanksgiving psalm for an escape from danger: here the danger was drowning. There are other examples in the Bible, e.g., the song of king Ezechia in Is 38, 10-20.

2, 7: *Roots of the mountains:* according to the ideas of the day, the

mountains; the bars of the nether world were closing behind me
forever, but you brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my
God.
8 When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord:
9 my prayer reached you in your temple. | Those who worship
10 vain idols forsake their source of mercy. | But I, with resound-
ing praise, will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay.
Deliverance is from the Lord.
11 Then the Lord commanded the fish to spew Jona upon the
shore.

3

1 ***Conversion of Ninive*** The word of the Lord came to Jona
2 a second time: "Set out for the great city of Ninive, and
3 announce to it the message that I will tell you." So Jona made
ready and went to Ninive, according to the Lord's bidding.
Now Ninive was an enormously large city; it took three days
4 to go through it. Jona began his journey through the city, and
had gone but a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more
5 and Ninive shall be destroyed," | when the people of Ninive
believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great
and small, put on sackcloth.
6 When the news reached the king of Ninive, he rose from
his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth
7 and sat in the ashes. Then he had this proclaimed throughout
Ninive, by decree of the king and his nobles: "Neither man nor
beast, neither cattle nor sheep, shall taste anything; they shall
8 not eat, nor shall they drink water. Man and beast shall be
covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; every man shall
turn from his evil way and from the violence he has in hand.
9 Who knows, God may relent and forgive, and withhold his
10 blazing wrath, so that we shall not perish." When God saw
by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented

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earth floated on the watery "abyss" (v. 6). A plunge would eventually sink one to the deepest extremities of the mountains of the earth.

2, 11: To the advocates of the parabolic interpretation, this miracle is the most artificial in the book.

3, 3-4: *Ninive was an enormously large city:* see Introduction on the exaggeration of its size. Excavations of Ninive show it was about three miles long and about one and one-half miles wide.

3, 5-10: The sudden conversion of Ninive is the climax of the story and the apex of all the unlikeliboods, for an unknown foreign prophet converts over "120,000 persons" (4, 11), from the king to the pauper. All perform extraordinary penances. See Introduction for more reasons why this is not seriously intended as a miraculous conversion.

of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.

4

1 ***Jona's Anger: God's Reproof*** But this was greatly dis-
2 pleasing to Jona, and he became angry. "I beseech you, Lord," he prayed, "is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? This is why I fled at first to Tharsis. I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, rich in clemency,
3 loathe to punish. And now, Lord, please take my life from me;
4 for it is better for me to die than to live." | But the Lord asked, "Have you reason to be angry?"

5 Jona then left the city for a place to the east of it, where he built himself a hut and waited under it in the shade, to see what
6 would happen to the city. And when the Lord God provided a gourd plant, that grew up over Jona's head, giving shade that relieved him of any discomfort, Jona was very happy over the
7 plant. But the next morning at dawn God sent a worm which
8 attacked the plant, so that it withered. And when the sun arose, God sent a burning east wind; and the sun beat upon Jona's head till he became faint. Then he asked for death, saying, "I would be better off dead than alive."

9 But God said to Jona, "Have you reason to be angry over the plant?" "I have reason to be angry," Jona answered, "angry
10 enough to die." | Then the Lord said, "You are concerned over the plant which cost you no labor and which you did not raise;
11 it came up in one night and in one night it perished. And should I not be concerned over Ninive, the great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot distinguish their right hand from their left, not to mention the many cattle?"

4, 1-4: Jona here represents the narrow nationalism of many Jews of his day, against whom the author penned this parable (see Introduction).

4, 6: *Gourd plant:* the Hebrew word means a wide-leafed plant of the cucumber or castor-bean variety.

4, 10-11: The author satirically contrasts Jona's whimpering over the discomforting loss of a plant's shade and his simultaneous sulking because God will not exterminate Ninive. To state it a bit differently, the writer says: If God is kind enough to provide Jona with a little shade, how much more disposed is He to forgive all men when they repent even the detestable masters of history, the Assyrians. *Persons who cannot . . . left:* children. *Cattle:* with a pungent master stroke of wit, the writer of universalism shows that God is solicitous, not only about human beings but even about animals. We may well ask if it is conceivable that the historical Jona would have composed such a caustic caricature of himself.

THE BOOK OF MICHEA

INTRODUCTION

Michea, a contemporary of Isaia, came from the southwestern Judean village of Moreseth. His name means, "Who is like Yahweh" (7, 18). A shepherd prophet of blunt speech, he resembles Amos with whom he also shares a deep concern for social questions rather than interest in domestic and foreign policies.

Michea preached "in the days of Joatham, Achaz and Ezechia, king of Juda" (1, 1), which is roughly the second half of the eighth century B.C. According to Jer 26, 18f, Michea influenced the religious reforms of king Ezechia of Juda who, after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, destroyed the idolatrous places of worship. See 4 Kgs 18, 4 ff.

An editor assembled Michea's prophecies into three separate sections. (After Osee's book, these oracles may well be the most poorly preserved text in the Hebrew Bible.)

Main divisions of the Book of Michea are:

1. Punishment of Israel's Sins: Prophecies of Doom, especially for Social Crimes, 1—3
2. The New Israel and the Destruction of Its Enemies, 4—5
3. Admonition: Prophecies of Doom against Israel and Juda 6—7

I. PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL'S SINS

1

1 ***Divine Judgment*** The word of the Lord which came to
Michea of Moreseth in the days of Joatham, Achaz, and
Ezechia, kings of Juda: that is, the vision he received concerning
Samaria and Jerusalem.

2 Hear, O peoples, all of you, give heed, O earth, and all that
fills you! Let the Lord God be witness against you, the Lord
from his holy temple!

3 For see, the Lord comes forth from his place, he descends and
4 treads upon the heights of the earth. | The mountains melt
under him and the valleys split open, like wax before the fire,
like water poured down a slope.

5 For the crime of Jacob all this comes to pass, and for the

1—3: Scholars have always attributed the substance of these three chapters to Michea, except 2, 12-13. The prophet most probably delivered these three chapters just before the fall of Samaria 722-21 B.C.

1, 1: See Introduction.

1, 2-6: Michea has God call Juda and Israel to a court trial. God is represented as coming from His heavenly temple (vv. 2-4) to punish Samaria and Jerusalem (vv. 5-6).

sins of the house of Israel. What is the crime of Jacob? Is it not
Samaria? And what is the sin of the house of Juda? Is it not
6 Jerusalem? | I will make Samaria a stone heap in the field, a
place to plant for vineyards; I will throw down into the valley
7 her stones, and lay bare her foundations. | All her idols shall be
broken to pieces, all her wages shall be burned in the fire, and
all her statues I will destroy. As the wages of a harlot they were
gathered, and to the wages of a harlot shall they return.
8 For this reason I lament and wail, I go barefoot and naked;
I utter lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the
9 ostriches. | There is no remedy for the blow she has been struck;
rather, it has come even to Juda, it reaches to the gate of my
people, even to Jerusalem.
10 Publish it not in Geth, weep not at all; in Beth-aphra roll in
11 the dust. | Pass by, you who dwell in Saphir! The inhabitants
of Saanan come not forth from their city. The lamentation of
12 Beth-esel finds in you its grounds. | How can the inhabitants
of Maroth hope for good? For evil has come down from the
Lord to the gate of Jerusalem.
13 Harness steeds to the chariots, O inhabitants of Lachis;
Lachis, the beginning of sin for daughter Sion, because there
14 were in you the crimes of Israel. | Therefore you shall give
parting gifts to Moreseth-Geth; Beth-achzib is a deception to the
15 kings of Israel. | Yet must I bring to you the conqueror, O
inhabitants of Maresa; even to Odollam shall go the glory of
Israel.
16 Make yourself bald, pluck out your hair, for the children
whom you cherish; let your baldness be as the eagle's, because
they are exiled from you.

2

1 ***Social Evils*** Woe to those who plan iniquity, and work out
evil on their couches; in the morning light they accomplish it
2 when it lies within their power. | They covet fields, and seize

1, 7: Samaria is compared to a prostitute because of her idolatry before her fall.

1, 8-9: Some believe that this prophecy was delivered after Sennacherib's invasion of Juda in 701 B.C.

1, 10-15: To express that the Assyrian hammer blows against Samaria will affect her sister kingdom of Juda, Michea represents his country's future punishment by selecting eleven familiar Judean cities near home. These cities, four of which are unknown, lie in the plain between the mountains of Juda in the east, and Philistia on the Mediterranean coast. There is much play on words in the names of these cities. The text is obscure in part.

1, 16: Shaving the head was a biblical sign of mourning.

2, 2: Juda was chronically plagued by landowners who enriched

them; houses, and they take them; they cheat an owner
3 his house, a man of his inheritance. | Therefore thus says th
Lord: Behold, I am planning against this race an evil fro
which you shall not withdraw your necks; nor shall you wa
with head high, for it will be a time of evil.
4 On that day a satire shall be sung over you, and there sha
be a plaintive chant: "Our ruin is complete, our fields are pc
tioned out among our captors, the fields of my people a
5 measured out, and no one can get them back!" | Thus you sha
have no one to mark out boundaries by lot in the assembly
the Lord.
6 "Preach not," they preach, "let them not preach of the
7 things!" The shame will not withdraw. | How can it be sai
O house of Jacob, "Is the Lord short of patience, or are such l
deeds?" Do not my words promise good to him who wal
uprightly?
8 But of late my people has risen up as an enemy: you ha
stripped off the mantle covering the tunic of those who go th
9 way in confidence, as though it were spoils of war. | The wom
of my people you drive out from their pleasant houses; fro
their children you take away forever the honor I gave them
10 "Up! Be off, this is no place to rest"; for any trifle you ex
a crippling pledge.
11 If one, acting on impulse, should make the futile claim:
pour you wine and strong drink as my prophecy," then he wo
12 be the prophet of this people. | I will gather you, O Jacob, ea
and every one, I will assemble all the remnant of Israel; I w
group them like a flock in the fold, like a herd in the midst of
13 corral; they shall not be thrown into panic by men. | With

themselves fraudulently by taking land from the poorer people. I
this reason the ancestral property ("inheritance") was supposed to
inviolate. See the story of Naboth in 3 Kgs 21, 1-4.

2, 4: The fitting penalty for greedy landowners will be the irrevoca
loss of their property to their enemies.

2, 5: *To mark out boundaries by lot:* an allusion to Jos 13—
namely, the distribution of the land of Palestine to the twelve trib

2, 6-7: The words in quotes are the protests of the people agai
Michea's predictions of doom.

2, 8: Jews rob other Jews after the manner of non-Jewish enem

2, 9-10: Creditors harshly evict widows, and their children l
their freedom ("honor"). *A crippling pledge:* an unobserved Mos
Law forbade oppressive pledges for loans. See Ex 22, 25f.

2, 11: This people desires a prophet who would prophesy w
pleased them, provided they supply him with drink.

2, 12-13: Many critics do not attribute these verses to Michea. Th
date as exilic this hope of the return to Palestine of the southern ki
dom ("Jacob") and the northern kingdom ("Israel").

leader to break the path they shall burst open the gate and go
out through it; their king shall go through before them, and the
Lord at their head.

3

1 ***Downfall of Present Leaders*** And I said: Hear, you lead-
ers of Jacob, rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not your duty to
2 know what is right, | you who hate what is good, and love evil?
you who tear their skin from them, and their flesh from their
3 bones! | They eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from
them, and break their bones. They chop them in pieces like flesh
4 in a kettle, and like meat in a caldron. | When they cry to the
Lord, he shall not answer them; rather shall he hide his face
from them at that time, because of the evil they have done.
5 Thus says the Lord regarding the prophets who lead my
people astray; who, when their teeth have something to bite,
announce peace, but when one fails to put something in their
6 mouth, proclaim war against him. | Therefore you shall have
night, not vision, darkness, not divination; the sun shall go
down upon the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them. |
7 Then shall the seers be put to shame, and the diviners con-
founded; they shall cover their lips, all of them, because there
8 is no answer from God. | But as for me, I am filled with power,
with the spirit of the Lord, with authority and with might;
to declare to Jacob his crimes and to Israel his sins.
9 Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of
the house of Israel! You who abhor what is just, and pervert all
10 that is right; | who build up Sion with bloodshed, and Jerusa-
11 lem with wickedness! | Her leaders render judgment for a
bribe, her priests give decisions for a salary, her prophets divine
for money, while they rely on the Lord, saying, "Is not the Lord
12 in the midst of us? No evil can come upon us!" | Therefore,
because of you, Sion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem
reduced to rubble, and the mount of the temple to a forest ridge.

II. THE NEW ISRAEL

4

1 ***The People to Be Restored*** In days to come the mount
of the Lord's house shall be established higher than the

3, 5-8: Almost all the prophets denounced false prophets.

3, 12: This is the first time that a prophet verbally assaults Jerusalem and its temple. See Jer 26, 18.

4—5: Scholars are divided in their opinion on the authenticity of these two chapters. Some believe that they came from Michea in the

mountains; it shall rise high above the hills, and peoples sha
2 stream to it: | many nations shall come, and say, "Come, l
us climb the mount of the Lord, to the house of the God c
Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, that we may walk i
his paths." For from Sion shall go forth instruction, and th
3 word of the Lord from Jerusalem. | He shall judge betwee
many peoples and impose terms on strong and distant nation
they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spea
into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword again
4 another, nor shall they train for war again. | Every man sha
sit under his own vine or under his own fig tree, undisturbe
5 for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. | For all th
peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in th
name of the Lord, our God, forever and ever.
6 On that day, says the Lord, I will gather the lame, and I wi
7 assemble the outcasts, and those whom I have afflicted. | I wi
make of the lame a remnant, and of those driven far off a stror
nation; and the Lord shall be king over them on Mount Sio
8 from now on forever. | And you, O Magdal-eder, hillock
daughter Sion! Unto you shall it come: the former dominic
shall be restored, the kingdom of daughter Jerusalem.
9 Now why do you cry out so? Are you without a king? C
has your counselor perished, that you are seized with pains lil
10 a woman in travail? | Writhe in pain, grow faint, O daught
Sion, like a woman in travail; for now shall you go forth fro
the city and dwell in the fields; to Babylon shall you go, the
shall you be rescued. There shall the Lord redeem you from th
hand of your enemies.
11 How many nations are gathered against you! They say, "L
12 her be profaned, let our eyes see Sion's downfall!" | But the
know not the thoughts of the Lord, nor understand his counse
when he has gathered them like sheaves on the threshing floor.

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eighth century, and others that they came from a later hand in exil
or postexilic time. It is with these two opinions in mind that we are
understand the background of Michea's oracles.

4, 1-3: See Is 2, 3-4 n for the same verses.

4, 6-8: Whether this prophecy be exilic or postexilic, it express
a hope that the expatriated will return to form one united nation aga
with Jerusalem as its capital. Some believe this oracle was delivered
encourage the Jerusalemites under the threat of Sennacherib's siege
701 B.C.

4, 8: *Magdal-eder:* literally, "tower of the flock," a symbolic nam
for Jerusalem.

4, 10: *For now . . . your enemies:* even those who hold chs. 4—5
be from the eighth century tend to make an exception in regard to th
verse, viewing it as a postexilic reference to the Babylonian exile.

13 Arise and thresh, O daughter Sion; your horn I will make iron
and your hoofs bronze, that you may crush many peoples; you
shall devote their spoils to the Lord, and their riches to the Lord
of the whole earth.

14 ***Restoration through the Messia*** Now fence yourself in,
Bat-gader! "They have laid siege against us!" With the rod
they strike on the cheek the ruler of Israel.

5

1 But you, Bethlehem-Ephratha too small to be among the
clans of Juda, from you shall come forth for me one who is to
be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient
2 times. | (Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time
when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his
3 brethren shall return to the children of Israel.) | He shall stand
firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the
majestic name of the Lord, his God; and they shall remain, for
4 now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; | he shall
be peace.

4, 14: *Bat-gader:* literally, "house of the fenced-in place," another symbolic name for Jerusalem.

5, 1: This is a Messianic text, no matter whether it dates from the eighth century Michea or from a later hand. One modern opinion is: in contrast to king Ezechia of Jerusalem, besieged in 701 by Sennacherib (4, 14), the prophet points to a future king of the Davidic dynasty. In other words, this is a Messianic text on the dynasty, not on one specific person of the dynasty. *Bethlehem:* the Hebrew text does not have this word. *Ephratha, too small . . . of Juda:* in contrast with the other Judean clans, Ephratha is "small" politically and territorially. At first, Ephratha was the name of a clan around Bethlehem, then it meant the name of the city of Bethlehem. David was not from this clan, but from the city of Bethlehem, which received its name from the clan. *For me:* to do my will. *From you shall come forth . . . from ancient times:* Michea is most likely not predicting that the Messia will be born in Bethlehem nor that He will be divine because of the words "whose origin is from of old, from ancient times." This latter phrase does not mean eternity but refers to the antiquity, even in those days, of David's dynasty. The Messianic element of this passage is that Michea foresees the continuation of the Davidic dynasty, which originated in Ephratha insofar as David (and his ancestors?) came from there. When Mt 2, 6 quoted Mi 5, 1, the evangelist did not interpret Michea as predicting that Jesus was to be born at Bethlehem. Matthew merely reflects the opinion of his day that Jesus' birth at Bethlehem was connected with Michea's prophecy.

5, 2: Some experts believe that Michea is referring to Isaia (see Is 7, 14 n). Others hold that each of the two prophets speaks independently, but from a common background of Messianic ideas.

5, 3: *Shepherd:* a kind ruler.

5, 4-5: *Peace:* means harmony with God and man. *Seven shepherds,*

If Assyria invades our country and treads upon our land, we
shall raise against it seven shepherds, eight men of royal rank;
5 and they shall tend the land of Assyria with the sword, and the
land of Nemrod with the drawn sword; and we shall be de-
livered from Assyria, if it invades our land and treads upon our
borders.
6 The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people
like dew coming from the Lord, like raindrops on the grass
7 which wait for no man, nor tarry for the sons of men. | And
the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst
of many peoples, like a lion among beasts of the forest, like a
young lion among flocks of sheep; when it passes through,
8 tramples and tears, and there is none to deliver. | Your hand
shall be lifted above your foes, and all your enemies shall be
destroyed.
9 On that day, says the Lord, I will destroy the horses from
10 your midst and ruin your chariots; | I will demolish the cities
11 of your land and tear down all your fortresses. | I will abolish
the means of divination from your use, and there shall no
12 longer be soothsayers among you. | I will abolish your carved
images and the sacred pillars from your midst; and you shall no
13 longer adore the works of your hands. | I will tear out the
14 sacred poles from your midst, and destroy your cities. | I will
wreak vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have
not hearkened.

III. ADMONITION

6

1 ***Accusation and Answer*** Hear, then, what the Lord says:
Arise, present your plea before the mountains, and let the hills
2 hear your voice! | Hear, O mountains, the plea of the Lord

eight men of royal rank: the numerical progression from seven to eight is a biblical figure for an indefinite number (Am 1, 3), but the two groups are identical.

5, 5: *Nemrod:* Assyria.

5, 6-7: It is through God's power, not man's, that the remnant will triumph over the Gentiles.

5, 9-13: The restoration will remove the causes that led the people away from God, mainly idolatrous objects and armaments in which idolaters trusted.

6—7: Nowadays the attitude is to regard these two chapters as substantially Michea's, and as coming from the latter part of the eighth century as do chs. 1—3.

6, 1-5: Yahweh lists His gifts and asks His people to explain their ingratitude.

pay attention, O foundations of the earth! For the Lord has a
plea against his people, and he enters into trial with Israel.
3 O my people, what have I done to you, or how have I wearied
4 you? Answer me! | For I brought you up from the land of
Egypt, from the place of slavery I released you; and I sent
5 before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. | My people, what
Moab's king Balac planned, and how Balaam, the son of
Beor, answered him . . . from Sattim to Galgal, that you may
know the just deeds of the Lord.
6 With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow before
God most high? Shall I come before him with holocausts, with
7 calves a year old? | Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of
rams, with myriad streams of oil? Shall I give my first-born for
8 my crime, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? | You
have been told, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires
of you: only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk
humbly with your God.
9 Hark! the Lord cries to the city. [It is wisdom to fear your
2 name!] Hear, O tribe and city council, | you whose rich men
are full of violence, whose inhabitants speak falsehood with
10 deceitful tongues in their heads! | Am I to bear any longer
11 criminal hoarding and the meager epha that is accursed? | Shall
I acquit criminal balances, bags of false weights?
13 Rather I will begin to strike you with devastation because of
15 your sins. | You shall sow, yet not reap, tread out the olive,
14 yet pour no oil, and the grapes, yet drink no wine. | You shall

6, 3: This verse and "For I brought you up from the land of Egypt" (v. 4) are appropriately reactualized as a refrain ten times in the Reproaches during the adoration of the cross in the Mass of Good Friday.

6, 5: *From Sattim to Galgal:* a reference to Jos 3—5. Although the text is defective, it is evident that this verse continues to recount God's saving actions from the Exodus (v. 4) to the conquest of Palestine.

6, 6-7: Michea has a faithful subject answer God (in this court trial) by asking what He wants as a sign of gratitude; the faithful subject even offers to sacrifice his oldest son.

6, 8: Michea, as the spokesman for Yahweh, answers the faithful subject to observe the traditional prophetic teaching, namely, "do the right," i.e., justice (Am 5, 24), "love goodness," i.e., charity, e.g., Ds 6, 6, and "walk humbly with your God," e.g., Is 2, 9-19. This verse is often singled out from prophetic literature as one of the most personal and practical guides of religion in opposition to the popular exterior notion of religion (vv. 6-7).

6, 9-16: In this oracle, Michea attacks the unfair practices of the Jerusalem merchants.

6, 9: It is natural for a country prophet like Michea to select the big city of Jerusalem as the symbol of all the crimes of the people.

6, 10: *Epha:* a dry measure.

eat, without being satisfied, food that will leave you empty.
what you acquire, you cannot save; what you do save, I wil
16 deliver up to the sword. | You have kept the decrees of Amri
and all the works of the house of Achab, and you have walke
in their counsels; therefore I will deliver you up to ruin, an
your citizens to derision; and you shall bear the reproach of th
nations.

7

1 *Condemnation and Prayer* Alas! I am as when the frui
is gathered, as when the vines have been gleaned; there is n
2 cluster to eat, no early fig that I crave. | The faithful are gon
from the earth, among men the upright are no more! They al
3 lie in wait to shed blood, each one ensnares the other. | Thei
hands succeed at evil; the prince makes demands, the judge i
4 had for a price, the great man speaks as he pleases, | the bes
of them is like a brier, the most upright like a thorn hedge.
The day announced by your watchmen! your punishment ha
5 come; now is the time of your confusion. | Put no trust in
friend, have no confidence in a companion; against her who lie
6 in your bosom guard the portals of your mouth. | For the so
dishonors his father, the daughter rises up against her mothe
the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man'
7 enemies are those of his household. | But as for me, I will loo
to the Lord, I will put my trust in God my savior; my God wil
hear me!
8 Rejoice not over me, O my enemy! though I have fallen,
9 will arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord is my light. | Th
wrath of the Lord I will endure because I have sinned again
him, until he takes up my cause, and establishes my right. H
10 will bring me forth to the light; I will see his justice. | Whe
my enemy sees this, shame shall cover her: she who said to m
"Where is the Lord, your God?" My eyes shall see her downfall
now shall she be trampled underfoot, like the mire in the street

6, 16: *Amri . . . Achab:* Juda continued the misguided worshi
but especially the social injustice of the northern kingdom as embodie
in these two northern kings (3 Kgs 16, 25-34).

7, 1-7: Michea sees sin widespread and feels alone, like Diogenes.

7, 4: The Hebrew is obscure. *Watchmen:* on the city walls.

7, 6: Quoted by Jesus. See Mt 10, 35f.

7, 8-10: This seems to be an exilic oracle against the "enemy,"
perhaps the Edomites or the Babylonians.

7, 8: *I sit in darkness:* of the exile. *The Lord is my light:* the Lor
is my "day" of freedom.

11 It is the day for building your walls; on that day the bound-
12 ary shall be taken away. | It is the day; and they shall come to
you from Assyria and from Egypt, from Tyre even to the River,
13 from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain; | and the
land shall be a waste because of its citizens, as a result of their
deeds.
14 Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your in-
heritance, that dwells apart in a woodland, in the midst of
Carmel. Let them feed in Basan and Galaad, as in the days of
15 old; | as in the days when you came from the land of Egypt,
show us wonderful signs.
16 The nations shall behold and be put to shame, in spite of all
their strength; they shall put their hands over their mouths;
17 their ears shall become deaf. | They shall lick the dust like the
serpent, like reptiles on the ground; they shall come quaking
from their fastnesses, trembling in fear of you [the Lord, our
God].
18 Who is there like you, the God who removes guilt and
pardons sin for the remnant of his inheritance; who does not
19 persist in anger forever, but delights rather in clemency, | and
will again have compassion on us, treading underfoot our guilt?
20 You will cast into the depths of the sea all our sins; | you will
show faithfulness to Jacob, and grace to Abraham, as you have
sworn to our fathers from days of old.

7, 11-13: An oracle of restoration, most likely originating from the time of the exile. *The River:* Euphrates.

7, 14-17: This is most likely a postexilic psalm-prayer to Yahweh.

7, 16: *Put their hands over their mouths:* a biblical sign of respectful silence.

7, 18-20: A conclusion to the prayer (vv. 14-17) and to the book.

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

The signal flashed for the beginning of the end of the mighty Assyria empire when its great king, Ashurbanipal, died in 632 B.C. Vassa countries gradually struck out for independence. Even Juda felt freer Finally, the neo-Babylonians and the Medes destroyed the Assyria capital of Ninive in July-August, 612 B.C. Three years later the la attempt of Assyria to regain her crumbling empire ended at Haran Syria.

The prophecy of Nahum is a prolonged triumphal cry over the declin and fall of Ninive. The prophet echoed the joy felt from Egypt to th Persian Gulf, for the Assyrians were reputedly the most cruel rulers o antiquity.

The long standing and still the majority opinions claim that Nahum' prophecies date from either 626-25 or 613-12 B.C. Many non Catholic critics who previously believed this to be a "prophecy" writte after the fall of Ninive, regard it now as a true prophecy. The hypothesi however, that Nahum's prophecy is a liturgical text composed eithe before the fall of Ninive, requesting a fast fall, or after it, in happ celebration, is rejected by most scholars, but it is generally admitted tha there are liturgical motifs strewn in throughout the work.

The prophet interprets Assyria's downfall as God's punishment o the wicked Assyrian oppression. Nahum sees the fall as a hopeful sig of a just and peaceful future. He simultaneously depicts God as the Lor of history, i.e., He rules Assyria as well as Juda (see 2, 14). Uniquel different from the other prophets, Nahum does not denounce th people of Yahweh nor issue a clarion call for repentance and reform This holds true only of his booklet, but in his life he may very easil have preached reform.

Main divisions of the Book of Nahum are:

1. The Title, 1, 1
2. The Lord's Coming in Judgment, 1, 2—2, 3
3. The Fall of Ninive, 2, 2-14
4. Ruin Imminent and Inevitable, 3, 1-19

1

1 Oracle about Ninive. The book of the vision of Nahum o Elcos.

2 ***The Lord's Coming in Judgment*** A jealous and aveng ing God is the Lord, an avenger is the Lord, and angry; th Lord brings vengeance on his adversaries, and lays up wrath

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1, 1: *Nahum:* it may mean "The Comforter." *Of Elcos:* experts ca only guess that the site of Nahum's home town is in Galilee, Judi Negeb. As to the place of his death, a sixteenth century A.D. legen places his tomb at a place near Ninive.

1, 2-8: The style of this psalm is alphabetic, i.e., each verse begin

3 for his enemies; | the Lord is slow to anger, yet great in power,
and the Lord never leaves the guilty unpunished. In hurricane
and tempest is his path, and clouds are the dust at his feet; |
4 he rebukes the sea and leaves it dry, and all the rivers he dries
up. Withered are Basan and Carmel, and the bloom of Lebanon
5 fades; | the mountains quake before him, and the hills dissolve;
the earth is laid waste before him, the world and all who dwell
6 in it. | Before his wrath, who can stand firm, and who can face
his blazing anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks
7 are rent asunder before him. | The Lord is good, a refuge on
the day of distress; he takes care of those who have recourse
8 to him, | when the flood rages; he makes an end of his oppo-
nents, and his enemies he pursues with darkness.
9 What are you imputing to the Lord? It is he who will make
10 an end! The enemy shall not rise a second time; | as when a
tangle of thornbushes is set aflame, like dry stubble, they shall
12 be utterly consumed. | For, says the Lord, be they ever so many
and so vigorous, still they shall be mown down and disappear.
13 Though I have humbled you, I will humble you no more. | Now
will I break his yoke from off you, and burst asunder your
11 bonds. | From you he came who devised evil against the Lord,
the scoundrel planner;

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with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Only eleven of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used in the eight verses that remained preserved of this poem. It ranks among the paeans of praise, albeit picturing Yahweh, in allusions to the creation and the Exodus events, as an angry conquering God. The psalm sets the stage for a religious view of Ninive's downfall.

1, 2: *A jealous . . . God:* for explanation, see Ex 20, 5 n.

1, 4: *Basan, Carmel . . . Lebanon:* places famous for their forests.

1, 6-7: The coming of God in judgment has two aspects: to those who oppose Him it will be unbearable; to "those who have recourse to Him" it will bring strength and consolation.

1, 9-2 and v. 3: These verses probably contain five fragments of longer oracles.

1, 9-10: Nahum's question to the Judeans, who are discouraged because of the Assyrian domination, means that they are minimizing God's power. He assures them of the contrary: "It is He who will make an end."

1, 12-13: This fragmentary oracle addressed to Juda must be understood as vv. 9-10 above.

1, 12: *They:* the enemies of Juda. *You:* Juda.

1, 13: *His yoke:* the dominion of the Assyrian king over Juda.

1, 11: Note the transposition of verses by the translators. This fragmentary prophecy is addressed to Ninive. *From you:* Ninive. *He came . . . planner:* many believe this unnamed Assyrian king is Sennacherib who besieged Jerusalem 701 B.C. (4 Kgs 18—19).

14 The Lord has commanded regarding you: no descendant shall
come to bear your name; from your temple I will abolish the
carved and the molten image; I will make your grave a mockery.

2

1 See, upon the mountains there advances the bearer of good
news, announcing peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Juda, fulfill
your vows! For nevermore shall you be invaded by the scoun-
3 drel; he is completely destroyed. | The Lord will restore the
vine of Jacob, the pride of Israel, though ravagers have ravaged
them and ruined the tendrils.

2 ***The Fall of Ninive*** The hammer comes up against you;
guard the rampart, keep watch on the road, gird your loins,
4 marshal all your strength! | The shields of his warriors are
crimsoned, the soldiers colored in scarlet; fiery steel are the
chariots on the day of his mustering. The horses are frenzied; |
5 the chariots dash madly through the streets and wheel in the
squares, looking like firebrands, flashing like lightning bolts. |
6 His picked troops are called, ranks break at their charge; to the
7 wall they rush, the mantelet is set up. | The river gates are
8 opened, the palace shudders, | its mistress is led forth captive,
and her handmaids, under guard, moaning like doves, beating

1, 14: This fragmentary prophecy is addressed to the Assyrian king at the time of Nahum.

2, 1 and 3: This fragmentary prophecy is addressed to Juda. Since the herald announces the news of peace (compare the same imagery in Is 52, 7), due to freedom from Assyrian domination, a religious revival will take place (v. 1). Nahum may have believed that the fall of Assyria would pave the way for a reunion of the northern ("Israel") and southern ("Jacob") kingdoms.

2, 2-4a: A description of the Ninivites.

2, 2: *The hammer comes up against you:* the enemy is about to crush Ninive. The entire text of chs. 2—3 is acknowledged as one of the peaks of Old Testament poetry because of their staccato effect, dramatic color, and power. Scholars like to compare Nahum as a martial poet with the poet of the Song of Debora (Jgs 5).

2, 4b: *Fiery steel are the chariots:* from here on the description shifts from the Ninivites to the attackers.

2, 5: *Streets . . . squares:* these may be outside the city walls proper.

2, 6: *Mantelet:* a movable siege engine with a built-in shelter to protect the besiegers as they advance against the city walls. The best example is seen on Assyrian bas-reliefs.

2, 7: The attackers pour into the city.

2, 8: *Mistress . . . and her handmaids:* either the queen of Ninive with the ladies of her court, or the statue of Ishtar, Ninive's chief goddess, with her temple prostitutes. See 3, 4.

9 their breasts. | Ninive is like a pool whose waters escape; "Stop!
10 Stop!" but none turns back. | "Plunder the silver, plunder the gold!" There is no end to the treasure, to their wealth in precious things of every kind!
11 Emptiness, desolation, waste; melting hearts and trembling
12 knees, writhing in every frame, every face blanched! | Where is the lions' cave, the young lions' den, where the lion went in
13 and out, and the cub, with no one to disturb them? | The lion snatched enough for his cubs, and strangled for his lionesses; he filled his dens with prey, and his caves with plunder. |
14 I come against you, says the Lord of hosts; I will consume in smoke your chariots, and the sword shall devour your young lions; your preying on the land I will bring to an end, the cry of your lionesses shall be heard no more.

3

1 ***Ruin Imminent and Inevitable*** Woe to the bloody city,
2 all lies, full of plunder, whose looting never stops! | The crack of the whip, the rumbling sound of wheels; horses a-gallop,
3 chariots bounding, cavalry charging, the flame of the sword, the flash of the spear, the many slain, the heaping corpses,
4 the endless bodies to stumble upon! | For the many debaucheries of the harlot, fair and charming, a mistress of witchcraft, who enslaved nations with her harlotries, and peoples by
5 her witchcraft: | I am come against you, and I will strip your skirt from you; I will show your nakedness to the na-
6 tions, to the kingdoms your shame! | I will cast filth upon
7 you, disgrace you and put you to shame; | till everyone who sees you runs from you, saying, "Ninive is destroyed; who can pity her? Where can one find any to console her?"
8 Are you better than No-Amon that was set among the streams, surrounded by waters, with the flood for her rampart
9 and water her wall? | Ethiopia was her strength, and Egypt, and others without end; Phut and the Libyans were her auxil-
10 iaries. | Yet even she went captive into exile, even her little ones were dashed to pieces at the corner of every street; for her

2, 12: *The lion:* the king of Assyria.

3, 1-19: This chapter contains another description of the fall of Ninive within the same poem of 2, 2—3, 19.

3, 5-6: The punishment of adulteresses.

3, 8: *No-Amon:* "No" was the Egyptian name of the capital of Upper Egypt, called Thebes by the Greeks; its tutelary deity was Amon. The great city was destroyed by the Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal in 663 B.C.

3, 9: *Her:* refers to No-Amon (Thebes). *Phut:* perhaps modern Somaliland on the Red Sea.

nobles they cast lots, and all her great men were put into
11 chains. | You, too, shall drink of this till you faint away; you,
12 too, shall seek a refuge from the foe. | All your fortresses are
but fig trees, bearing early figs that fall, when shaken, into the
13 hungry mouth. | See, the troops are women in your midst; to
your foes the gates of your land are open wide, fire has con-
14 sumed their bars. | Draw water for the siege, strengthen your
fortresses; go down into the mud and tread the clay, take hold
15 of the brick mold! | There the fire shall consume you, the sword
shall cut you down.

Multiply like the grasshoppers, multiply like the locusts! |
16.17 Make your couriers more numerous than the stars, your
garrisons as many as grasshoppers, and your scribes as locust
swarms gathered on the rubble fences on a cold day! Yet when
the sun warms them, the grasshoppers will spread their wings
and fly, and vanish, no one knows where.

18 Alas! how your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria, your
nobles have gone to rest; your people are scattered upon the
19 mountains, with none to gather them. | There is no healing for
your hurt, your wound is mortal. All who hear this news of you
clap their hands over you; for who has not been overwhelmed,
steadily, by your malice?

3, 11: *You:* Nineve is here warned of a similar destruction. Intoxication from drinking the cup of God's wrath is a biblical figure of divine condemnation.

3, 14: An ironic exhortation to prepare the city for a futile defense. *Go down . . . brick mold:* make bricks for the city walls.

3, 18-19: A satirical dirge.

THE BOOK OF HABACUC

INTRODUCTION

A minority of commentators believe that in the original text it did not read "Chaldea" (1, 6) and, therefore, depending on their substitutions, the historical background becomes the Persian period, the Greek period, or even the Machabean period.

The more common opinion reads "Chaldea," i.e., neo-Babylon. Hence, the background is briefly this: Chaldea was a state in southern Babylonia. Nabopolassar the Chaldean broke Babylonia away from Assyria by 626 B.C. The neo-Babylonians and the Medes captured Ninive, the Assyrian capital in 612 B.C. At the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. the neo-Babylonians definitively defeated the Assyrians and their allies, the Egyptians. With the Assyrian empire now a glory of the past, the victors undertook the invasion of Syria and Palestine. Hence, the prophecy of Habacuc was composed between 605 and 597 B.C.

Scholars at present hold that Habacuc wrote all of chapters one and two, but the authenticity of chapter three is contested. Because of the superscription (3, 1) and postscript (3, 19) a long standing opinion held that it belonged to a liturgical collection and was later incorporated in the Book of Habacuc. A modern minority opinion reverses the process. This opinion says that the liturgy borrowed and lengthened Habacuc's hymn (ch. 3) because it was general enough in meaning to be adapted to liturgical use. One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered 1947-48 in Cave 1, dating from about the time of Christ, is a *pesher* (commentary) on Hb 1—2. It does not follow that Hb 3, the canticle, was not originally a part of the work. It may simply mean that the Dead Sea commentators did not want to comment on it.

Habacuc, interested in the problem of evil, asked how God could be just if He allowed an unholy nation, Juda, to be punished by a still more unholy nation, Babylon.

The prophet found this answer: the just will be saved (see 2, 4 n), and, in later history, the Babylonians will be punished. In theological language, Habacuc's answer was *faith*. To him, no matter what the calamity was, it meant: he who believes in God will be victorious. This faith was the essence of living religiously. Hence, the answer remained on the plane of earthly retribution. The answer of eternal retribution was to come later.

Main divisions of the Book of Habacuc are:

1. Title, 1, 1
2. The Prophet's Complaint and the Lord's Answer, 1. 2—2, 20
3. Canticle, 3, 1-19

1

1 The oracle which Habacuc the prophet received in vision.

2 ***The Prophet's Complaint and Its Answer*** How long, O
Lord? I cry for help but you do not listen! I cry out to you,
3 "Violence!" but you do not intervene. | Why do you let me see
ruin; why must I look at misery? Destruction and violence are
4 before me; there is strife, and clamorous discord. | This is why
the law is benumbed, and judgment is never rendered: because
the wicked circumvent the just; this is why judgment comes
forth perverted.
5 Look over the nations and see, and be utterly amazed! For a
work is being done in your days that you would not have
6 believed, were it told. | For see, I am raising up Chaldea, that
bitter and unruly people, that marches the breadth of the land
to take dwellings not his own.
7 Terrible and dreadful is he, from himself derive his law and
8 his majesty. | Swifter than leopards are his horses, and keener
than wolves at evening. His horses prance, his horsemen come
9 from afar: they fly like the eagle hastening to devour; | each
comes for the rapine, their combined onset is that of a storm-
10 wind that heaps up captives like sand. | He scoffs at kings, and
princes are his laughingstock; he laughs at any fortress, heaps
11 up a ramp, and conquers it. | Then he veers like the wind and
is gone—this culprit who makes his own strength his god!
12 Are you not from eternity, O Lord, my holy God, immortal?
O Lord, you have marked him for judgment, O Rock, you have
13 set him up for punishment! | Too pure are your eyes to look

1, 1: *The oracle:* a threatening speech. *Habacuc:* nothing is known of him except legends which arose about him after his day. *Vision:* literary or true vision? See Am 7, 9 n.

1, 2-4: Habacuc's first complaint is the failure of justice. The prophet, in a dialogue with God, complains about God not stopping the catastrophes inflicted by the Babylonians' invasion of Juda.

1, 5-11: God's first reply is that the Babylonians are His instruments in punishing sinful men. This is a frequent idea among prophets before the Babylonian exile.

1, 8: *Wolves at evening:* the wolves are considered more vicious in the evening when setting out for prey.

1, 11: *Veers like the wind:* the conquests in the ancient Near East were mainly raiding expeditions to collect tribute.

1, 12-17: Habacuc's second complaint is against the destructive Babylonians.

1, 12: *O Rock:* an ancient title praising God's power.

1, 13: The prophet asks: Why does the immortal (v. 12) and pure God gaze silently while the faithless and wicked Babylonians kill the Judeans who are more just than they (v. 13)?

upon evil, and the sight of misery you cannot endure. Why,
then, do you gaze on the faithless in silence while the wicked
14 man devours one more just than himself? | You have made
man like the fish of the sea, like creeping things without a
15 master. | He brings them all up with his hook, he hauls them
away with his net, he gathers them in his seine; and so he re-
16 joices and exults. | Therefore he sacrifices to his net, and burns
incense to his seine; for thanks to them his portion is generous,
17 and his repast sumptuous. | Shall he, then, keep on brandishing
his sword to slay peoples without mercy?

2

1 I will stand at my guard post, and station myself upon the
rampart, and keep watch to see what he will say to me, and
what answer he will give to my complaint.
2 Then the Lord answered me and said: Write down the vision
3 clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily. | For the
vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not
disappoint; if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will
4 not be late. | The rash man has no integrity; but the just man,
because of his faith, shall live. Wealth, too, is treacherous: the
5 proud, unstable man— | he who opens wide his throat like the
nether world, and is insatiable as death, who gathers to himself

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1, 14-15: To illustrate the cruelty of the Babylonians, the prophet compares them to fishermen, joyfully capturing their prey, the Judeans.

1, 16: This may be meant figuratively or it may allude to a Babylonian sacrifice of war weapons after the manner of Scythians, who offered sacrifice to a sword, which symbolized their god of war, Ares.

2, 1: Habacuc's soliloquy. *Keep watch:* a prophet often considered himself a watchman. *What he will say:* what God will say.

2, 2-4a: God's second reply.

2, 3: The sense is: the vision will come at God's appointed time and therefore it cannot be rushed nor delayed.

2, 4: The more common opinion understands the answer as a contrast between the Judeans ("the just man") and the Babylonians ("the rash man"), rather than a contrast between the just Judeans and the rash Judeans. The just man will live because he trusts in and lives by God's law. The rash man, who does not live trustfully, is devoid of integrity. Hence, according to the more common opinion: Juda will survive, Babylon will vanish. This verse, one of the most popular in the Old Testament, is the answer to Habacuc's whole problem of evil (see Introduction). V. 4 is quoted in Rom 1, 17; Gal 3, 11; Heb 10, 38 to buttress the teaching that man is justified through faith in Christ.

2, 4b-5: The prelude to the five woes. Since Habacuc knows that Babylon will be chastised, he preaches five maledictions against the oppressor. Rich Babylon is as greedy for land as the nether world is for dead victims.

all the nations, and rallies to himself all the peoples— | shall
not all these take up a taunt against him, satire and epigrams
about him, to say:
Woe to him who stores up what is not his: how long can it
last! he loads himself down with debts. | Shall not your credi-
tors rise suddenly? Shall not they who make you tremble awake?
You shall become their spoil! | Because you despoiled many
peoples all the rest of the nations shall despoil you; because of
men's blood shed, and violence done to the land, to the city and
to all who dwell in it.
Woe to him who pursues evil gain for his household, setting
his nest on high to escape the reach of misfortune! | You have
devised shame for your household, cutting off many peoples,
forfeiting your own life: | for the stone in the wall shall cry
out, and the beam in the woodwork shall answer it!
Woe to him who builds a city by bloodshed, and establishes
a town by wickedness! | Is not this from the Lord of hosts:
peoples toil for the flames, and nations grow weary for nought! |
But the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's
glory as water covers the sea.
Woe to you who give your neighbors a flood of your wrath to
drink, and make them drunk, till their nakedness is seen! |
You are filled with shame instead of glory; drink, you too, and
stagger! On you shall revert the cup from the Lord's right hand,
and utter shame on your glory. | For the violence done to
Lebanon shall cover you, and the destruction of the beasts shall
terrify you; because of men's blood shed, and violence done to
the land, to the city and to all who dwell in it.
Woe to him who says to wood, "Awake!" to dumb stone,

2, 6b-8: The first woe is the crime of plundering. The Babylonians will be repaid in coin according to the law of retaliation.

2, 9-11: The second woe is Babylon's ("household") crime of evilly acquiring an empire.

2, 11: The empire, built at the cost of injustice, will call down vengeance on its builders.

2, 12-14: The third woe is the crime of cruelty.

2, 13: *Peoples toil for the flames:* peoples build only to have fire consume their work. Maybe this alludes to the Babylonians whose empire will soon perish.

2, 14: A quotation from Is 11, 9.

2, 15-17: The fourth woe is the crime of the harshness with which the Babylonians treated conquered cities. But these cities will retaliate.

2, 16: *The cup from the Lord's right hand:* the cup of God's anger.

2, 17: *The violence done to Lebanon:* the spoliation of the cedar forests of Lebanon, used in lavish building projects by the conquerors. *The destruction of the beasts:* the killing of the wild animals through excessive hunting by the conquerors.

"Arise!" Can such a thing give oracles? See, it is overlaid with
18 gold and silver, but there is no life-breath in it. | Of what avail
is the carved image, that its maker should carve it? Or the
molten image and lying oracle, that its very maker should trust
20 in it, and make dumb idols? | But the Lord is in his holy temple;
silence before him, all the earth!

3

Canticle

1 Prayer of Habacuc, the prophet. To a plaintive tune.
2 O Lord, I have heard your renown, and feared, O Lord, your
work. In the course of the years revive it, in the course of the
years make it known; in your wrath remember compassion!
3 God comes from Theman, the Holy One from Mount Pharan.
Covered are the heavens with his glory, and with his praise the
4 earth is filled. | His splendor spreads like the light; rays shine
5 forth from beside him, where his power is concealed. | Before
6 him goes pestilence, and the plague follows in his steps. | He
pauses to survey the earth; his look makes the nations tremble.
The eternal mountains are shattered, the age-old hills bow low
7 along his ancient ways. | I see the tents of Chusan collapse;
trembling are the pavilions of the land of Madian.
8 Is your anger against the streams, O Lord? Is your wrath
against the streams, your rage against the sea, that you drive the
9 steeds of your victorious chariot? | Bared and ready is your
bow, filled with arrows is your quiver. Into streams you split the
10 earth; | at sight of you the mountains tremble. A torrent of rain
descends; the ocean gives forth its roar. The sun forgets to rise,
11 | the moon remains in its shelter, at the light of your flying
arrows, at the gleam of your flashing spear.

2, 18-20: The fifth woe is the crime of idolatrous worship, here illustrated as folly by contrasting idols (vv. 19-18) with God (v. 20).

3, 1-19: In the context of chs. 1—2 (and especially 2, 4) this psalm expresses the author's confidence that Yahweh will wage war victoriously against the Babylonians. The just Judeans have merely to wait for God's intervention.

3, 1: A later liturgical rubric, as is also the end of v. 19 (see Introduction).

3, 2: *Revive it:* your wondrous deeds of the past.

3, 3-15: Conventional language is employed to describe the appearance of the Lord, as in Ex 19, 16-19.

3, 3: The Lord is represented as coming from Sinai, where He had appeared to Moses and given Israel the Covenant and the Law.

3, 5: This may be an influence from Chanaan whose gods were believed to spread diseases. In the subsequent verses there are several similar parallels from ancient Chanaanite literature.

3, 7: *Chusan:* Ethiopia or a land close to Edom and Madian.

12 In wrath you bestride the earth, in fury you trample the
13 nations. | You come forth to save your people, to save your
anointed one. You crush the heads of the wicked, you lay bare
14 their bases at the neck. | You pierce with your shafts the heads
of their princes whose boast would be of devouring the wretched
15 in their lair. | You tread the sea with your steeds amid the
churning of the deep waters.
16 I hear, and my body trembles; at the sound, my lips quiver.
Decay invades my bones, my legs tremble beneath me. I await
the day of distress that will come upon the people who attack
17 us. | For though the fig tree blossom not nor fruit be on the
vines, though the yield of the olive fail and the terraces produce
no nourishment, though the flocks disappear from the fold and
18 there be no herd in the stalls, | yet will I rejoice in the Lord and
19 exult in my saving God. | God, my Lord, is my strength; he
makes my feet swift as those of hinds and enables me to go
upon the heights.

For the leader; with stringed instruments.

3, 13: *Anointed one:* the king.
3, 15: A poetic figure manifesting God's power over the seas.

THE BOOK OF SOPHONIA

INTRODUCTION

Sophonia (or Zephaniah) delivered his oracles "in the days of Josia, . . . king of Juda" (1, 1), who reigned 640-609 B.C. It is generally held that the prophet preached from 640 to 630, the eve of Jeremia's appearance as a preaching prophet.

On the historical and political scene, Assyria's stern and glorious hegemony all over the Middle East began to weaken, especially from 632 when the last great monarch Ashurbanipal died. The Scythians were devastating Syria about 630. The Assyrian colossus fell 612 with the capture of Ninive.

Taking advantage of Assyria's waning power, king Josia begins to sweep the nation of its religious syncretism and finally launches a full religious reform in 622. Hence, Sophonia sketches the setting before the religious reform. Through the eyes of the prophet, we see Juda plagued with Assyrian, Ammonite, Chanaanite forms of worship, social injustice, and false prophets. The bright side of the nation was the faithful remnant which was to be the soul of the forthcoming reform.

The Book of Sophonia as we now read it in the Hebrew Bible comes from after the Babylonian exile of 538 B.C., but the bulk of the oracles is admitted nowadays by most commentators to come from the prophet.

Main divisions of the Book of Sophonia are:

1. The Day of the Lord: A Day of Doom, 1, 2-18
2. The Day of the Lord: A Day of Judgment of the Nation, 2, 1-15
3. Reproach and Promise for Jerusalem, 3, 1-20

1

1 The word of the Lord which came to Sophonia, the son of Chusi, the son of Godolia, the son of Amaria, the son of Hezecia, in the days of Josia, the son of Amon, king of Juda.

2 ***The Day of the Lord: A Day of Doom*** I will completely sweep away all things from the face of the earth, says
3 the Lord. | I will sweep away man and beast, I will sweep away

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1, 1: *The word of the Lord:* a synonym for oracle or prophecy. *Sophonia:* the name means literally "Yahweh has treasured." *The son of Hezecia:* scholars dispute whether this refers to the Judean king by that name which would make Sophonia come from royal blood.

1, 2-18: Continuing to picture the Day of Yahweh as one of punishment (see Am 5, 18-20 n), Sophonia applies the "Day" to Jerusalem and Juda (v. 4), but he has nature "punished" in sympathy with man's sin, a frequent biblical characteristic (vv. 2, 3, 18). It remains disputed whether Sophonia's "Day" here was inspired by the Scythians' invasion of Palestine a few years before this oracle.

the birds of the sky, and the fishes of the sea. I will overthrow
the wicked; I will destroy mankind from the face of the earth,
4 says the Lord. | I will stretch out my hand against Juda, and
against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; I will destroy from this
place the last vestige of Baal, the very names of his priests, |
5 and those who adore the host of heaven on the roofs, with those
6 who adore the Lord but swear by Melchom; | and those who
have fallen away from the Lord, and those who do not seek the
Lord.
7 Silence in the presence of the Lord God! for near is the day of
the Lord, yes, the Lord has prepared a slaughter feast, he has
8 consecrated his guests. | On the day of the Lord's slaughter
feast I will punish the princes, and the king's sons, and all that
9 dress in foreign apparel. | I will punish, on that day, all who
leap over the threshold, who fill the house of their master with
10 violence and deceit. | On that day, says the Lord, a cry will be
heard from the Fish Gate, a wail from the New Quarter, loud
11 crashing from the hills. | Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!
for all the merchants will be destroyed, all who weigh out silver,
12 done away with. | At that time I will explore Jerusalem with
lamps; I will punish the men who thicken on their lees, who say
in their hearts, "Neither good nor evil can the Lord do." |
13 Their wealth shall be given to pillage and their houses to

1, 4-6: Sophonia denounces the Judeans for practicing religious syncretism.

1, 5: *Host of heaven on the roofs:* the Assyrian astral cult was practiced in Juda. *Melchom:* the god of the Ammonites who demanded human sacrifices.

1, 7-9: The Day of the Lord applied to Juda.

1, 8: *King's sons:* the court officials who wielded power during the minority of king Josia. *Foreign apparel:* the court ministers aped the ways of the Assyrians.

1, 9: *All who leap over the threshold:* for one meaning of this uncertain expression, see 1 Sm 5, 5 n. *Who fill the house . . . deceit:* an allusion to social injustice practiced by the court ministers of the royal palace ("house").

1, 10-11: *Fish Gate . . . New Quarter . . . Mortar:* well known sections of northern Jerusalem which would usually suffer the first impact of invaders. *The hills:* surrounding Jerusalem. These two verses are an indictment of the Jerusalem merchants.

1, 12: *Men who thicken on their lees:* Sophonia uses the figure of undisturbed lees at the bottom of a bottle of wine to illustrate lazy men—perhaps the most graphic expression in the book. The "lamp" metaphor shows that no one will escape God's punishment. The representation in art of Sophonia with a lamp derives from this verse. *Neither good nor evil can the Lord do:* God does not interfere with the world.

1, 13: Sophonia probably borrowed this verse from Am 5, 11.

devastation; they will build houses, but shall not dwell in them,
14 plant vineyards, but not drink their wine. | Near is the great
day of the Lord, near and very swiftly coming; hark, the day of
15 the Lord! bitter, then, the warrior's cry. | A day of wrath is that
day, a day of anguish and distress, a day of destruction and
desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of thick black
16 clouds, | a day of trumpet blasts and battle alarm against forti-
17 fied cities, against battlements on high. | I will hem men in till
they walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the
Lord; and their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their
18 brains like dung. | Neither their silver nor their gold shall be
able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath, when in the
fire of his jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. For he shall
make an end, yes, a sudden end, of all who live on the earth.

2

1 ***The Day of the Lord: A Day of Judgment*** Gather,
2 gather yourselves together, O nation without shame! | Before
you are driven away, like chaff that passes on; before there
comes upon you the blazing anger of the Lord: before there
3 comes upon you the day of the Lord's anger. | Seek the Lord, all
you humble of the earth, who have observed his law; seek
justice, seek humility; perhaps you may be sheltered on the day

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1, 15-16: These upheavals are not intended literally, but as part of the accepted prophetic description of the Day of the Lord as in Jl 3, 3-4.

1, 15: *A day of wrath is that day:* the *Dies irae dies illa* comes directly from this line. This chapter has influenced the medieval hymn, *Dies irae* (Day of wrath), which is used in the Mass for the Dead in the Roman Liturgy. The *Dies Irae* in Verdi's "Requiem" is a most vivid translation in music of what Sophonia meant by God's day of wrath.

1, 16: *A day of trumpet blasts:* almost literally translated into the hymn *Dies irae.* Compare Handel's "Messiah."

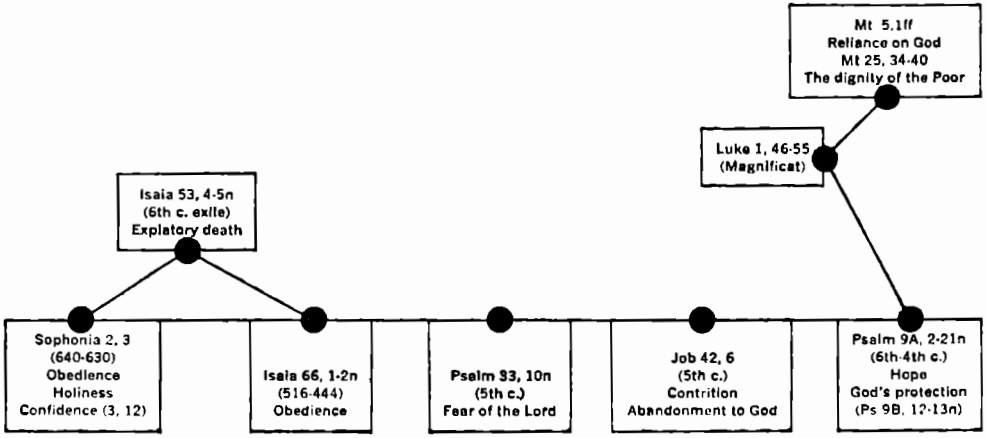
1, 18—2, 2: Among the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls is a commentary *(pesher)* on these verses.

2, 1-3: Sophonia summons Juda ("nation without shame") to escape the Day of the Lord, but the prophet addresses especially the "humble."

2, 3: *Humble . . . seek humility:* before the time of Sophonia the Hebrew word *anawim* ("the poor people"), and a few cognate Hebrew words, meant both the economically and socially poor. Sophonia begins to give this word religious connotations. It developed into an ever richer spiritual meaning down to New Testament times. The poor become those who accept their poverty without rebelling against God. In Sophonia, poverty begins to take on the connotations of obedience ("who have observed his law") and holiness ("seek justice") and confidence in God ("who shall take refuge in the name of the Lord" 3, 12).

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE POOR FOLK: Its Origin and Growth

A STUDY IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY



Sophonia is usually considered by scholars as the first who began injecting heavy spiritual overtones into **anawim**, the Hebrew word for "the poor people." Until his time this word meant the socially and economically poor (see So 2, 3 n). Throughout the centuries it took on the connotations of different virtues as shown on the chart. Gradually, the poor people assume a discernible spiritual physiognomy in spite of much overlapping and repetition of virtues. The chart illustrates only some key writings on poor folk spirituality. It follows for the most part the use of the Hebrew word **anawim**. The method of word study does not exclude poor folk spirituality in those parts of the Bible where this spirituality is found even though the word **anawim** is not. Job is an eminent example of the "poor man" although that Hebrew word is not used in Job 42, 6. Yet in this text Job expresses contrition and surrender for having questioned God on why the poor suffer and the unjust prosper. These are typical virtues of the poor folk's attitude.

One notable feature of this biblical theological study is the disregard for chronology in revelation. Messianism is a prime example. To our amazement, God did not reveal the most sublime qualities of the Messia and His kingdom at the end of the Old Testament period but much earlier. Likewise, we would expect that this spirituality of the poor grew richer with time. But, instead, we find that its apex is reached early in the Old Testament: it is the Suffering Servant Song addressed to the sixth century exiles. The spiritual note therein is expiatory death. This note is unique in the Old Testament. Doctrinally, not chronologically, this expiatory idea hovers about the threshold of the New Testament's teaching on expiation. The remaining Old Testament examples of poor folk spirituality have been charted evenly because the decision concerning which virtues were higher than others would be too subjective.

In New Testament times the poor folk spirituality reaches another peak in the Magnificat of Mary (Luke 1, 46-55). The pivot of this New Testament song of the poor folk is: "He . . . has exalted the **lowly**" (v. 52). The Greek word from which "lowly" is translated is the counterpart of the Hebrew word for the poor. Mary contrasts the poor folk with the proud (v. 51), the mighty (v. 52), and the rich (v. 53). Mary was the living synthesis of the Old Testament poor folk spirituality.

The poor folk spirituality of the Magnificat is enhanced by Christ's teaching in His first beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Mt 5, 3). He repeats the Old Testament teaching on poverty but sets it more squarely on its foundation, which is: reliance upon God. Jesus teaches the dignity of the poor (Mt 25, 34-40) who are to prolong His own life which was the poor man's supreme model. Mary and Jesus are the two New Testament peaks not because of having added richer, and essential doctrinal content to the Old Testament poor folk spirituality but because they lived it.

4 of the Lord's anger. | For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ascalon
shall be a waste, Azotus they shall drive out at midday, and
5 Accaron shall be uprooted. | Woe to you who dwell by the sea-
coast, to the Cretan folk! The word of the Lord is against you,
I will humble you, land of the Philistines, and leave you to
6 perish without an inhabitant! | The coastland of the Cretans
7 shall become fields for shepherds, and folds for flocks. | The
coast shall belong to the remnant of the house of Juda; by the
sea they shall pasture. In the houses of Ascalon at evening they
shall couch their flocks, for the Lord their God shall visit them,
and bring about their restoration.
8 I have heard the revilings uttered by Moab, and the insults
of the Ammonites, when they reviled my people and made
9 boasts against their territory. | Therefore, as I live, says the
Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Moab shall become like Sodom,
the land of Ammon like Gomorra: a field of nettles and a salt
pit and a waste forever. The remnant of my people shall plunder
10 them, the survivors of my nation dispossess them. | Such shall
be the requital of their pride, because they reviled and boasted
11 against the people of the Lord of hosts. | The Lord shall inspire
them with fear when he makes all the gods of earth to waste
away; then, each from its own place, all the coastlands of the
nations shall adore him.
12 You too, O Chusites, shall be slain by the sword of the Lord.
13 He will stretch out his hand against the north, to destroy
14 Assyria; he will make Ninive a waste, dry as the desert. | In
her midst shall settle in droves all the wild life of the hollows
the screech owl and the desert owl shall roost in her columns

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2, 4-15: These are oracles against the nations, for the meaning of which see Am 1, 2 n. In this section there may be random additions (vv. 7, 10, 11) by a hand after the exile, because Jewish editors often edi torialized prophetic oracles against the Gentiles.

2, 4: *Gaza . . . Ascalon . . . Azotus . . . Accaron:* four of the five cities of the Philistine confederation. The fifth city, Geth, is omitted. perhaps because it was already destroyed.

2, 5: *Cretan folk:* the Philistines who came from Crete.

2, 7: See 2, 9 n.

2, 8-9: There are different educated guesses to identify the his torical incidents regarding the Moabites and Ammonites alluded to here.

2, 9: *The remnant . . . survivors:* some believe that the remnan here and in v. 7 are a postexilic addition of hope for the restoration of former times. See the basic meaning of remnant in Am 5, 15 n.

2, 11: *The coastlands:* the islands of the Mediterranean Basin.

2, 12: *Chusites:* at this time the Egyptians were called Chusites be cause they were being ruled by an Ethiopian dynasty. This may be a fragmentary oracle against Egypt.

2, 13-15: See the whole prophecy of Nahum on the fall of Ninive

their call shall resound from the window, the raven's croak
15 from the doorway. | Is this the exultant city that dwelt secure;
that told herself, "There is no other than I!" How has she be-
come a waste, a lair for wild beasts? Whoever passes by her
hisses, and shakes his fist!

3

1 ***Reproach and Promise for Jerusalem*** Woe to the city,
rebellious and polluted, to the tyrannical city! | She hears no
voice, accepts no correction; in the Lord she has not trusted, to
3 her God she has not drawn near. | Her princes in her midst
are roaring lions; her judges are wolves of the night that have
4 had no bones to gnaw by morning. | Her prophets are insolent,
treacherous men; her priests profane what is holy, and do vio-
5 lence to the Law. | The Lord within her is just, who does no
wrong; morning after morning he renders judgment unfail-
ingly, at dawn.
6 I have destroyed nations, their battlements are laid waste;
I have made their streets deserted, with no one passing through;
their cities are devastated, with no man dwelling in them. |
7 I said, "Surely now you will fear me, you will accept correction";
she should not fail to see all I have visited upon her. Yet all the
8 more eagerly have they done all their corrupt deeds. | There-
fore, wait for me, says the Lord, against the day when I arise as
accuser; for it is my decision to gather together the nations, to
assemble the kingdoms, in order to pour out upon them my
wrath, all my blazing anger; for in the fire of my jealousy shall
all the earth be consumed.
9 For then I will change and purify the lips of the peoples, that
they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one
10 accord; | from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia and as far as the
recesses of the North, they shall bring me offerings.
11 On that day you need not be ashamed of all your deeds, your

2, 15: *The exultant city:* Ninive.

3, 1-5: Oracles against Jerusalem ("the city"). Most probably the oracles against the nations (2, 4-15) preceded the oracles against Jerusalem to serve as a warning to the latter. See Am, 2, 6-16 n which follows the same order.

3, 3: *That have had no bones to gnaw by morning:* the Hebrew is obscure here.

3, 6-7: The people did not profit from Yahweh's destruction of the Gentiles.

3, 9-10: God will purify the lips of the pagans so that they will be able to praise God and be converted.

3, 11-13: *On that day:* the poor and humble remnant will be saved. See 2, 3 n.

rebellious actions against me; for then will I remove from your
midst the proud braggarts, and you shall no longer exalt your-
12 self on my holy mountain. | But I will leave as a remnant in
your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge
13 in the name of the Lord: | the remnant of Israel. They shall do
no wrong and speak no lies; nor shall there be found in their
mouths a deceitful tongue; they shall pasture and couch their
flocks with none to disturb them.
14 Shout for joy, O daughter Sion! sing joyfully, O Israel! Be
glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! |
15 The Lord has removed the judgment against you, he has turned
away your enemies; the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your
16 midst, you have no further misfortune to fear. | On that day,
it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Sion, be not dis-
17 couraged! | The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty
savior; he will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in
18 his love, he will sing joyfully because of you, | as one sings at
festivals.
I will remove disaster from among you, so that none may
19 recount your disgrace. | Yes, at that time I will deal with all
who oppress you: I will save the lame, and assemble the out-
casts; I will give them praise and renown in all the earth, when
20 I bring about their restoration. | At that time I will bring you
home, and at that time I will gather you; for I will give you
renown and praise, among all the peoples of the earth, when I
bring about your restoration before your very eyes, says the
Lord.

3, 14-20: It is a song of hope and joy in which Juda will celebrate her victory over enemies (v. 15), God will be soldier and king (vv. 15 and 17); and the expatriated will be repatriated (v. 20). Many believe this to be postexilic.

THE BOOK OF AGGAI

INTRODUCTION

As the books of Esdras and Nehemias inform us, among the various obstacles which the repatriated Jews faced in the reconstruction of the fatherland was the Samaritan conspiracy to obstruct the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. After Darius ascended the Persian throne in 522 B.C., permission was granted to proceed with the temple reconstruction. In 520 B.C., when the people were still discouraged, the two prophets Aggai (Haggai) and Zacharia (Zechariah) exhorted the people to rebuild the temple. These two men returned from Babylon with Zorobabel. Nothing else is known of Aggai, not even his age, which is disputed among scholars; some make him old and others, young. The theme of the temple reconstruction permeates the five oracles or prophecies of Aggai. In historical fact, he preached more than these five oracles. Because of the use of the third person, and because of other reasons, scholars believe that even if these are not his exact words as we have them, they are certainly his thoughts written shortly afterward. Esd 5—6 give the historical background in which these two prophets preached, and Esd 5, 1; 6, 14 refer to their preaching by name.

Main divisions of the Book of Aggai are:

1. Exhortation to Rebuild the Temple of the Lord, 1, 1-15
2. Future Glory of the New Temple, 2, 1-9
3. Offerings of the Unclean Rejected, 2, 10-14
4. Promise of Immediate Blessings, 2, 15-19
5. Pledge to Zorobabel, 2, 20-23

1

1 ***Exhortation to Rebuild the Temple of the Lord*** On the first day of the sixth month in the second year of king Darius, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Aggai to the governor of Juda, Zorobabel, son of Salathiel, and to the high priest Josue, son of Josedec:

2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: This people says: "Not now
3 has the time come to rebuild the house of the Lord." (Then this
4 word of the Lord came through Aggai, the prophet:) Is it time

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1, 1: *On the first day . . . second year:* August-September in 520 B.C. Each prophecy was orally delivered in the second half of the second year of Darius I, i.e., 520 B.C. Aggai addresses the governor and the high priest.

1, 2-11: The five sayings of Aggai's preaching assembled here, because of their kindred subject matter, are: vv. 2, 4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-11.

1, 2: *The Lord of hosts:* used fourteen times by Aggai.

1, 4: The second saying, as the first, is a reprimand to the leaders,

for you to dwell in your own paneled houses, while this house
lies in ruins?
5 Now thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways! |
6 You have sown much, but have brought in little; you have
eaten, but have not been satisfied; you have drunk, but have
not been exhilarated; have clothed yourselves, but not been
warmed; and he who earned wages earned them for a bag with
holes in it.
7.8 Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways! | Go up
into the hill country; bring timber, and build the house that I
may take pleasure in it and receive my glory, says the Lord. |
9 You expected much, but it came to little; and what you brought
home, I blew away. For what cause? says the Lord of hosts.
Because my house lies in ruins, while each of you hurries to his
10 own house. | Therefore the heavens withheld from you their
11 dew, and the earth her crops. | And I called for a drought
upon the land and upon the mountains; upon the grain, and
upon the wine, and upon the oil, and upon all that the ground
brings forth; upon men and upon beasts, and upon all that is
produced by hand.
12 Then Zorobabel, son of Salathiel, and the high priest Josue,
son of Josedec, and all the remnant of the people listened to the
voice of the Lord, their God, and to the words of the prophet
Aggai, because the Lord, their God, had sent him, and the
13 people feared because of the Lord. And the Lord's messenger,
Aggai, proclaimed to the people as the message of the Lord:
I am with you, says the Lord.
14 Then the Lord stirred up the spirit of the governor of Juda,

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and through them to the people, that they live in luxurious homes ("paneled") while God's temple remains in ruins.

1, 5: *Consider your ways:* a favorite expression used, at least equivalently, in v. 7; 2, 15.18.

1, 6: Aggai sees the following misfortunes as a punishment from God: insufficient harvest, food, drink, clothing, and wages. *A bag with holes in it:* this is perhaps the first allusion in the Bible to coined money.

1, 9: This enigmatic verse probably means that God rejected ("blew away") the sacrifices which they brought to the altar of the ruined temple ("home") because they let the temple stay in ruins while they enjoyed their own homes. In the Bible, breathing (blowing) on something, or someone, can be salutary or harmful. This notion survives in the Middle East.

1, 10-11: The drought and famine are interpreted as the result of not building the temple. *Grain . . . wine . . . oil:* the familiar Old Testament trio of staple products in Palestine.

1, 12-15: Aggai's speech to the leaders and to the people was well received. *The remnant of the people:* scholars dispute whether Aggai exhorted only the repatriated Jews to rebuild the temple, or whether he included those Judeans who had not gone into exile.

Zorobabel, son of Salathiel, and the spirit of the high priest Josue, son of Josedec, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, so that they came and set to work on the house of the
15 Lord of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

2

Future Glory of the New Temple In the second year
1 of king Darius, | on the twenty-first day of the seventh month,
2 the word of the Lord came through the prophet Aggai: Tell this to the governor of Juda, Zorobabel, son of Salathiel, and to the high priest Josue, son of Josedec, and to the remnant of the people:
3 Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem like
4 nothing in your eyes? | But now take courage, Zorobabel, says the Lord, and take courage, Josue, high priest, son of Josedec, and take courage, all you people of the land says the Lord, and
5 work! For I am with you, says the Lord of hosts. | This is the pact that I made with you when you came out of Egypt, and my spirit continues in your midst; do not fear!
6 For thus says the Lord of hosts: One moment yet, a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and
7 the dry land. | I will shake all the nations, and the treasures of all the nations will come in, and I will fill this house with
8 glory, says the Lord of hosts. | Mine is the silver and mine the
9 gold says the Lord of hosts. | Greater will be the future glory

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2, 1: October 520 B.C.

2, 3-5: Since it was only one month (1, 1) from the laying of the foundation stones, Aggai is comparing Solomon's temple ("this house" v. 3) with a disorderly foundation site (not a finished temple which later, upon completion, would be smaller and less beautiful than Solomon's). In spite of this unfavorable comparison, Aggai encourages them to work.

2, 6: *One moment yet, a little while:* some time in the future. *I will shake the heavens . . . dry land:* the cosmic disturbances are a literary device to signify here *the inauguration* of the new Messianic era.

2, 7-9: The "treasures" are specified as "silver" and "gold." The Gentiles ("nations") bringing treasures to Jerusalem is a symbolic way of saying that they will be converted. Aggai's message is: work with encouragement because our temple will be superior to Solomon's insofar as it will usher in the future glorious age when the Gentiles will be converted. Hence, the Hebrew text foretells a universal kingdom (symbolized by the temple), but this text must not be understood as fulfilled when king Herod embellished the temple, nor when Jesus walked into it. The Hebrew words say nothing about Jesus. The Latin Vg translation insinuates that the Hebrew text spoke about the coming of Christ the Messia. The Advent liturgy follows the Vg.

of this house than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts!

10 ***Offerings of the Unclean Rejected*** On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of king Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Aggai: Thus
11.12 says the Lord of hosts: | Ask the priests for a decision: If a man carries sanctified flesh in the fold of his garment and the fold touches bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any other food, do they become sanctified? "No," the priests answered.
13 | Then Aggai said: If a person unclean from contact with a corpse touches any of these, do they become unclean? The
14 priests answered, "They become unclean." | Then Aggai continued:

So is this people, and so is this nation in my sight, says the Lord: and so are all the works of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

15 ***Promise of Immediate Blessings*** But now, consider from this day forward. Before there was a stone laid upon a
16 stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare?

When one went to a heap of grain for twenty measures, it would yield but ten; when another went to the vat to draw
17 fifty measures, there would be but twenty. | I struck you in all the works of your hands with blight, searing wind, and hail yet you did not return to me, says the Lord.

18 [Consider from this day forward: from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. From the day on which the temple of the Lord was founded, consider!]

2, 10: *Ninth month, in the second year:* November-December in 520 B.C.

2, 11: *Decision:* the Hebrew word *torah* here means an oral instruction.

2, 12-13: Holiness is not contagious (v. 12), but uncleanness is (v. 13).

2, 14: The application may mean: insofar as the people were unclean, their offerings became unclean (even though the temple was now rebuilt, offerings were made on the altar since its reconstruction in 538 B.C.). Or the application may refer to the Samaritans who volunteered to help in rebuilding the temple (Esd 4, 3 n). Far from being sanctified by the holy work, the Samaritans would most likely "infect" the Jews with uncleanness.

2, 15-19: This section may have originally followed 1, 15. The meaning is about the same as explained in 1, 6 n.

2, 18: *The ninth month:* the ordinal "ninth" has been copied incorrectly from 2, 10. This note clearly concerns the "twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, on which the temple of the Lord was founded" (1, 15).

19 Indeed, the seed has not sprouted, nor have the vine, the fig,
the pomegranate and the olive tree yet borne. From this day,
I will bless!

20 ***Pledge to Zorobabel*** The message of the Lord came a
second time to Aggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month:
21 Tell this to Zorobabel, the governor of Juda:
22 I will shake the heavens and the earth; | I will overthrow
the thrones of kingdoms, destroy the power of the kingdoms of the
nations. I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the
riders with their horses shall go down by one another's sword.
23 | On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, Zorobabel,
son of Salathiel, my servant, says the Lord, and I will set you
as a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts.

2, 20: *The month:* probably again the sixth month, as in 1, 15; see also 2, 18 n.

2, 19: *From this day, I will bless:* God will bless the people from the time they begin to reconstruct the temple.

2, 21: *I will shake the heavens and the earth:* see 2, 6 n.

2, 22: To encourage Zorobabel in the reconstruction of the temple, Aggai says that God is powerful enough to overthrow kingdoms and armies.

2, 23: Aggai says: Zorobabel is solemnly promised divine protection and is extraordinarily honored as God's signet ring, i.e., as God's representative. (The signet ring, being one's own seal to sign documents, was naturally a most precious possession. See Gn 38, 18 n). By using "signet ring," Aggai alludes to Zorobabel's grandfather, Conia, son of king Joakim, who was rejected as God's signet ring. See Jer 22, 24. In other words, the prophet sees Zorobabel as continuing the royal promises made to David and his successors. The words "take," "servant," "chosen" are found in Messianic contexts in other biblical passages.

THE BOOK OF ZACHARIA

INTRODUCTION

The prophet-priest Zacharia (or Zechariah), whose name means "Yahweh remembers," was a younger contemporary of the prophet Aggai with whom he shared the zeal for the rebuilding of the temple (Esd 5, 1; 6, 14). Both men also shared the view that its reconstruction was to precede God's approaching kingdom. A true conversion of heart, in the practice of justice and charity, must accompany the reconstruction. This notion of conversion comes from prophets older than Zacharia.

The first eight chapters, dated 520-518 B.C., contain literary visions which all scholars admit to come from Zacharia. The theme throughout is the exhortation to the returned exiles to rebuild the Jerusalem temple.

Zacharia follows several important ideas of Ezechiel, e.g., the stress on God's transcendence and the role of the priesthood in the Messianic era. Zacharia's symbolic visions show the influence of Ezechiel, to whom he is inferior. After the time of Zacharia, this symbolic imagery was to develop into full-blown apocalyptic literature, as in the Book of Daniel.

According to most commentators, half of the book, called Second Zacharia (9—14), was not written by the author of Za 1—8. There are cogent literary and historical reasons for this opinion. For instance, there is no longer any talk on the rebuilding of the temple. The dispute rages over the number of authors of chs. 9—14 and the general time of their writing. Often proposed is the end of the fourth century B.C. The New Testament quotes parts of Za 9—14 six times.

Main divisions of the Book of Zacharia are:

1. Eight Visions with the Theme of Rebuilding the Temple, 1, 1—6, 8
2. The Coronation of Zorobabel, 6, 9-15
3. The Problem of Fasting, 7—8
4. The Invasion of the Lord, 9, 1-8
5. Restoration, 9, 9-17
6. The New Order of Things, 10, 1—11, 3
7. Allegory of the Shepherds, 11, 4-17
8. Messianic Jerusalem, 12
9. The End of Falsehood, 13
10. The Fight for Jerusalem, 14

1

1 ***Necessity of Conversion*** In the second year of Darius, in the eighth month, the word of the Lord came to the prophet
2 Zacharia, son of Barachia, son of Addo: The Lord was indeed

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1, 1: *The second year . . . eighth month:* October-November 520 B.C.

1, 2-6: Zacharia calls the people to conversion and thereby to differ from their ancestors who paid no attention to the prophets.

angry with your fathers. . . . | and say to them: Thus says
the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I
will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Be not like your
fathers whom the former prophets warned: Thus says the Lord
of hosts: Turn from your evil ways and from your wicked
deeds. But they would not listen or pay attention to me, says
the Lord. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets,
can they live forever? | But my words and my decrees, which I
entrusted to my servants the prophets, did not these overtake
your fathers? Then they repented and admitted: "The Lord of
hosts has treated us according to our ways and deeds, just as
he had determined he would."

The Four Horsemen In the second year of Darius, on
the twenty-fourth day of Sabat, the eleventh month, the word
of the Lord came to the prophet Zacharia, son of Barachia, son
of Addo, in the following way: I had a vision during the night.
There appeared the driver of a red horse, standing among
myrtle trees in a shady place, and behind him were red, sorrel,
and white horses. | Then I asked, "What are these, my lord?";
and the angel who spoke with me answered me, "I will show
you what these are." | The man who was standing among
the myrtle trees spoke up and said, "These are they whom the
Lord has sent to patrol the earth." And they answered the angel
of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees and
said, "We have patrolled the earth, see, the whole earth is
tranquil and at rest!"
Then the angel of the Lord spoke out and said, "O Lord

1, 5-6: The people and the prophets die, but God's word lives forever. *Has treated us . . . as he had determined he would:* the people admitted that God's threats against their ancestors had been fulfilled.

1, 7—6, 8: The eight sermons preached in the form of literary visions occur in the same night (1, 7f). Scholars find the meaning of the symbolism difficult and sometimes impossible to decipher.

1, 7-17: In the first vision of the horsemen patrolling the world, Zacharia has an angel intercede. God consolingly encourages the people to look for better times in the future, even though the Persian empire was not yet overthrown and Jerusalem was not yet made the capital of the world.

1, 7: *The second year . . . eleventh month:* January-February, 519 B.C.

1, 8-11: *The driver of a red horse:* apparently distinct from the man or "angel of the Lord . . . standing among the myrtle trees," who spoke with the prophet. The four horsemen are sent by God to the four corners of the earth (2, 10) to see if the whole earth is at peace.

1, 8: *Red, sorrel, and white horses:* that they had riders may be implied.

1, 12: *These seventy years:* a round number for the Babylonian exile.

of hosts, how long will you be without mercy for Jerusalem and
the cities of Juda that have felt your anger these seventy
13 years?" To the angel who spoke with me, the Lord replied with
comforting words.
14 And the angel who spoke with me said to me, Proclaim:
Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am deeply moved for the sake of
15 Jerusalem and Sion, and I am exceedingly angry with the
complacent nations; whereas I was but a little angry, they
16 added to the harm. Therefore, says the Lord: I will turn to
Jerusalem in mercy; my house shall be built in it, says the Lord
of hosts, and a measuring line shall be stretched over Jeru-
17 salem. | Proclaim further: Thus says the Lord of hosts: My
cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the Lord will
again comfort Sion, and again choose Jerusalem.

2

1 ***Four Horns and Four Blacksmiths*** I raised my eyes and
2 looked: there were four horns. Then I asked the angel who
spoke with me what these were. He answered me, "These are
the horns that scattered Juda and Israel and Jerusalem."
3 Then the Lord showed me four blacksmiths. And I asked,
4 "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "Here are the
horns that scattered Juda, so that no man raised his head any
more; but these have come to terrify them: to cast down the
horns of the nations that raised their horns to scatter the land
of Juda."

5 ***The New Jerusalem*** Again I raised my eyes and looked:
6 there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. "Where are
you going?" I asked. "To measure Jerusalem," he answered;
"to see how great is its width and how great its length."
7 Then the angel who spoke with me advanced, and another
8 angel came out to meet him and said to him, "Run, tell this
to that young man: People will live in Jerusalem as though in

1, 15: *The complacent nations:* the neighbors of Juda.

1, 16: *A measuring line:* to be used for reconstruction.

2, 1-4: This second vision of the four horns symbolizes the enemies who "scattered Juda" out of her country. The four blacksmiths symbolize the power that God will use to overpower Juda's enemies.

2, 5-17: The third vision is the "man with a measuring line" who will rebuild the new Jerusalem. The meaning is: the exiles will come home and the pagans will be converted.

2, 8-9: There is no need of a wall because Jerusalem will be overpopulated. Moreover, God will be the city's encircling protection.

2, 8: *That young man:* the angel or "man with a measuring line" of v. 5.

open country, because of the multitude of men and beasts in
9 her midst. But I will be for her an encircling wall of fire, says
the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst."
10 Up, up! Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord; for
I had scattered you to the four winds of heaven, says the Lord.
11 | Up, O Sion! Escape, you who dwell with daughter Babylon.
12 For thus says the Lord of hosts [after, glory, he has sent me]
concerning the nations that have plundered you: Whoever
13 touches you touches the apple of my eye. See, I wave my hand
over them; they become plunder for their slaves. Thus you shall
know that the Lord of hosts has sent me.
14 Sing and rejoice, O daughter Sion! See, I am coming to
15 dwell among you, says the Lord. Many nations shall join them-
selves to the Lord on that day, and they shall be his people,
and he will dwell among you, and you shall know that the
16 Lord of hosts has sent me to you. The Lord will possess Juda
as his portion in the holy land, and he will again choose Jeru-
17 salem. Silence, all mankind, in the presence of the Lord! for he
stirs forth from his holy dwelling.

3

1 ***Josue the High Priest*** Then he showed me Josue the
high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, while Satan
2 stood at his right hand to accuse him. And the angel of the
Lord said to Satan, "May the Lord rebuke you, Satan; may the
Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this man a
brand snatched from the fire?"
3 Now Josue was standing before the angel clad in filthy
4 garments. He spoke and said to those who were standing
before him, "Take off his filthy garments, and clothe him
5 in festal garments." | He also said, "Put a clean miter on
his head." And they put a clean miter on his head and clothed

2, 10: *The land of the north:* Babylonia (v. 11).
2, 15-16: The conversion of the Gentiles, with Jerusalem as the religious capital. *Holy land:* the first biblical use of this phrase.
3, 1-10: The fourth vision is that of Josue, the high priest of Zacharia's day, who perhaps here represents all the people. The charges of Satan that Josue (people) is guilty are dismissed (vv. 4-5). Josue can now become the mediator between God and His people (v. 7).
3, 1: *The angel of the Lord:* Zacharia uses this expression for the Lord Himself. *Satan:* he appears here as the enemy of man but not of God.
3, 2: *Who has chosen Jerusalem:* see 2, 15-16 n. *A brand snatched from the fire:* one saved from exile.
3, 3: *Filthy garments:* a symbol of guilt.
3, 4-5: See 3, 1-10 n.

him with the garments. Then the angel of the Lord, standing,
said, "See, I have taken away your guilt."
6 The angel of the Lord then gave Josue this assurance: |
7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: If you walk in my ways and
heed my charge, you shall judge my house and keep my courts,
8 and I will give you access among these standing here. | Listen,
O Josue, high priest! You and your associates who sit before
you are men of good omen. Yes, I will bring my servant the
9 Shoot. Look at the stone that I have placed before Josue, one
stone with seven facets. I will engrave its inscription, says the
Lord of hosts, and I will take away the guilt of the land in one
10 day. On that day, says the Lord of hosts, you will invite one
another under your vines and fig trees."

4

4 Then I said to the angel who spoke with me, "What are
5 these things, my lord?" And the angel who spoke with me
replied, "Do you not know what these things are?" "No, my
6 lord," I answered. | Then he said to me, "This is the Lord's
message to Zorobabel: Not by an army, nor by might, but by
7 my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. What are you, O great
mountain? Before Zorobabel you are but a plain. He shall
bring out the capstone amid exclamations of 'Hail, Hail' to it."
8.9 This word of the Lord then came to me: The hands of
Zorobabel have laid the foundations of this house, and his
hands shall finish it; then you shall know that the Lord of
10 hosts has sent me to you. For even they who are scornful on

3, 8: *Men of good omen:* the good standing and restoration of Josue and his fellow priests are a symbol of happy Messianic times to come. *My servant the Shoot:* Messianic term for Zorobabel. See 6, 11 n.

3, 9-10: The general sense is that, ideally, sin will disappear and peace will reign in Messianic times.

3, 9: *The stone . . . placed before Josue:* most likely a precious gem for Josue's forehead. The stone is the same as the "select stone" of 4, 10. *Stone with seven facets:* a symbol of God's care of all the world as explained in 4, 10.

3, 10: *Invite . . . vines and fig trees:* the biblical figure for peace.

4, 4ff: Whenever the numbering of the verses is not consecutive, i.e., 1, 2, 3, etc., it means that the original order of lines was accidentally disturbed in the transmission of the text. The verse numbers given in such cases are always those of the current Hebrew text, though the arrangement differs. Hence, e.g., in the present ch. 4, the CCD translators rearranged the verses to what they believed to be the original order, namely: ch. 4, vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14.

4, 6-7: The sense of the "message" is that God's power will prevail in rebuilding the temple through Zorobabel in spite of obstacles ("great mountain").

4, 10: See 3, 9 n.

that day of small beginnings shall rejoice to see the select stone in the hands of Zorobabel. These seven facets are the eyes of the Lord that range over the whole earth.

1 *The Lampstand* Then the angel who spoke with me returned and awakened me, like a man awakened from his sleep.
2 "What do you see?" he asked me. "I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl at the top," I replied; "on it are seven lamps
3 with their tubes, | and beside it are two olive trees, one on the
11 right and the other on the left." I then asked him, "What are
12 these two olive trees at each side of the lampstand?" | And again I asked, "What are the two olive tufts which freely pour
13 out fresh oil through the two golden channels?" "Do you not know what these are?" he said to me. "No, my lord," I
14 answered him. | He said, "These are the two anointed who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

5
1 *The Flying Scroll* Then I raised my eyes again and saw
2 a scroll flying. "What do you see?" he asked me. I answered, "I see a scroll flying; it is twenty cubits long and ten cubits
3 wide." Then he said to me: "This is the curse which is to go forth over the whole earth; in accordance with it shall every thief be swept away, and in accordance with it shall every
4 perjurer be expelled from here. I will send it forth, says the Lord of hosts, and it shall come into the house of the thief, or into the house of him who perjures himself with my name; it shall lodge within his house, consuming it, timber and stones."

4, 1ff: See 4, 4ff n. The fifth vision of the lampstand between two olive trees means that God will work out His plans through Josue, the religious leader (one olive tree), and Zorobabel, the civil leader (the other olive tree).

4, 2: *Lampstand:* the "bowl" seems to disqualify the lampstand as a figure of the seven-branched lampstand. Regardless of the picture Zacharia had in mind, what does the lampstand represent? God? The temple of the future Messianic age?

5, 1-4: In the sixth vision, the flying scroll, Zacharia preaches that God will purify the land of thieves and perjurers (who perhaps typify social evildoers). The underlying idea of this and the following vision of the flying bushel (5, 5-11) is that sin must be eradicated before the Messianic age dawns (see 3, 9-10 n).

5, 2: *Twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide:* thirty feet by fifteen (the dimensions of Solomon's temple as given in 3 Kgs 6, 3).

5, 3-4: *The curse:* presumably the "curse" is written on this lengthy scroll (v. 3) and falls upon the houses of the evildoers (v. 4).

5 ***The Flying Bushel*** Then the angel who spoke with me
came forward and said to me, "Raise your eyes and see what
6 this is that comes forth." | "What is it?" I asked. And he
answered, "This is a bushel container coming. This is their
7 guilt in all the land." Then a leaden cover was lifted, and there
8 was a woman sitting inside the bushel. "This is Wickedness,"
he said; and he thrust her inside the bushel, pushing the leaden
9 cover into the opening. Then I raised my eyes and saw two
women coming forth with a wind ruffling their wings, for they
had wings like the wings of a stork. As they lifted up the bushel
10 into the air, | I said to the angel who spoke with me, "Where
11 are they taking the bushel?" | He replied, "To build a temple
for it in the land of Senaar; when the temple is ready, they will
deposit it there in its place."

6

1 ***Four Chariots*** Again I raised my eyes and saw four char-
iots coming out from between two mountains; and the moun-
2 tains were of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the
3 second chariot black horses, the third chariot white horses,
and the fourth chariot spotted horses—all of them strong
4 horses. I asked the angel who spoke with me, "What are
5 these, my lord?" | The angel said to me in reply, "These are
the four winds of the heavens, which are coming forth after
6 being reviewed by the Lord of all the earth." The chariot with
the black horses was turning toward the land of the north, the
red and the white horses went after them, and the spotted ones
7 went toward the land of the south. As these strong horses
emerged, eager to set about patrolling the earth, he said, "Go,
8 patrol the earth!" Then, as they patrolled the earth, | he called
out to me and said, "See, they that go forth to the land of the
north will make my spirit rest in the land of the north."

9 ***The Coronation*** This word of the Lord then came to me:
10 Take from the returned captives Holdai, Tobia, Idaia; and go

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5, 5-11: In the seventh vision, the woman sealed in the bushel is a figure of the general corruption of the people of Juda. She is removed from the Holy Land and transported to Babylonia ("Senaar") where a dwelling is being prepared for her; this is a symbol of the reign of wickedness in pagan lands, contrasted with the reign of holiness in the Lord's dwelling on Mount Sinai.

6, 1-8: In the eighth vision, the four patrolling chariots, the meaning may be that God's anger ("spirit") flares up against Babylon ("land of the north") and, therefore, these are war chariots; or, the "spirit" lights upon the Babylonian exiles to stir them to return home to Juda and, thus, the chariots are messengers.

the same day to the house of Josia, son of Sophonia (these had
11 come from Babylon). Silver and gold you shall take, and make
a crown; place it on the head of [Josue, son of Josedec, the
12 high priest] Zorobabel. And say to him: Thus says the Lord
of hosts: Here is a man whose name is Shoot, and where he is
13 he shall sprout, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. Yes, he
shall build the temple of the Lord, and taking up the royal
insignia, he shall sit as ruler upon his throne. The priest shall
be at his right hand, and between the two of them there shall be
14 friendly understanding. The crown itself shall be a memorial
offering in the temple of the Lord in favor of Holdai, Tobia,
15 Idaia, and the son of Sophonia. And they who are from afar
shall come and build the temple of the Lord, and you shall know
that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. And if you heed
carefully the voice of the Lord your God. . . .

7

1 ***True Fasting*** In the fourth year of Darius the king [the
word of the Lord came to Zacharia], on the fourth day of
2 Casleu, the ninth month, | Bethel-Sarasar sent Rogammelech
3 and his men to implore favor of the Lord | and to ask the
priests of the house of the Lord of hosts, and the prophets,
"Must I mourn and abstain in the fifth month as I have been
4 doing these many years?" Thereupon this word of the Lord of

6, 11: *Make a crown; place it on the head of [Josue, son of Josedec, the high priest] Zorobabel:* according to the current Hebrew text, Josue the high priest is to be crowned. However, since the crown is a sign of royalty, the original text must have had the name of Zerobabel here, not that of Josue. In 3, 8 Josue is a different man from the one called the Shoot, and in 6, 12 it is upon the Shoot that the crown is to be placed. Zacharia carried out God's command and crowned Zorobabel king, in a ceremony symbolic of the future when God would intervene and Juda would be allowed to have its king back. Even though Zorobabel was a descendant of David, Zacharia did not actually make him king here. "Shoot" as the key Messianic word in this passage and 3, 8 are accepted royal Messianic texts. These texts speak of a future single king who will restore the disappearing dynasty. In this sense, Zorobabel is a type of the Messia. However, neither this text nor 4, 1ff say that the Messia will be both priest and king.

7—8: The problem of fasting.

7, 1: *The fourth year of Darius . . . the fourth day of Casleu, the ninth month:* November, 518 B.C.

7, 2-3: A question of conscience was asked of the prophets and priests whether the anniversary of mourning and fasting ("fifth month"), in commemoration of the temple destruction in 587 B.C., should be observed although the temple was in the process of reconstruction.

7, 4-14: Zacharia takes advantage of the question (7, 2-3) to give a sermon on how in the past fasting and celebrating were considered

5 hosts came to me: Say to all the people of the land and to the
priests: When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the
seventh month these seventy years, was it really for me that you
6 fasted? And when you were eating and drinking, was it not for
yourselves that you ate, and for yourselves that you drank?
7 Were not these the words which the Lord spoke through the
former prophets, when Jerusalem and the surrounding cities
were inhabited and at peace, when the Negeb and the foothills
8 were inhabited? [This word of the Lord came to Zacharia: |
9 Thus says the Lord of hosts:] Render true judgment, and show
10 kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress
the widow or the orphan, the alien or the poor; do not plot
11 evil against one another in your hearts. But they refused to
listen; they stubbornly turned their backs and stopped their
12 ears so as not to hear. And they made their hearts diamond-
hard so as not to hear the teaching and the message that the
Lord of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets.
13 Then the Lord of hosts in his great anger said that, as they
had not listened when he called, so he would not listen when
14 they called, but would scatter them with a whirlwind among all
the nations that they did not know. Thus the land was left
desolate after them with no one traveling to and fro; they made
the pleasant land into a desert.

8

1 ***In the Days of the Messia*** This word of the Lord of
hosts came: Thus says the Lord of hosts:
2 I am intensely jealous for Sion, stirred to jealous wrath for
3 her. | Thus says the Lord: I will return to Sion, and I will
dwell within Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful
city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.
4 Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women, each
with staff in hand because of old age, shall again sit in the
5 streets of Jerusalem. The city shall be filled with boys and girls
6 playing in her streets. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Even if
this should seem impossible in the eyes of the remnant of this

more important than keeping God's laws. Since their forefathers did not observe the laws of God, He punished them through the exile.

7, 5: Seventh month: most likely a reference to the murder of Godoliah "whom the king of Babylon had made ruler" of Juda, Jer 41, 1-3. *Seventy years:* round number for the duration of the Babylonian exile.

8, 1-23: This is a group of ten oracles on the peace, prosperity, conversion and joys of the Messianic age. Many ideas contained in chs. 1—7 are repeated here. There are abundant allusions to other prophets, especially Aggai. Zacharia considers the days of the temple reconstruction as the inauguration of the Messianic age.

people, shall it in those days be impossible in my eyes also, says
7 the Lord of hosts? Thus says the Lord of hosts: Lo, I will
rescue my people from the land of the rising sun, and from
8 the land of the setting sun. I will bring them back to dwell
within Jerusalem. They shall be my people, and I will be their
God, with faithfulness and justice.
9 Thus says the Lord of hosts: Let your hands be strong, you
who in these days hear these words spoken by the prophets on
the day when the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts
10 was laid for the building of the temple. For before those days
there were no wages for men, or hire for beasts; those who
came and went had no security from the enemy, for I set every
11 man against his neighbor. But now I will not deal with the
remnant of this people as in former days, says the Lord of
12 hosts, | for it is the seedtime of peace: the vine shall yield its
fruit, the land shall bear its crops, and the heavens shall give
their dew; all these things I will have the remnant of the
13 people possess. Just as you were a curse among the nations, O
house of Juda and house of Israel, so will I save you that you
may be a blessing: do not fear, but let your hands be strong.
14 Thus says the Lord of hosts: As I determined to harm you
when your fathers provoked me to wrath, says the Lord of
15 hosts, and I did not relent, | so again in these days I have
determined to favor Jerusalem and the house of Juda; do not
16 fear! These then are the things you should do: Speak the truth
to one another; let there be honesty and peace in the judgments
17 at your gates, and let none of you plot evil against another in
his heart, nor love a false oath. For all these things I hate,
says the Lord.
18.19 This word of the Lord of hosts came to me: Thus says
the Lord of hosts: The fast days of the fourth, the fifth, the
seventh, and the tenth months shall become occasions of joy and
gladness, cheerful festivals for the house of Juda; only love
20 faithfulness and peace. Thus says the Lord of hosts: There
21 shall yet come peoples, the inhabitants of many cities; and the
inhabitants of one city shall approach those of another, and
say, "Come! let us go to implore the favor of the Lord"; and,
22 "I too will go to seek the Lord." Many peoples and strong
nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and

8, 19: Zacharia finally answers the question of 7, 3. The fast day of the "fourth month" commemorated the ruin of Jerusalem in June 587 B.C.; the fast of the "fifth month," the burning of the temple in July 587; that of the "seventh month," the murder of Godolia in September 587; and that of the "tenth month," the beginning of the last phase of Jerusalem's siege in January 588 B.C.

23 to implore the favor of the Lord. | Thus says the Lord of
hosts: In those days ten men of every nationality, speaking
different tongues, shall take hold, yes, take hold of every Jew
by the edge of his garment and say, "Let us go with you, for
we have heard that God is with you."

9

1 ***Invasion by the Lord*** A burden: The word of the Lord
is upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus is its resting place
for the cities of Aram are the Lord's, as are all the tribes of
2 Israel, | Hamath also, on its border, Tyre too, and Sidon, how-
ever wise they be.
3 Tyre built herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver like
4 dust, and gold like the mire of the streets. | Lo, the Lord will
strip her of her possessions, and smite her power on the sea
and she shall be devoured by fire.
5 Ascalon shall see it and be afraid; Gaza also: she shall be
in great anguish; Accaron too, for her hope shall come to
nought. The king shall disappear from Gaza, and Ascalon shall
6 not be inhabited, | and the baseborn shall occupy Azotus. I will
7 destroy the pride of the Philistine | and take from his mouth
his bloody meat, and his abominations from between his
teeth: he also shall become a remnant for our God, and shall
be like a family in Juda, and Accaron shall be like the Jebusites
8 I will encamp by my house as a guard that none may pass
to and fro; no oppressor shall pass over them again, for now
have regard for their affliction.

9 ***Restoration under the Messia*** Rejoice heartily, O daugh-
ter Sion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your kin,

9—14: See Introduction on Second Zacharia.

9, 1-8: The unknown author of this oracle has God conquer the land from Damascus down the Mediterranean coast, and establish Juda as the conqueror. Some give the time of the Assyrians as the date of this oracle, and others the time of the Greeks.

9, 1: *Hadrach:* a city north of Damascus.

9, 6: *The baseborn:* people of mixed ancestry.

9, 7: *Bloody meat, and his abominations from between his teeth* meats forbidden to Jews. *Remnant:* in the books of Zacharia and Aggeus this term is used for the repatriated Jews. *Jebusites:* the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Jerusalem, conquered by David, and incorporated into Israel.

9, 8: *My house:* the temple or Holy Land.

9, 9-10: An unknown prophet on an unknown historical occasion invites Jerusalem to rejoice over the future royal Messia whose main trait is here described as peacefulness— "riding on an ass," an animal of peace (not poverty) as opposed to a horse of war in v. 10. "His Do-

shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek, and riding on an
10 ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass. | He shall banish the chariot
from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; the warrior's
bow shall be banished, and he shall proclaim peace to the
nations. His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the
River to the ends of the earth.
11 As for you, for the blood of your covenant with me, I will
12 bring forth your prisoners from the dungeon. | In the return to
the fortress of the waiting prisoners, this very day, I will return
13 you double for your exile. | For I will bend Juda as my bow,
I will arm myself with Ephraim; I will arouse your sons, O
Sion, [against your sons, O Yavan,] and I will use you as a
warrior's sword.
14 The Lord shall appear over them, and his arrow shall shoot
forth as lightning; the Lord God shall sound the trumpet, and
15 come in a storm from the south. | The Lord of hosts shall be a
shield over them, they shall overcome sling stones and trample
them underfoot; they shall drink blood like wine, till they are
filled with it like libation bowls, like the corners of the altar. |
16 And the Lord, their God, shall save them on that day, his
people, like a flock. For they are the jewels in a crown raised
17 aloft over his land. | For what wealth is theirs, and what
beauty! grain that makes the youths flourish, and new wine, the
maidens!

10

1 ***The New Order of Things*** Ask of the Lord rain in the
spring season! It is the Lord who makes the storm clouds, and

minion" shall be universal. The Messia will be "meek" like the remnant in So 3, 12 and a "just savior," i.e., God will lavish His protection upon the Messia. Modern scripture scholars say that even if Christ did not deliberately materially fulfill this prophecy (see Mt 21, 4f and parallel passages) by riding on an ass, He would have fulfilled it because of His peacefulness. These moderns do not hold that the Old Testament prophet is giving a photographic picture of this scene: the scene went beyond what the prophet envisioned.

9, 11-17: An idealistic restoration and return of God's people from exile.

9, 11: *The blood of your covenant with me:* the covenant between the Lord and Israel sealed with sacrificial blood (Ex 24, 8).

9, 12: *The waiting prisoners:* the exiles awaiting the return to their country, where they will receive a double compensation for the double punishment they had suffered.

9, 13: "Ephraim" will be the arrow that God will use for the bow of Juda. *Yavan:* Greece.

10, 1-2: This oracle may have been composed when people were

2 sends men the pouring rain; for everyone, grassy fields. | For
the teraphim speak nonsense, the diviners have false visions:
deceitful dreams they tell, empty comfort they offer. This is
why they wander like sheep, wretched: they have no shepherd.
3 | My wrath is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish
the leaders; for the Lord of hosts will visit his flock, the house
of Juda, and make them his stately war horse.
4 From him shall come leader and chief, from him warrior's
5 bow and every officer. | They shall all be warriors, trampling
the mire of the streets in battle; they shall wage war because
the Lord is with them, and shall put the horsemen to rout.
6 I will strengthen the house of Juda, the house of Joseph I will
save; I will bring them back, because I have mercy on them;
they shall be as though I had never cast them off, for I am
7 the Lord, their God, and I will hear them. | Then Ephraim
shall be valiant men, and their hearts shall be cheered as by
wine. Their children shall see it and be glad, their hearts shall
rejoice in the Lord.
8 I will whistle for them to come together, and when I redeem
9 them they will be as numerous as before. | I sowed them
among the nations, yet in distant lands they remember me:
10 they shall rear their children and return. | I will bring them
back from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria. I
will bring them into Galaad and into Lebanon, but these shall
11 not suffice them; | I will cross over to Egypt and smite the
waves of the sea and all the depths of the Nile shall be dried
up. The pride of Assyria shall be cast down, and the scepter
12 of Egypt taken away. | I will strengthen them in the Lord, and
they shall walk in his name, says the Lord.

11

1 Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your
2 cedars! | Wail, you cypress trees, for the cedars are fallen, the

praying for rain during a drought, and were tempted to use pagan means
to obtain rain.

10, 2: *Teraphim:* a frequent biblical name for household idols used
for divination.

10, 3-12: This oracle is by an unknown prophet, at an unknown date
and on an unknown historical circumstance, who has God describe
through a new Exodus (v. 11) a time of restoration of the people's land
and prosperity.

10, 3: *Shepherds . . . leaders:* perhaps foreign rulers.

10, 10: *I will bring them into Galaad and into Lebanon:* an allusion
to the extent of David's kingdom.

11, 1-3: Scholars can only guess whether the names Lebanon, Basan
and Jordan in this mocking song are intended as symbols of Israel's

mighty have been despoiled. Wail, you oaks of Basan, for the
3 impenetrable forest is cut down! | Hark! the wailing of the
shepherds, their glory has been ruined. Hark! the roaring of
the young lions, the jungle of the Jordan is laid waste.

4 *Allegory of the Shepherds* Thus said the Lord, my God:
5 Shepherd the flock to be slaughtered. For they who buy them
slay them with impunity; while those who sell them say,
"Blessed be the Lord, I have become rich!" Even their own
6 shepherds do not feel for them. (Nor shall I spare the inhabit-
ants of the earth any more, says the Lord. Yes, I will deliver
each of them into the power of his neighbor, or into the power
of his king; they shall crush the earth, and I will not deliver
it out of their power.)
7 So I became the shepherd of the flock to be slaughtered
for the sheep merchants. I took two staffs, one of which I
called "Favor," and the other, "Bonds," and I fed the flock.
8 In a single month I did away with the three shepherds. I
9 wearied of them, and they behaved badly toward me. | "I will
not feed you," I said. "What is to die, let it die; what is to
perish, let it perish, and let those that are left devour one
another's flesh."
10 Then I took my staff "Favor" and snapped it asunder, break-
ing off the covenant which I had made with all peoples; that
11 day it was broken off. The sheep merchants who were watching
12 me understood that this was the word of the Lord. | I said to
them, "If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not,
let it go." And they counted out my wages, thirty pieces of
13 silver. But the Lord said to me, "Throw it in the treasury, the

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foreign enemies, or whether this song is an allusion to the leaders ("shepherds") who caused Juda's downfall.

11, 4-17: The general meaning of this most obscure allegory is that God tries to govern His people who are being exploited, but the people rebel against Him. There are over thirty scholarly guesses on the identity of the "three shepherds" (v. 8) exploiting the people. The meaning of each detail is highly disputed, including the identity of the shepherd of the flock (vv. 4 and 7). Most commentators agree that the allegory refers to a definite historical situation either in the Ptolemaic or Machabean period, preferably the former.

11, 11-13: The shepherd (prophet) tenders his resignation from the hopeless task as God's guardian of the people. His owners pay him "thirty pieces of silver." The contempt of the wages is not in the amount but in the allusion to Ex 21, 32 as the price of a slave. The prophet deposits the money in the temple, thus symbolizing that God (not the prophet) is being rebuffed by the people and their rulers. Mt 26, 15 accommodates these wages to the amount Judas received for his betrayal of Christ.

handsome price at which they valued me." So I took the thirty
pieces of silver and threw them into the treasury in the house of
the Lord.
14 Then I snapped asunder my other staff, "Bonds," breaking
15 off the brotherhood between Juda and Israel. | The Lord said
16 to me: This time take the gear of a foolish shepherd. For I will
raise up a shepherd in the land who will take no note of those
that perish, nor seek the strays, nor heal the injured, nor feed
what survives—he will eat the flesh of the fat ones and tear off
their hoofs!
17 Woe to my foolish shepherd who forsakes the flock! May
the sword fall upon his arm and upon his right eye; let his
arm wither away entirely, and his right eye be blind forever!

12

1 ***Jerusalem God's Instrument*** A burden: the word of the
Lord concerning Israel. Thus says the Lord, who spreads out
the heavens, lays the foundations of the earth, and forms the
2 spirit of man within him: See, I will make Jerusalem a bowl to
stupefy all peoples round about. [Juda will be besieged, even
3 Jerusalem.] | On that day I will make Jerusalem a weighty
stone for all peoples. All who attempt to lift it shall injure
themselves badly, and all the nations of the earth shall be
4 gathered against her. On that day, says the Lord, I will strike
every horse with fright, and its rider with madness. I will
strike blind all the horses of the peoples, but upon the house
5 of Juda I will open my eyes, and the princes of Juda shall say
to themselves, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem have their strength
6 in the Lord of hosts, their God." On that day I will make
the princes of Juda like a brazier of fire in the woodland, and
like a burning torch among sheaves, and they shall devour right
and left all the surrounding peoples; but Jerusalem shall still
7 abide on its own site. The Lord shall save the tents of Juda
first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the
8 inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be exalted over Juda. On
that day, the Lord will shield the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and
the weakling among them shall be like David on that day, and
the house of David godlike, like an angel of the Lord before
9 them. On that day I will seek the destruction of all nations that
come against Jerusalem.

12, 1-14: An oracle on the victory of Jerusalem over attackers, and on the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. This oracle is too vague to attach to a known historical situation.

10 ***Messianic Jerusalem*** I will pour out on the house of David
and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and
petition; and they shall look on him whom they have thrust
through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an
only son, and they shall grieve over him as one grieves over a
first-born.
11 On that day the mourning in Jerusalem shall be as great
as the mourning of Adadremmon in the plain of Mageddon.
12 And the land shall mourn, each family apart: | the family
of the house of David, and their wives; the family of the
13 house of Nathan, and their wives; the family of the house of
Levi, and their wives; the family of Semei, and their wives;
14 and all the rest of the families, each family apart, and the
wives apart.

13

1 ***The End of Falsehood*** On that day there shall be open
to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a
2 fountain to purify from sin and uncleanness. On that day, says
the Lord of hosts, I will destroy the names of the idols from
the land, so that they shall be mentioned no more; I will also
take away the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness from the
3 land. If a man still prophesies, his parents, father and mother,
shall say to him, "You shall not live, because you have spoken
a lie in the name of the Lord." When he prophesies, his parents,
father and mother, shall thrust him through.

12, 10: *A spirit of grace and petition:* God's blessings. *They shall look on him whom they have thrust through:* the prophet, speaking of an end-time, says that the nation will mourn one who died from deep suffering. The text is obscure, so that scholars do not know the nature of the implicit crime committed, nor who this mysterious person is. There are many opinions as to the historical person at the time of the writing. He is very similar to the suffering servant of Is 52, 13—53, 12. Jn 19, 37 interprets Zacharia 12, 10 as a prophecy of Christ's passion.

12, 11: The mourning of the pierced victim in Jerusalem is compared to a lamentation "in the plain of Mageddon" apparently over a certain personage called "Adadremmon." The reference is no longer clear. Both "Adad" (Hadad) and "Remmon" were names of the Semitic storm god, often identified with the god Baal. Some see here a reference to the annual mourning of the pagans over the death of the fertility god. According to others, "Adadremmon" is the name of a place near Mageddon, and the reference would then be to the mourning over the death of king Josia, who was killed in battle there. See 2 Par 35, 22-25.

13, 1-6: In this oracle, God purifies the Holy Land of its idolatry and false prophets.

13, 1: *A fountain to purify from sin:* in contrast to the lustral water used in ritual purification.

4 On that day, every prophet shall be ashamed to prophesy
his vision, neither shall he assume the hairy mantle to mislead
5 but he shall say, "I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the soil, for
6 I have owned land since my youth." And if anyone asks him,
"What are these wounds on your chest?" he shall answer,
"With these I was wounded in the house of my dear ones."

7 ***The Song of the Sword*** Awake, O sword, against my shep-
herd, against the man who is my associate, says the Lord of
hosts. Strike the shepherd that the sheep may be dispersed, and
8 I will turn my hand against the little ones. ¶ In all the land, says
the Lord, two thirds of them shall be cut off and perish, and
9 one third shall be left. ¶ I will bring the one third through fire
and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will test them
as gold is tested. They shall call upon my name, and I will hear
them. I will say, "They are my people," and they shall say, "The
Lord is my God."

14

1 ***The Fight for Jerusalem*** Lo, a day shall come for the Lord
2 when the spoils shall be divided in your midst. And I will gather
all the nations against Jerusalem for battle: the city shall be
taken, houses plundered, women ravished; half of the city shall
go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be removed
3 from the city. Then the Lord shall go forth and fight against
4 those nations, fighting as on a day of battle. That day his feet
shall rest upon the Mount of Olives, which is opposite Jerusalem
to the east. The Mount of Olives shall be cleft in two from
east to west by a very deep valley, and half of the mountain
5 shall move to the north and half of it to the south. And the
valley of the Lord's mountain shall be filled up when the valley

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13, 4: *Hairy mantle:* worn by prophets as a mark of their calling. See 4 Kgs 1, 8.

13, 6: *Wounds on your chest . . . dear ones:* experts differ on the translation here and on the meaning of the whole passage (vv. 3-6). The general meaning seems to be that in the ideal future there will no be any need of even true prophets.

13, 7-9: The Lord will purify the land until only the remnant faithful to Him, is left.

13, 7: When the shepherd is killed, the sheep are scattered. Mt 26 31 quotes this verse, in somewhat different form: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

14, 1-21: By alluding to many Old Testament passages, the author of this chapter describes a battle at an end-time, weaving into the battle-description verses on the restoration of the Holy Land and on the conversion of the Gentiles, who will go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. The details are not meant literally.

of those two mountains reaches its edge; it shall be filled up as it
was filled up by the earthquake in the days of king Ozia of
Juda. Then the Lord, my God, shall come, and all his holy ones
with him.
6.7 On that day there shall no longer be cold or frost. There
shall be one continuous day, known to the Lord, not day and
night, for in the evening time there shall be light.
8 On that day, living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half to
the eastern sea, and half to the western sea, and it shall be so in
9 summer and in winter. The Lord shall become King over the
whole earth; on that day the Lord shall be the only one, and
his name the only one.
10 And from Geba to Rimmon in the Negeb, all the land shall
turn into a plain; but Jerusalem shall remain exalted in its
place. From the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the First Gate,
to the Corner Gate; and from the Tower of Hananeel to the
11 king's wine presses, they shall occupy her. Never again shall she
be doomed; Jerusalem shall abide in security.
12 And this shall be the plague with which the Lord shall strike
all the nations that have fought against Jerusalem: their flesh
shall rot while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall
rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths.
13 On that day there shall be among them a great tumult from
the Lord: every man shall seize the hand of his neighbor, and
the hand of each shall be raised against that of his neighbor. |
14 Juda also shall fight against Jerusalem. The riches of all the
surrounding nations shall be gathered together, gold, silver, and
garments, in great abundance.
15 Similar to this plague shall be the plague upon the horses,
mules, camels, asses, and upon all the beasts that are in those
camps.
16 All who are left of all the nations that came against Jerusa-
lem shall come up year after year to worship the King, the
17 Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the feast of Tabernacles. If any
of the families of the earth does not come up to Jerusalem to
worship the King, the Lord of hosts, no rain shall fall upon
18 them. And if the family of Egypt does not come up, or enter,
upon them shall fall the plague which the Lord will inflict upon
all the nations that do not come up to celebrate the feast of
19 Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the
punishment of all the nations that do not come up to celebrate
the feast of Tabernacles.

14, 8: *Living waters shall flow from Jerusalem:* see almost the same image in Jl 4, 18.

20 On that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, "Holy
to the Lord." The pots in the house of the Lord shall be as the
21 libation bowls before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and
in Juda shall be holy to the Lord of hosts; and all who come
to sacrifice shall take them and cook in them. On that day there
shall no longer be any merchant in the house of the Lord of
hosts.

THE BOOK OF MALACHIA

INTRODUCTION

The last of the prophetical authors, whose name means "My Messenger," is unknown but for this book. Yet he must have been well known to his contemporaries because his whole book is a heated reprimand against the religious indifference of the priests and people in offering the proper sacrifices. He rebukes the priests for not instructing the people, and the people for divorces and mixed marriages. All these reprimands are cast in dialogues comprising assertions by Yahweh or Malachia, which the priests or people oppose, but Yahweh and Malachia repeat the assertions usually in a threatening tone. Malachia's purpose in preaching was to have the people honor God fittingly by performing the temple liturgy properly as in the days of old.

From the criticism against the temple liturgy, scholars deduce that the time of Malachia's activities must have been after the exile and deep in the Persian period when the religious fervor of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem in 515 B.C. was long past. Hence, the prophecy written or spoken is generally agreed to come from about 450 B.C. The date shows that Malachia was preparing the way for the reforms of Esdras and Nehemias.

Main divisions of the Book of Malachia are:

1. The Title, 1, 1
2. Israel Preferred to Edom, 1, 2-5
3. Sins of the Priests and Levites, 1, 6—2, 9
4. Sins of the People, 2, 10-17
5. The Messenger of the Covenant, 3, 1-24

1

1 An oracle. The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachia.

2 ***Israel Preferred to Edom*** I have loved you, says the Lord;
3 but you say, "How have you loved us?" | Was not Esau Jacob's
brother? says the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, but hated Esau; I

1, 1: *Israel:* although this term usually designates the northern kingdom, in this context it refers to the southern kingdom of the Jews.

1, 2-5: This introduction of God's love for Israel (vv. 2-5) is meant to highlight the ingratitude of Juda who had disobeyed God's laws as explained in the rest of the booklet.

1, 2: Since the underlying supposition here is the traditional Old Testament theme that God loves through bestowing material prosperity, the Jews ask how God can be said to love them when they are so poor economically, and politically miserable under the Persian heel.

1, 3: Esau is used for the Edomites, since he was their ancestor; Jacob is used for the Jews, since he was their ancestor. *Yet I loved Jacob, but hated Esau:* this Hebraic figure of speech really means: I *preferred* Jacob to Esau. It alludes to the rivalry between the two an-

made his mountains a waste, his heritage a desert for jackals.
4 If Edom says, "We have been crushed but we will rebuild th
ruins," thus says the Lord of hosts: They indeed may build, bu
I will tear down, and they shall be called the land of guilt,
5 the people with whom the Lord is angry forever. Your own eye
shall see it, and you will say, "Great is the Lord, even beyond th
land of Israel."

6 ***Sins of the Priests and Levites*** A son honors his father
and a servant fears his master; if then I am a father, where i
the honor due to me? And if I am a master, where is th
reverence due to me?—So says the Lord of hosts to you, C
priests, who despise his name. But you ask, "How have w
7 despised your name?" | By offering polluted food on my altar
Then you ask, "How have we polluted it?" By saying the tabl
8 of the Lord may be slighted! | When you offer a blind anima
for sacrifice, is this not evil? When you offer the lame or th
sick, is it not evil? Present it to your governor; see if he wil
9 accept it, or welcome you, says the Lord of hosts. | So now i
you implore God for mercy on us, when you have done the like
will he welcome any of you? says the Lord of hosts.
10 Oh, that one among you would shut the temple gates to keep
you from kindling fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure i
you, says the Lord of hosts; neither will I accept any sacrific

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cestors, which was perpetuated in their descendants (see Gn 25, 21ff and the whole prophecy of Abdia). It is not odd in Semitic thinking t prove God's love (for the Jews) by replying that He dealt more harshl (through the natural course of history) with Edom, a sister nation a that, than with Juda. See Rom 9, 13. *I made his mountains a waste . . . a desert for jackals:* an allusion to the destruction of Edom, perhaps by the Nabateans.

1, 4: In spite of the determination of the Edomites to rebuild their nation, God will not favor them any more in the future than He did in the past (see v. 3 n).

1, 6: God is not given the honor and reverence due to Him.

1, 8: The offering in sacrifice of a lame, sick or blind animal was forbidden. See Lv 22, 17-25.

1, 10-11: God rejects the unworthy sacrifices of the Jerusalem priests (v. 10). He prefers a sacrifice "from the rising of the sun, ever to its setting" (v. 11). This is a geographical expression meaning: all over the world. Which is this other universal sacrifice? Some scholars claim that Malachia is directly foretelling the future sacrifice to be offered by the Messia (without mentioning the nature of the sacrifice). Others claim that the prophet is directly speaking of a contemporary sacrifice for which there are four explanations, the best being this: the words "pure offering" (v. 11) allude to the Persian or Zoroastrian worship of the "God of Heaven." This expression was often adopted as a title of Yahweh in Esd, Neh, and Dn, e.g., Esd 5, 11. The prophet would, then, have considered this sacrifice in honor of Persian kings as being really

11 from your hands, | for from the rising of the sun, even to its
setting, my name is great among the nations; and everywhere
they bring sacrifice to my name, and a pure offering; for great
12 is my name among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. | But
you behave profanely toward me by thinking the Lord's table
13 and its offering may be polluted, and its food slighted. | You
also say, "What a burden!" and you scorn it, says the Lord of
hosts; you bring in what you seize, or the lame, or the sick; yes,
you bring it as a sacrifice. Shall I accept it from your hands?
14 says the Lord. | Cursed is the deceiver, who has in his flock a
male, but under his vow sacrifices to the Lord a gelding; for a
great King am I, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be
feared among the nations.

2

1 And now, O priests, this commandment is for you: If you do
2 not listen, and if you do not lay it to heart, to give glory to my
name, says the Lord of hosts, I will send a curse upon you and
of your blessing I will make a curse. Yes, I have already cursed
3 it, because you do not lay it to heart. | Lo, I will deprive you of
the shoulder and I will strew dung in your faces, the dung of
4 your feasts, and you will be carried off with it. | Then you will
know that I sent you this commandment because I have a cove-
5 nant with Levi, says the Lord of hosts. | My covenant with him
was one of life and peace; fear I put in him, and he feared me,
and stood in awe of my name.
6 True doctrine was in his mouth, and no dishonesty was found
upon his lips; he walked with me in integrity and uprightness,
7 and turned many away from evil. | For the lips of the priest
are to keep knowledge, and instruction is to be sought from his
8 mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. | But
you have turned aside from the way, and have caused many

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offered to Yahweh, the one true God, even though the pagans did not realize it. As far as referring this text to the future sacrifice of the Mass is concerned, the Council of Trent's interpretation is this: Malachia's text is to be understood as either the direct literal meaning of the prophet, or as his reference to a contemporaneous sacrifice of the *type* of the later New Testament sacrifice of the Mass. (This is one of the half dozen texts which is often quoted as claiming the moral unanimity of the Fathers.)

1, 11: This verse is used in the Tract of the votive Mass of the Eucharist.

2, 3: *I will deprive you of the shoulder:* this part of a sacrificial animal, allotted by the Law (Dt 18, 3) to the priests, will be withheld from them.

2, 4: A reference to Nm 25, 12f.

2, 7: One of the most famous verses of Malachia.

to falter by your instruction; you have made void the covena
9 of Levi, says the Lord of hosts. | I, therefore, have made yc
contemptible and base before all the people, since you do n
keep my ways, but show partiality in your decisions.

10 *Sins of the People* Have we not all the one Father? H
not the one God created us? Why then do we break faith wi
11 each other, violating the covenant of our fathers? | Juda h
broken faith; an abominable thing has been done in Israel ar
in Jerusalem. Juda has profaned the temple which the Lo
12 loves, and has married an idolatrous woman. | May the Lo
cut off from the man who does this both witness and advoca
out of the tents of Jacob, and anyone to offer sacrifices to tl
Lord of hosts!

13 This also you do: the altar of the Lord you cover with tea
weeping and groaning, because he no longer regards your sac
14 fice nor accepts it favorably from your hand; | and you sa
"Why is it?"—because the Lord is witness between you ar
the wife of your youth, with whom you have broken fai
15 though she is your companion, your betrothed wife. | Did l
not make one being, with flesh and spirit: and what does th
one require but godly offspring? You must then safeguard li
that is your own, and not break faith with the wife of yo
16 youth. | For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Isra
and covering one's garment with injustice, says the Lord
hosts; you must then safeguard life that is your own, and n
break faith.

17 You have wearied the Lord with your words, yet you sa
"How have we wearied him?" By your saying, "Every evildo
is good in the sight of the Lord, and he is pleased with him
or else, "Where is the just God?"

3

1 *The Messenger of the Covenant* Lo, I am sending m
messenger to prepare the way before me; and suddenly the
will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek, and th

2, 10-16: The forbidden intermarriage of Israelites with foreigne
(see Dt 7, 1-4) is here portrayed as a violation of the Covenant (v. 10
which made the sacrifices offered by the offenders unacceptable to Gc
(v. 13). These intermarriages were all the more blameworthy whe
they involved the divorce of Israelite wives (vv. 14-16).

2, 17—3, 1: God's answer to the question "Where is the just God
who seems to reward evildoers (2, 17), is that He will soon show H
justice by sending a messenger. This messenger is identified as Elia
v. 23 and as John the Baptist in Mt 11, 10.

messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming,
2 says the Lord of hosts. | But who will endure the day of his
coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like
3 the refiner's fire, or like the fuller's lye. | He will sit refining and
purifying [silver], and he will purify the sons of Levi, refining
them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to
4 the Lord. | Then the sacrifice of Juda and Jerusalem will please
5 the Lord, as in the days of old, as in years gone by. | I will
draw near to you for judgment, and I will be swift to bear
witness against the sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers, those
who defraud the hired man of his wages, against those who
defraud widows and orphans; those who turn aside the stranger,
and those who do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.
6 Surely I, the Lord, do not change, nor do you cease to be sons
7 of Jacob. | Since the days of your fathers you have turned aside
from my statutes, and have not kept them. Return to me, and I
will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Yet you say, "How
8 must we return?" | Dare a man rob God? Yet you are robbing
me! And you say, "How do we rob you?" In tithes and in offer-
9 ings! | You are indeed accursed, for you, the whole nation, rob
10 me. | Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be
food in my house, and try me in this, says the Lord of hosts: shall
I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down bless-
11 ing upon you without measure? | For your sake I will forbid the
locust to destroy your crops; and the vine in the field will not
12 be barren, says the Lord of hosts. | Then all nations will call
you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the Lord of
hosts.
13 You have defied me in word, says the Lord, yet you ask,
14 "What have we spoken against you?" | You have said, "It is
vain to serve God, and what do we profit by keeping his com-
mand, and going about in penitential dress in awe of the Lord

3, 2-4: This is a description of the work of the messenger of God. It will consist in purifying the ministers and the temple so that worship may be offered properly as of old. Then everything will be ready for God to come and judge.

3, 5: The description of God's work.

3, 6-7: The faithful Yahweh will not forget His promises to the people (v. 6), even though they forgot Him (v. 7).

3, 8-11: The people may return to God if they do not cheat ("rob") Him by withholding their tithes and offerings (vv. 8-9). Then He will end the drought (v. 10) and prevent the locust plague (v. 11).

3, 10: *Storehouse:* the temple treasury.

3, 13-21: Resuming the theme of 2, 17 the people defiantly ask God why the good suffer and the evil prosper (vv. 13-15). God answers that on Judgment Day He will reward the good and punish the wicked.

15 of hosts? | Rather must we call the proud blessed; for indee
16 evildoers prosper, and even tempt God with impunity." | The
they who fear the Lord spoke with one another, and the Lor
listened attentively; and a record book was written before hi
17 of those who fear the Lord and trust in his name. | And the
shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my own special possessio
on the day I take action. And I will have compassion on ther
18 as a man has compassion on his son who serves him. | The
you will again see the distinction between the just and th
wicked; between him who serves God, and him who does n
19 serve him. | For lo, the day is coming, blazing like an ove
when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble, and th
day that is coming will set them on fire, leaving them neith
20 root nor branch, says the Lord of hosts. | But for you who fe
my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing ray
21 and you will gambol like calves out of the stall | and trea
down the wicked; they will become ashes under the soles o
your feet, on the day I take action, says the Lord of hosts
22 Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I enjoine
upon him on Horeb, the statutes and ordinances for all Israel.
23 Lo, I will send you Elia, the prophet, before the day of the Lor
comes, the great and terrible day, to turn the hearts of th
fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to the
24 fathers, | lest I come and strike the land with doom.

Lo, I will send you Elia, the prophet before the day of the Lor comes, the great and terrible day.

3, 23: *Elia:* see 2, 17—3, 1 n.

3, 24: The words in smaller print, a repetition of most of v. 23, hav been added by the scribes so that the collection of the twelve minc prophets will not end with the threat of doom.

THE FIRST BOOK OF MACHABEES

INTRODUCTION

Since the First and Second Book of Machabees are closely connected, it would be easy to assume that the second book continues from the point in history where the first book ended. However, each book autonomously treats the Jewish war of independence against the Syrian masters who tried to stamp out the Jewish way of life.

The first book spans the period from 175 to 135 B.C.; the second from 175 to 161 B.C. The principal leader of the revolt in both books is Judas Machabee. The other common feature of the two books is that the Church considers them inspired, but the Jews and Protestants do not.

The first book was most probably written in Hebrew, but the original text was lost very early. It is known in a Greek translation. An educated anonymous Jerusalem Jew must have written the entire book at about 100 B.C. His sources include many documents and letters which the scholars believe to be authentic, except perhaps 12, 20-23. He may have used other sources such as a "Life of Judas Machabee." The sources are already an indication of the author's type of history writing. Although he does not write like a modern historian, his book contains generally historical truth, with chronological and topographical precision, set comfortably within the framework of contemporaneous Near Eastern history as known from extrabiblical sources. Yet, he writes "propagandistic history." The propaganda is all in favor of the Machabean dynasty because the Machabees fought for and preached the observance of the Mosaic Law and the traditional customs. (For the attempt to Hellenize the Jews, see Introduction to Daniel.) The revolt is pictured as a world-shattering event. All opposition is blanketed under "children of the devil." The author puts speeches on the lips of Judas and his brother Jonathan which extol the legitimacy and necessity of the revolutionary war. The numbers of the enemy soldiers are blown up to depict in relief the heroism of the divinely protected Machabean armies whose victories are heightened and whose defeats are softened (e.g., 6, 48-54).

The lack of religious teaching in the book is striking. Just as in the shorter (Hebrew) text of Esther, the name of God has never been mentioned. His name is referred to by "him" (e.g., 2, 61), or "heaven" (e.g., 3, 50), perhaps out of an exaggerated respect typical of the era to avoid the name of God (see 1, 51 n).

The main religious thrust of the book is that observance of the Mosaic Law leads to temporal happiness (see 14, 4-15). This is a doctrine frequently found in the Old Testament.

Main divisions of the First Book of Machabees are:

1. The Background to the Revolt of the Machabees, 1—2
2. The Battles of Judas Machabee, 3, 1—9, 22
3. Jonathan Machabee, 9, 23—12, 54
4. Simon Machabee, 13—16

1

1 ***Alexander Divides His Kingdom*** Now it came to pass
after that Alexander the *son of* Philip the Macedonian, who
first reigned in Greece, coming out of the land of Cethim, had
2 overthrown Darius king of the Persians and Medes. | He fought
many battles and took the strongholds of all and slew the kings
3 of the earth. | And he went through even to the ends of the
earth and took the spoils of many nations. And the earth was
4 quiet before him. | And he gathered a power and a very strong
5 army: and his heart was exalted and lifted up. | And he sub-
dued countries of nations, and princes: and they became tribu-
6 taries to him. | And after these things, he fell down upon his
7 bed and knew that he should die. | And he called his servants
the nobles that were brought up with him from his youth: and
he divided his kingdom among them while he was yet alive. |
8.9 And Alexander reigned twelve years: and he died. | And his
10 servants made themselves kings every one in his place. | And
they all put crowns upon themselves after his death, and their
sons after them many years, and evils were multiplied in the
earth.

11 ***Persecution Begins*** And there came out of them a wicked
root, Antiochus the Illustrious, the son of king Antiochus who
had been a hostage at Rome: and he reigned in the hundred
12 and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks. | In
those days there went out of Israel wicked men and they per-
suaded many, saying: Let us go and make a covenant with the
heathens that are round about us, for since we departed from
13 them many evils have befallen us. | And the word seemed good

1, 1-10: The purpose of the sketch of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) and his conquests is to introduce Antiochus in v. 11.

1, 1: *Cethim:* Greece. *Darius:* Alexander defeated Darius III at Granica, Issus, and Arbela.

1, 3: *And he went through even to the ends of the earth:* from Egypt to India.

1, 8: Alexander died on June 13, 323 B.C. in Babylon.

1, 10: Alexander's empire splintered into four minor empires, two of which interest the history of the Jews, namely, the kingdom of the Lagids of Egypt and that of the Seleucids of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The two kingdoms disputed the mastery of Palestine.

1, 11: *Antiochus the Illustrious:* it should read Antiochus Epiphanes. He seized the throne of Syria in 175 B.C. Antiochus III the Great in 198 B.C. had taken Syria and Palestine away from the Egyptian Lagids and annexed it to his own Seleucid empire.

1, 12-14: A faction of the Jews cooperated with Antiochus to Grecize or, better, Hellenize their own Jewish nation.

14 in their eyes. | And some of the people determined to do this
and went to the king; and he gave them license to do after the
15 ordinances of the heathens. | And they built a place of exer-
16 cise in Jerusalem, according to the laws of the nations. | And
they made themselves prepuces and departed from the holy
covenant and joined themselves to the heathens and were sold to
do evil.

17 And the kingdom was established before Antiochus: and he
had a mind to reign over the land of Egypt, that he might reign
18 over two kingdoms. | And he entered into Egypt with a great
multitude, with chariots and elephants and horsemen and a
19 great number of ships. | And he made war against Ptolemee
king of Egypt: but Ptolemee was afraid at his presence and fled,
20 and many were wounded unto death. | And he took the strong
cities in the land of Egypt, and he took the spoils of the land of
Egypt.

21 ***Antiochus Profanes the Temple*** And after Antiochus had
ravaged Egypt in the hundred and forty-third year, he returned
22 and went up against Israel. | And he went up to Jerusalem with
23 a great multitude. | And he proudly entered into the sanctuary,
and took away the golden altar and the candlestick of light,
and all the vessels thereof and the table of proposition and the
pouring vessels, and the vials and the little mortars of gold, and
the veil and the crowns, and the golden ornament that was
24 before the temple: and he broke them all in pieces. | And he
took the silver and gold, and the precious vessels, and he took
the hidden treasures which he found. And when he had taken
25 all away he departed into his own country. | And he made a
great slaughter of men and spoke very proudly.

26 And there was great mourning in Israel and in every place
27 where they were. And the princes and the ancients mourned,
and the virgins and the young men were made feeble, and the
28 beauty of the women was changed. | Every bridegroom took up
lamentation: and the bride that sat in the marriage bed,
29 mourned. | And the land was moved for the inhabitants thereof,
and all the house of Jacob was covered with confusion.

1, 15: *Place of exercise:* the gymnasium.

1, 16: *And they made themselves prepuces:* they removed the marks of their circumcision. *Were sold to do evil:* a Hebraism for "were prostituted."

1, 17-21: Antiochus IV took advantage of the sixteen-year old Ptolemy VI Philometor till Rome halted the former in 168 B.C.

30 ***Jerusalem Despoiled*** And after two full years the king sent the chief collector of *his* tributes to the cities of Juda, and
31 he came to Jerusalem with a great multitude. | And he spoke to them peaceable words in deceit: and they believed him. |
32 And he fell upon the city suddenly and struck it with a great
33 slaughter and destroyed much people in Israel. | And he took the spoils of the city and burned it with fire, and threw down the
34 houses thereof and the walls thereof round about. | And they took the women captive, and the children and the cattle they
35 possessed. | And they built the city of David with a great and strong wall and with strong towers and made it a fortress for
36 them. | And they placed there a sinful nation, wicked men, and they fortified themselves therein. And they stored up armor and victuals and gathered together the spoils of Jerusalem, |
37.38 and laid them up there: and they became a great snare. | And this was a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil
39 devil in Israel. | And they shed innocent blood round about the
40 sanctuary and defiled the holy place. | And the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled away by reason of them, and the city was made the habitation of strangers: and she became a stranger to her
41 own seed and her children forsook her. | Her sanctuary was desolate like a wilderness, her festival days were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach, her honors were brought
42 to nothing. | Her dishonor was increased according to her glory and her excellency was turned into mourning.

43 ***The Edict of Antiochus*** And king Antiochus wrote to all his kingdom that all the people should be one and every one
44 should leave his own law. | And all nations consented accord-
45 ing to the word of king Antiochus. | And many of Israel consented to his service, and they sacrificed to idols and profaned
46 the sabbath. | And the king sent letters by the hands of messengers to Jerusalem and to all the cities of Juda: that they
47 should follow the law of the nations of the earth, | and should forbid holocausts and sacrifices and atonements to be made in
48 the temple of God, | and should prohibit the sabbath and the

1, 30: *The chief collector of his tributes:* he was most likely Apollonius of 2 Mc 5, 24.

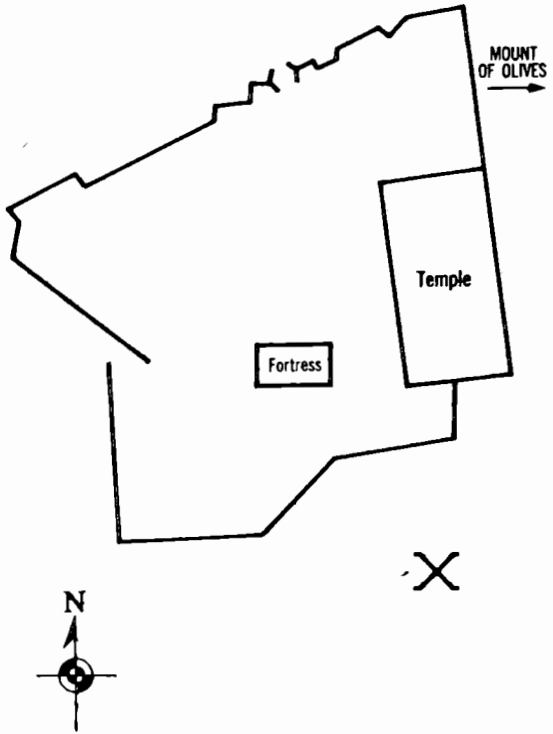
1, 35: See map: Jerusalem of the Machabees, p. 1705.

1, 38: *An evil devil:* the men in the fortress, ("place") were always prone to harm the people.

1, 45: *Consented to his service:* to his form of worship.

1, 46-67: Antiochus' ambition was to unify his melting pot empire by one Greek religion and culture.

JERUSALEM OF THE MACHABEES



The Syrian Fortress ("Castle," "Citadel," in Greek "Akra") is often mentioned in 1, 2 Mc. At this time in history it was known as "The City of David" (1 Mc 1,35; 14, 36). It was the beehive of espionage since it sheltered Hellenistic Jews. From it were launched forays against the patriotic Jerusalemites (A less probable opinion situates the fortress at X).

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49 festival days to be celebrated. | And he commanded the hol
50 places to be profaned and the holy people of Israel. | And h
commanded altars to be built, and temples and idols and swine'
51 flesh to be immolated, and unclean beasts. | And that the
should leave their children uncircumcised and let their souls b
defiled with all uncleannesses and abominations to the end tha
they should forget the law and should change all the justifica
52 tions of God. | And that whosoever would not do according t
the word of king Antiochus should be put to death.
53 According to all these words he wrote to his whole kingdom
and he appointed rulers over the people that should force then
54 to do these things. | And they commanded the cities of Juda t
55 sacrifice. | Then many of the people were gathered to them tha
had forsaken the law of the Lord: and they committed evils i
56 the land. | And they drove away the people of Israel into lurk
57 ing holes and into the secret places of fugitives. | On the fif
teenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred and forty-fift
year, king Antiochus set up the abominable idol of desolatio
upon the altar of God, and they built altars throughout all th
58 cities of Juda round about. | And they burned incense an
59 sacrificed at the doors of the houses and in the streets. | An
they cut in pieces and burned with fire the books of the law o
60 God. | And every one with whom the books of the testamen
of the Lord were found and whosoever observed the law of th
Lord, they put to death, according to the edict of the king.
61 Thus by their power did they deal with the people of Israe
62 that were found in the cities, month after month. | And on tin
five and twentieth day of the month they sacrificed upon th
63 altar of the idol that was opposite the altar of *God*. | Now
the women that circumcised their children were slain according
64 to the commandment of king Antiochus. | And they hanged th
children about their necks in all their houses, and those that ha
65 circumcised them, they put to death. | And many of the peopl
of Israel determined with themselves that they would not ea
unclean things: and they chose rather to die than to be defile
66 with unclean meats. | And they would not break the holy law
67 of God, and they were put to death. | And there was very grea
wrath upon the people.

1, 51: *All the justifications:* prescriptions. *Of God:* in many places the Douay, following the Vulgate, says "God" but the Greek text never mentions the name of God.

1, 57: Between December 10 and 17 in 167 B.C., Antiochus desecrated the altar. *Abominable idol of desolation:* see Dn 9, 27 n.

2

1 ***Mathathias and His Sons*** In those days arose Mathathias
the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of
Joarib, from Jerusalem, and he abode in the mountain of Modin.
2 | And he had five sons: John who was surnamed Gaddis; |
3-4 and Simon who was surnamed Thasi: | and Judas who was
5 called Machabeus; | and Eleazar who was surnamed Abaron;
6 and Jonathan who was surnamed Apphus. | These saw the evils
that were done in the people of Juda and in Jerusalem. | And
Mathathias said: Woe to me! Wherefore was I born to see the
ruin of my people and the ruin of the holy city, and to dwell
8 there, when it is given into the hands of the enemies? | The
holy places have come into the hands of strangers: her temple
9 has become as a man without honor. | The vessels of her
glory are carried away captive; her old men are murdered in
the streets and her young men have fallen by the sword of the
10 enemies. | What nation has not inherited her kingdom and got
11 rich of her spoils? | All her ornaments are taken away. She that
12 was free is made a slave. | And behold our sanctuary and our
beauty and our glory is laid waste: and the Gentiles have
13 defiled them. | To what end then should we live any longer?
14 And Mathathias and his sons rent their garments, and they
covered themselves with haircloth and made great lamentation.
15 | And they that were sent from king Antiochus came there to
compel them that had fled into the city of Modin to sacrifice
16 and to burn incense and to depart from the law of God. | And
many of the people of Israel consented and came to them: but
17 Mathathias and his sons stood firm. | And they that were sent
from Antiochus, answering, said to Mathathias: You are a
ruler and an honorable and great man in this city and adorned
18 with sons and brethren. | Therefore, come you first and obey
the king's commandment, as all nations have done, and the men
of Juda and they that remain in Jerusalem: and you and your
sons shall be in the number of the king's friends and enriched
with gold and silver and many presents.

19 ***Mathathias Revolts*** Then Mathathias answered and said
with a loud voice: Although all nations obey king Antiochus,
so as to depart every man from the service of the law of his

2, 1: *Modin:* about twenty-two miles northwest of Jerusalem.
2, 4: *Machabeus:* means most probably Hammer; it was at first the nickname of Judas and later of the entire family. The Jews used Hasmoneans instead of Machabees.
2, 14: The customary mourning rites.
2, 19: *The service of the law:* the religion.

20 fathers and consent to his commandments, | I and my sons and
21 my brethren will obey the law of our fathers. ¦ God be merciful unto us. It is not profitable for us to forsake the law and
22 the justices of God. | We will not hearken to the words of king Antiochus, neither will we sacrifice and transgress the commandments of our law, to go another way.
23 Now as he left off speaking these words, there came a certain Jew in the sight of all to sacrifice to the idols upon the altar in the city of Modin, according to the king's commandment. |
24 And Mathathias saw and was grieved, and his reins trembled, and his wrath was kindled according to the judgment of the law: and running upon him he slew him upon the altar. |
25 Moreover the man whom king Antiochus had sent, who compelled them to sacrifice, he slew at the same time: and pulled
26 down the altar, ¦ and showed zeal for the law, as Phinees did
27 by Zamri the son of Salomi. ¦ And Mathathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: Every one that has zeal for the
28 law and maintains the testament, let him follow me. ' So he and his sons fled into the mountains and left all that they had in the city.
29 Then many that sought after judgment and justice went
30 down into the desert. ¦ And they abode there, they and their children and their wives and their cattle: because afflictions
31 increased upon them. | And it was told to the king's men and to the army that was in Jerusalem in the city of David, that certain men who had broken the king's commandment had gone away into the secret places in the wilderness and that many followed them.

32 ***The Battle on the Sabbath*** And forthwith they went out toward them and made war against them on the sabbath day.
33 | And they said to them: Do you still resist? Come forth and do according to the edict of king Antiochus, and you shall live.
34 And they said: We will not come forth, neither will we obey
35 the king's edict, to profane the sabbath day. ¦ And they made
36 haste to give them battle. ¦ But they answered them not, neither did they cast a stone at them nor stopped up the secret places,
37 | saying: Let us all die in our innocency: and heaven and earth shall be witnesses for us, that you put us to death wrongfully.

2, 21: *Justices of God:* prescriptions of God.
2, 24: *Reins:* heart.
2, 26: A reference to Nm 25, 7-8.
2, 28-29: *Mountains . . . desert:* southwest of Jerusalem.
2, 36: *The secret places:* where they were hiding.

38 | So they gave them battle on the sabbath: and they were slain
with their wives and their children and their cattle, to the num-
ber of a thousand persons.
39 And Mathathias and his friends heard of it, and they
40 mourned for them exceedingly. | And every man said to his
neighbor: If we shall do as our brethren have done and not
fight against the heathens for our lives and our justifications,
41 they will now quickly root us out of the earth. | And they de-
termined in that day, saying: Whosoever shall come up against
us to fight on the sabbath day, we will fight against him. And
we will not all die, as our brethren that were slain in the secret
places.

42 ***The Zeal and Success of Mathathias*** Then was assem-
bled to them the congregation of the Assideans, the stoutest of
43 Israel, every one that had a good will for the law. | And all
they that fled from the evils joined themselves to them and
44 were a support to them. | And they gathered an army and
slew the sinners in their wrath and the wicked men in their
45 indignation: and the rest fled to the nations for safety. | And
Mathathias and his friends went round about, and they threw
46 down the altars, | and they circumcised all the children whom
they found in the confines of Israel that were uncircumcised:
47 and they did valiantly. | And they pursued after the children
48 of pride, and the work prospered in their hands. | And they
recovered the law out of the hands of the nations and out of
the hands of the kings: and they yielded not the horn to the
49 sinner. | Now the days drew near that Mathathias should die,
and he said to his sons: Now has pride and chastisement got
strength, and the time of destruction and the wrath of indigna-
tion.

50 ***Mathathias Exhorts His Sons; His Death*** Now therefore
O my sons, be zealous for the law and give your lives for the
51 covenant of your fathers. | And call to remembrance the
works of the fathers which they have done in their generations:

2, 40: *Every man said to his neighbor:* a Hebraism.

2, 42: *Assideans:* or Hasideans, were religious observers of the law, not a political group of men who joined Mathathias. They were the spiritual ancestors of the Essenes and of the Pharisees in the Gospels.

2, 44: *Sinners . . . wicked men:* Jews who took on Greek ways. *Nations:* Gentiles.

2, 47: *Children of pride:* the Syrians.

2, 48: *They yielded not the horn to the sinner:* a Hebraism for "they did not allow the sinners to triumph."

and you shall receive your glory and an everlasting name. |
52 Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was
53 reputed to him unto justice? | Joseph in the time of his distress
kept the commandment and he was made lord of Egypt. |
54 Phinees our father, by being fervent in the zeal of God, received
55 the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. | Jesus, while he
56 fulfilled the word, was made ruler in Israel. | Caleb, for bear-
ing witness before the congregation, received an inheritance. |
57 David by his mercy obtained the throne of an everlasting king-
58 dom. | Elias, while he was full of zeal for the law, was taken
59 up into heaven. | Ananias and Azarias and Misael by believing
60 were delivered out of the flame. | Daniel in his innocency was
61 delivered out of the mouth of the lions. | And thus consider
through all generations that none that trust in him fail in
62 strength. | And fear not the words of a sinful man, for his
63 glory is dung and worms. Today he is lifted up, and to-
morrow he shall not be found, because he has returned into his
earth and his thought has come to nothing.
64 You, therefore, my sons, take courage and behave manfully
65 in the law: for by it you shall be glorious. | And behold, I know
that your brother Simon is a man of counsel: give ear to him
66 always, and he shall be a father to you. | And Judas Mach-
abeus who is valiant and strong from his youth up, let him be
the leader of your army, and he shall manage the war of the
67 people. | And you shall take to you all that observe the law:
68 and revenge the wrong of your people. | Render to the Gentiles
69 their reward, and take heed to the precepts of the law. | And
70 he blessed them and was joined to his fathers. | And he died
in the hundred and forty-six year: and he was buried by his
sons in the sepulchers of his fathers in Modin. And all Israel
mourned for him with great mourning.

3

1 ***Judas Machabeus*** Then his son Judas, called Machabeus,
2 rose up in his stead. | And all his brethren helped him, and

2, 52: A reference to Gn 22, 2.
2, 53: A reference to Gn 41, 40.
2, 54: A reference to Nm 25, 13.
2, 55: "Jesus" refers to Josue in Jos 1, 2.
2, 56: A reference to Nm 14, 6.
2, 57: A reference to 2 Sm 2, 4.
2, 58: A reference to 4 Kgs 2, 11.
2, 59: A reference to Dn 3, 50.
2, 60: A reference to Dn 6, 23.
2, 70: *Hundred and forty-sixth year:* 166 B.C. The Bible gives the dates according to the Seleucid era which began as the year 1 in 312 B.C.

all they that had joined themselves to his father, and they
3 fought with cheerfulness the battle of Israel. | And he got his
people great honor and put on a breastplate as a giant and girt
his warlike armor about him in battles and protected the camp
4 with his sword. | In his acts he was like a lion and like a lion's
5 whelp roaring for his prey. | And he pursued the wicked and
sought them out, and them that troubled his people he burned
6 with fire. | And his enemies were driven away for fear of him,
and all the workers of iniquity were troubled: and salvation
7 prospered in his hand. | And he grieved many kings and made
Jacob glad with his works, and his memory is blessed for ever.
8 | And he went through the cities of Juda and destroyed the
wicked out of them and turned away wrath from Israel. |
9 And he was renowned even to the utmost part of the earth, and
he gathered them that were perishing.

10 ***Judas Overthrows Apollonius and Seron*** And Apollonius
gathered together the Gentiles and a numerous and great army
11 from Samaria, to make war against Israel. | And Judas under-
stood it and went forth to meet him: and he overthrew him and
killed him, and many fell down slain, and the rest fled away. |
12 And he took their spoils, and Judas took the sword of Apol-
13 lonius and fought with it all his lifetime. | And Seron captain
of the army of Syria heard that Judas had assembled a company
14 of the faithful and a congregation with him, | and he said:
I will get me a name and will be glorified in the kingdom and
will overthrow Judas and those that are with him that have
15 despised the edict of the king. | And he made himself ready:
and the host of the wicked went up with him, strong succors,
16 to be revenged of the children of Israel. | And they approached
even as far as Bethoron: and Judas went forth to meet him
17 with a small company. | But when they saw the army coming
to meet them they said to Judas: How shall we, being few, be
able to fight against so great a multitude and so strong, and
18 we are ready to faint with fasting today? | And Judas said:
It is an easy matter for many to be shut up in the hands of a
few: and there is no difference in the sight of the God of heaven
to deliver with a great multitude or with a small company. |
19 For the success of war is not in the multitude of the army, but
20 strength comes from heaven. | They come against us with an

3, 9: *And he was renowned even to the utmost part of the earth:* an example of the propagandistic history. See Introduction.

3, 16: *Bethoron:* about twelve miles northwest of Jerusalem.

insolent multitude, and with pride, to destroy us and our wive
21 and our children and to take our spoils. | But we will fight fo
22 our lives and our laws: | and the Lord himself will overthrow
23 them before our face. But as for you, fear them not. | And a
soon as he had made an end of speaking, he rushed suddenl
upon them: and Seron and his host were overthrown befor
24 him. | And he pursued him by the descent of Bethoron eve
to the plain, and there fell of them eight hundred men. And th
25 rest fled into the land of the Philistines. | And the fear of Juda
and of his brethren and the dread *of them* fell upon all th
26 nations round about them. | And his fame came to the king
and all nations told of the battles of Judas.

27 ***A Great Army Sent against Judas from Syria*** Now
when king Antiochus heard these words, he was angry in hi
mind, and he sent and gathered the forces of all his kingdom
28 an exceeding strong army. | And he opened his treasury an
gave out pay to the army for a year: and he commanded them
29 that they should be ready for all things. | And he perceive
that the money of his treasures failed and that the tributes c
the country were small because of the dissension and the ev
that he had brought upon the land, that he might take awa
30 the laws of old times. | And he feared that he should not hav
as formerly enough for charges and gifts, which he had give
before with a liberal hand: for he had abounded more than th
31 kings that had been before him. | And he was greatly perplexe
in mind and purposed to go into Persia and to take tributes c
the countries and to gather much money.
32 And he left Lysias, a nobleman of the blood royal, to overse
the affairs of the kingdom, from the river Euphrates even t
33 the river of Egypt, | and to bring up his son Antiochus till h
34 came again. | And he delivered to him half the army and th
elephants, and he gave him charge concerning all that he woul
have done and concerning the inhabitants of Judea, and Jeru
35 salem; and that he should send an army against them, to de
stroy and root out the strength of Israel and the remnan
of Jerusalem and to take away the memory of them from thi
36 place; | and that he should settle strangers to dwell in all the
37 coasts and divide their land by lot. | So the king took the ha

3, 31: The Persian expedition was also undertaken to punish Mithri
dates I of Parthia who was chaffing as a vassal of king Antiochu
3, 34: *Elephants:* they are mentioned several times. The Persian
were the first to use them in warfare.

of the army that remained and went forth from Antioch the chief city of his kingdom, in the hundred and forty-seventh year: and he passed over the river Euphrates and went through the higher countries.

38 Then Lysias chose Ptolemee, the son of Dorymenus, and
39 Nicanor and Gorgias, mighty men of the king's friends. | And he sent with them forty thousand men and seven thousand horsemen, to go into the land of Juda and to destroy it accord-
40 ing to the king's orders. | So they went forth with all their power and came and pitched near Emmaus in the plain coun-
41 try. | And the merchants of the countries heard the fame of them and they took silver and gold in abundance and servants: and they came into the camp, to buy the children of Israel for slaves. And there were joined to them the forces of Syria and of the land of the strangers.

42 And Judas and his brethren saw that evils were multiplied and that the armies approached to their borders: and they knew the orders the king had given to destroy the people and utterly
43 abolish them. | And they said every man to his neighbor: Let us raise up the low condition of our people and let us fight for
44 our people and our sanctuary. | And the assembly was gathered that they might be ready for battle, and that they might pray
45 and ask mercy and compassion. | Now Jerusalem was not inhabited but was like a desert. There was none of her children that went in or out, and the sanctuary was trodden down, and the children of strangers were in the castle. There was the habitation of the Gentiles, and joy was taken away from Jacob, and the pipe and harp ceased there.

46 *Judas and His Men Fast and Pray* And they assembled together and came to Maspha opposite Jerusalem: for in
47 Maspha was a place of prayer heretofore in Israel. | And they fasted that day and put on haircloth and put ashes upon their
48 heads, and they rent their garments. | And they laid open the books of the law in which the Gentiles searched for the like-
49 ness of their idols. | And they brought the priestly ornaments and the firstfruits and tithes, and stirred up the Nazarites that

3, 40: *Emmaus:* about twenty miles west of Jerusalem. Not the town in Lk 24, 13.

3, 48: One probable meaning is: the Jews consulted their Bible to search for guidance just as the pagans consulted oracles.

3, 49: *Nazirites:* according to Nm 6, 13f, the Nazirites were supposed to offer sacrifice upon completion of their vows, but they could not since the temple was profaned. (Douay spelling: Nazarites.)

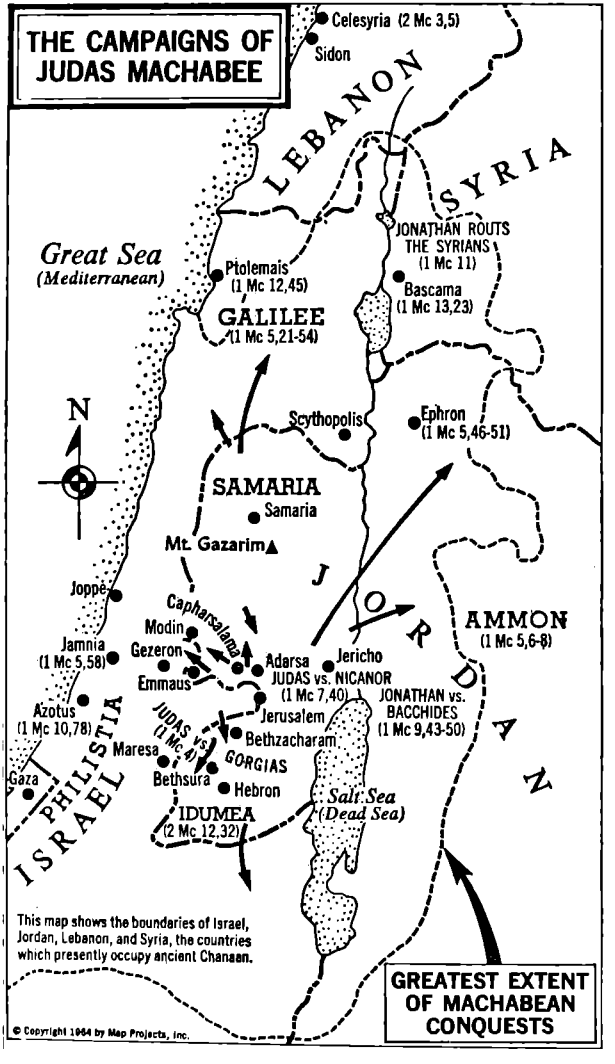
50 had fulfilled their days. ¶ And they cried with a loud voice
toward heaven, saying: What shall we do with these, and
51 whither shall we carry them? ¶ For your holies are trodden
down and are profaned, and your priests are in mourning and
52 are brought low. ¶ And behold the nations have come together
against us to destroy us: you know what they intend against us.
53 ¶ How shall we be able to stand before their face unless you (
54 God, help us? ¶ Then they sounded with trumpets and cried
out with a loud voice.

55 And after this Judas appointed captains over the people,
over thousands, and over hundreds, and over fifties, and over
56 tens. ¶ And he said to them that were building houses, or had
betrothed wives or were planting vineyards or were fearful,
that they should return every man to his house, according to
57 the law. ¶ So they removed the camp and pitched on the south
58 side of Emmaus. ¶ And Judas said: Gird yourselves and be
valiant men and be ready early in the morning, that you may
fight with these nations that are assembled against us to destroy
59 us and our sanctuary. For it is better for us to die in battle
60 than to see the evils of our nation and of the holies. Nevertheless as it shall be the will *of God* in heaven so be it done.

4

1 ***Judas Routs the King's Army*** Then Gorgias took five
thousand men and a thousand of the best horsemen, and they
2 removed out of the camp by night, that they might come
upon the camp of the Jews and strike them suddenly. And the
3 men that were of the castle were their guides. And Judas
heard of it and rose up, he and the valiant men, to attack the
4 king's forces that were in Emmaus. ¶ For as yet the army was
5 dispersed from the camp. And Gorgias came by night into the
camp of Judas and found no man, and he sought them in the
6 mountains, for he said: These men flee from us. And when
it was day, Judas showed himself in the plain with three thou-
7 sand men only who neither had armor nor swords. And they
saw the camp of the Gentiles that it was strong, and the men
in breastplates and the horsemen round about them: and they
8 were trained up to war. ¶ And Judas said to the men that were
with him: Fear not their multitude, neither be afraid of their
9 assault. ¶ Remember in what manner our fathers were saved

4. 2: *Men . . . of the castle:* a reference to the renegade Jews in the fortress of 1, 35.


THE CAMPAIGNS OF JUDAS MACHABEE
Celesyria (2 Mc 3,5)
Sidon
LEBANON
SYRIA
JONATHAN ROUTS THE SYRIANS (1 Mc 11)
Great Sea (Mediterranean)
Ptolemais (1 Mc 12,45)
Bascama (1 Mc 13,23)
GALILEE (1 Mc 5,21-54)
N
Scythopolis
Ephron (1 Mc 5,46-51)
SAMARIA
Samaria
Mt. Gazarim
Joppe
Caphrsalama
Modin
Jamnia (1 Mc 5,58)
Gezeron
Adarsa
Jericho
JUDAS vs. NICANOR (1 Mc 7,40)
Emmaus
JORDAN
AMMON (1 Mc 5,6-8)
Azotus (1 Mc 10,78)
Jerusalem
JONATHAN vs. BACCHIDES (1 Mc 9,43-50)
JUDAS vs. (1 Mc 4)
Bethzacharam
Maresa
GORGIAS
Gaza
Bethsura
Hebron
PHILISTIA
ISRAEL
Salt Sea (Dead Sea)
IDUMEA (2 Mc 12,32)
This map shows the boundaries of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, the countries which presently occupy ancient Chanaan.
GREATEST EXTENT OF MACHABEAN CONQUESTS
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in the Red Sea when Pharao pursued them with a great army. |
10 And now let us cry to heaven: and the Lord will have mercy
on us and will remember the covenant of our fathers and will
11 destroy this army before our face this day. | And all nations
shall know that there is one that redeems and delivers Israel.
12 And the strangers lifted up their eyes and saw them coming
13 against them. | And they went out of the camp to battle, and
14 they that were with Judas sounded the trumpet. | And they
joined battle: and the Gentiles were routed and fled into the
15 plain. | But all the hindmost of them fell by the sword, and
they pursued them as far as Gezeron, and even to the plains of
Idumea and of Azotus and of Jamnia: and there fell of them
16 to the number of three thousand men. | And Judas returned
17 again with his army that followed him, | and he said to the
people: Be not greedy of the spoils, for there is war before us,
18 | and Gorgias and his army are near us in the mountain: but
stand now against our enemies and overthrow them, and you
19 shall take the spoils afterward with safety. | And as Judas was
speaking these words, behold part of them appeared looking
forth from the mountain.

20 *Gorgias' Forces Put to Flight* And Gorgias saw that his
men were put to flight and that they had set fire to the camp,
21 for the smoke that was seen declared what was done. | And
when they had seen this, they were seized with great fear, seeing
at the same time Judas and his army in the plain ready to fight.
22.23 | So they all fled away into the land of the strangers. | And
Judas returned to take the spoils of the camp, and they got
much gold and silver and blue silk and purple of the sea and
24 great riches. | And returning home they sang a hymn and
blessed God in heaven, because he is good, because his mercy
25 endures for ever. | So Israel had a great deliverance that day
26 And such of the strangers as escaped went and told Lysias
27 all that had happened. | And when he heard these things, he
was amazed and discouraged, because things had not succeeded
in Israel according to his mind and as the king had commanded.

28 *The Troops of Lysias Defeated* So the year following
Lysias gathered together threescore thousand chosen men and
29 five thousand horsemen, that he might subdue them. | And
they came into Judea and pitched their tents in Bethoron, and

4, 15: *Gezeron:* Gezer. This verse contains geographical difficulties.
4, 22: *Land of the strangers:* land of the Philistines.

30 Judas met them with ten thousand men. | And they saw that
the army was strong, and he prayed and said: Blessed are you,
O Savior of Israel, who broke the violence of the mighty by the
hand of your servant David and delivered up the camp of the
strangers into the hands of Jonathan the son of Saul and of his
31 armorbearer. | Shut up this army in the hands of your people
Israel: and let them be confounded in their host and their horse-
32 men. | Strike them with fear and cause the boldness of their
strength to languish, and let them quake at their own destruc-
33 tion. | Cast them down with the sword of them that love you,
and let all that know your name praise you with hymns. |
34 And they joined battle: and there fell of the army of Lysias five
35 thousand men. | And when Lysias saw that his men were put
to flight and how bold the Jews were, and that they were ready
either to live or die manfully, he went to Antioch and chose
soldiers that they might come again into Judea with greater
numbers.

36 ***Judas Cleanses the Temple*** Then Judas, and his brethren
said: Behold our enemies are discomfited. Let us go now to
37 cleanse the holy places and to repair them. | And all the army
38 assembled together; and they went up into mount Sion. | And
they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and
the gates burned, and shrubs growing up in the courts as in a
forest or on the mountains, and the chambers joining to the tem-
39 ple thrown down. | And they rent their garments and made
40 great lamentation and put ashes on their heads. | And they
fell down to the ground on their faces, and they sounded with
the trumpets of alarm, and they cried toward heaven.
41 Then Judas appointed men to fight against them that were in
42 the castle, till they had cleansed the holy places. | And he
chose priests without blemish, whose will was set upon the law
43 of God. | And they cleansed the holy places, and took away
44 the stones that had been defiled into an unclean place. | And
he considered about the altar of holocausts that had been pro-
45 faned, what he should do with it. | And a good counsel came
into their minds, to pull it down: lest it should be a reproach
to them, because the Gentiles had defiled it. So they threw it
46 down. | And they laid up the stones in the mountain of the
temple in a convenient place, till there should come a prophet
and give answer concerning them.

47 ***A New Altar Is Built*** And they took whole stones accord-

4, 41: See 4, 2 n.

ing to the law and built a new altar according to the former. |
48 And they built up the holy places and the things that were
within the temple: and they sanctified the temple and the courts.
49 | And they made new holy vessels and brought in the candle-
stick and the altar of incense and the table into the temple. |
50 And they put incense upon the altar and lighted up the lamps
that were upon the candlestick, and they gave light in the
51 temple. | And they set the loaves upon the table and hung up
the veils and finished all the works that they had begun to
52 make. | And they arose before the morning on the five and
twentieth day of the ninth month (which is the month of
53 Casleu) in the hundred and forty-eighth year. | And they
offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of
54 holocausts which they had made. | According to the time and
according to the day wherein the heathens had defiled it, in the
same was it dedicated anew with canticles and harps and lutes
55 and cymbals. | And all the people fell upon their faces and
adored and blessed up to heaven him that had prospered them.
56 | And they kept the dedication of the altar eight days: and they
offered holocausts with joy and sacrifices of salvation and of
praise.
57 And they adorned the front of the temple with crowns of
gold and escutcheons, and they renewed the gates and the cham-
58 bers and fastened doors upon them. | And there was exceeding
great joy among the people, and the reproach of the Gentiles
59 was turned away. | And Judas and his brethren and all the
church of Israel decreed that the day of the dedication of the
altar should be kept in its season from year to year for eight
days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Casleu,
60 with joy and gladness. | They built up also at that time mount
Sion, with high walls and strong towers round about, lest the
Gentiles should at any time come and tread it down as they
61 did before. | And he placed a garrison there to keep it: and

4, 59: The Feast of Dedication or Purification of the temple, also called Feast of Lights because of the lamps placed at the entrance of the homes to symbolize the Mosaic Law. The feast was celebrated three years to the day after the erection of the "abominable idol of desolation" in 1, 57. See 2 Mc 10, 1-8, for the parallel passage where similarities with the Feast of Tabernacles are noted. The feast of dedication is mentioned in Jn 10, 22. The Jews still celebrate it annually in December January as the Feast of Hanukka. The Talmud, in post-biblical days attributes the eight days of the feast to a miracle. The flask of consecrated oil, hidden in the wall by the priests at the profanation of the temple was found intact. The one-day supply of the flask "miraculously" lasted eight days. See 2 Mc 1, 18-33 n.

he fortified it to secure Bethsura that the people might have a defense against Idumea.

5

1 ***Judas and His Brethren Save the Persecuted*** Now it came to pass, when the nations round about heard that the altar and the sanctuary were built up as before, that they were 2 exceeding angry. | And they thought to destroy the generation of Jacob that were among them: and they began to kill some of 3 the people and to persecute them. | Then Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumea and them that were in Acrabathane, because they beset the Israelites round about: and he 4 made a great slaughter of them. | And he remembered the malice of the children of Bean, who were a snare and a stumbling-block to the people by lying in wait for them in the 5 way. | And they were shut up by him in towers, and he set upon them and devoted them to utter destruction, and burned 6 their towers with fire and all that were in them. | Then he passed over to the children of Ammon, where he found a mighty power and much people, and Timotheus was their 7 captain. | And he fought many battles with them, and they 8 were discomfited in their sight: and he smote them. | And he took the city of Gazer and her towns and returned into Judea.

9 And the Gentiles that were in Galaad assembled themselves together against the Israelites that were in their quarters to destroy them: and they fled into the fortress of Datheman. | 10 And they sent letters to Judas and his brethren, saying: The heathens that are round about are gathered together against us, 11 to destroy us. | And they are preparing to come and take the fortress into which we have fled. And Timotheus is the captain 12 of their host. | Now therefore come, and deliver us out of their 13 hands, for many of us are slain. | And all our brethren that were in the places of Tubin are killed, and they carried away their wives and their children, captives, and took their spoils. And they have slain there almost a thousand men.

14 And while they were yet reading these letters, behold there came other messengers out of Galilee with their garments rent, 15 who related according to these words, saying: that they of Ptolemais and of Tyre and of Sidon were assembled against

5, 3: *Children of Esau in Idumea and . . . Acrabathane:* this means: the Edomites living southwest of the Dead Sea.

5, 4: *Children of Bean:* people living east of the Dead Sea.

5, 15: *Ptolemais:* Accho.

them. And all Galilee is filled with strangers, in order to con-
16 sume us. | Now when Judas and the people heard these words,
a great assembly met together to consider what they should do
for their brethren that were in trouble and were assaulted by
17 them. | And Judas said to Simon his brother: Choose your men
and go and deliver your brethren in Galilee. And I and my
18 brother Jonathan will go into the country of Galaad. | And he
left Joseph, the son of Zacharias, and Azarias, captains of the
19 people, with the remnant of the army in Judea to keep it. | And
he commanded them, saying: Take charge of this people, but
20 make no war against the heathens till we return. | Now three
thousand men were allotted to Simon to go into Galilee: and
21 eight thousand to Judas to go into the land of Galaad. | And
Simon went into Galilee and fought many battles with the
heathens. And the heathens were discomfited before his face:
22 and he pursued them even to the gate of Ptolemais. | And there
fell of the heathens almost three thousand men: and he took
23 the spoils of them, | and he took with him those that were in
Galilee and in Arbatis with their wives and children and all
that they had, and he brought them into Judea with great joy.

24 *The Victories of Judas* And Judas Machabeus and Jona-
than his brother passed over the Jordan and went three days'
25 journey through the desert. | And the Nabutheans met them
and received them in a peaceable manner and told them all that
26 happened to their brethren in the land of Galaad: and that
many of them were shut up in Barasa and in Bosor and in
Alima and in Casphor and in Mageth and in Carnaim, all
27 these strong and great cities. | Yea, and that they were kept
shut up in the rest of the cities of Galaad, and that they had
appointed to bring their army on the morrow near to these
cities and to take them and to destroy them all in one day. |
28 Then Judas and his army suddenly turned their march into the
desert to Bosor and took the city: and he slew every male by
the edge of the sword and took all their spoils and burned it
29 with fire. | And they removed from thence by night and went
30 till they came to the fortress. | And it came to pass that early
in the morning, when they lifted up their eyes, behold there
were people without number, carrying ladders and engines to
31 take the fortress and assault them. | And Judas saw that the
fight had begun: and the cry of the battle went up to heaven
32 like a trumpet, and a great cry out of the city. | And he said to

5, 17: *The country of Galaad:* east of the Jordan river.

33 his host: Fight today for your brethren. | And he came with
three companies behind them, and they sounded their trumpets
34 and cried out in prayer. | And the host of Timotheus under-
stood that it was Machabeus, and they fled away before his
face: and they made a great slaughter of them, and there fell
35 of them in that day almost eight thousand men. | And Judas
turned aside to Maspha and assaulted and took it: and he slew
every male thereof and took the spoils thereof and burned it
36 with fire. | From there he marched and took Casbon and
Mageth and Bosor, and the rest of the cities of Galaad.
37 But after this Timotheus gathered another army and camped
38 opposite Raphon beyond the torrent. | And Judas sent men
to view the army, and they brought him word, saying: All the
nations, that are round about us, have assembled unto him an
39 army exceeding great. | And they have hired the Arabians to
help them, and they have pitched their tents beyond the torrent,
ready to come to fight against you. And Judas went to meet
40 them. | And Timotheus said to the captains of his army: When
Judas and his army come near the torrent of water, if he pass
over unto us first, we shall not be able to withstand him, for
41 he will certainly prevail over us. | But if he be afraid to pass
over and camp on the other side of the river, we will pass over
42 to them and shall prevail against him. | Now when Judas
came near the torrent of water, he set the scribes of the people
by the torrent and commanded them, saying: Suffer no man
43 to stay behind, but let all come to the battle. | And he passed
over to them first, and all the people after him, and all the
heathens were discomfited before them. And they threw away
their weapons and fled to the temple that was in Carnaim. |
44 And he took that city, and the temple he burned with fire, with
all things that were therein: and Carnaim was subdued and
could not stand against the face of Judas.
45 And Judas gathered together all the Israelites that were in
the land of Galaad, from the least even to the greatest, and
their wives and children, and an army exceeding great, to come
46 into the land of Juda. | And they came as far as Ephron. Now
this was a great city situated in the way, strongly fortified, and
there was no means to turn from it on the right hand or on the
47 left, but the way was through the midst of it. | And they that
were in the city shut themselves in and stopped up the gates
with stones: and Judas sent to them with peaceable words, |
48 saying: Let us pass through your land, to go into our country:
and no man shall hurt you. We will only pass through on foot.
49 But they would not open to them. | Then Judas commanded

proclamation to be made in the camp that they should make an
30 assault, every man in the place where he was. | And the men
of the army drew near: and he assaulted that city all the day
and all the night: and the city was delivered into his hands. |
31 And they slew every male with the edge of the sword: and
he razed the city and took the spoils thereof and passed through
32 all the city over them that were slain. | Then they passed over
the Jordan to the great plain that is opposite Bethsan. |
33 And Judas gathered together the hindmost: and he exhorted
the people all the way through, till they came into the land of
34 Juda. | And they went up to mount Sion with joy and gladness
and offered holocausts, because not one of them was slain till
they had returned in peace.

35 ***Joseph and Azarias Disobey and Are Defeated*** Now
in the days that Judas and Jonathan were in the land of Galaad,
36 and Simon his brother in Galilee before Ptolemais, | Joseph,
the son of Zacharias, and Azarias, captain of the soldiers, heard
37 of the good success and the battles that were fought. | And he
said: Let us also get us a name, and let us go fight against the
38 Gentiles that are round about us. | And he gave charge to them
39 that were in his army, and they went toward Jamnia. | And
Gorgias and his men went out of the city to give them battle. |
60 And Joseph and Azarias were put to flight and were pursued
unto the borders of Judea. And there fell, on that day, of the
people of Israel about two thousand men, and there was a great
61 overthrow of the people: | because they did not hearken to
Judas and his brethren, thinking that they should do manfully.
62 | But they were not of the seed of those men by whom salva-
tion was brought to Israel.
63 And the men of Juda were magnified exceedingly in the sight
of all Israel, and of all the nations where their name was heard.
64 | And people assembled to them with joyful acclamations. |
65 Then Judas and his brethren went forth and attacked the chil-
dren of Esau, in the land toward the south. And he took Cheb-
ron and her towns, and he burned the walls thereof and the
66 towers all round it. | And he removed his camp to go into the
67 land of the aliens, and he went through Samaria. | In that day
some priests fell in battle: for, while desiring to do manfully,
68 they went out unadvisedly to fight. | And Judas turned to
Azotus into the land of the strangers, and he threw down their
altars, and he burned the statues of their gods with fire: and he
took the spoils of the cities and returned into the land of Juda.

5, 68: *Land of the strangers:* land of the Philistines.

6

1 ***Repentance and Death of Antiochus*** Now king Antiochus was going through the higher countries, and he heard that
the city of Elymais in Persia was greatly renowned and abound-
2 ing in silver and gold. | And that there was in it a temple exceeding rich: and coverings of gold and breastplates and shields
which king Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian that
3 reigned first in Greece, had left there. | Lo, he came and sought to take the city and to pillage it but he was not able, because
4 the design was known to them that were in the city. | And they rose up against him in battle, and he fled away, departing with great sadness, and returned toward Babylonia.
5 And while he was in Persia, there came one that told him how the armies that were in the land of Juda were put to flight.
6 | And that Lysias went with a very great power and was put to flight before the face of the Jews, and that they had grown strong by the armor and power and store of spoils which they
7 had gotten out of the camps which they had destroyed. | And that they had thrown down the abomination which he had set up upon the altar in Jerusalem, and that they had compassed about the sanctuary with high walls as before, and Bethsura also, his city.
8 And it came to pass when the king heard these words that he was struck with fear and exceedingly moved. And he laid himself down upon his bed and fell sick for grief, because it had
9 not fallen out to him as he imagined. | And he remained there many days, for great grief came more and more upon him, and
10 he made account that he should die. | And he called for all his friends and said to them: Sleep has gone from my eyes, and I have fallen away, and my heart is cast down for anxiety. |
11 And I said in my heart: Into how much tribulation have I come, and what floods of sorrow I am in now, I that was pleasant and
12 beloved in my power! | But now I remember the evils that I have done in Jerusalem, from where I took away all the spoils of gold and of silver that were in it, and where I sent to destroy
13 the inhabitants of Juda without cause. | I know therefore that for this cause these evils have found me: and behold I perish
14 with great grief in a strange land. | Then he called Philip, one of his friends, and he made him regent over all his kingdom. |
15 And he gave him the crown and his robe and his ring, that he should go to Antiochus his son and should bring him up for

6, 1: *Elymais:* Elam.
6, 7: *Bethsura:* a reference to 4, 61.

16 the kingdom. | So king Antiochus died there in the year one
hundred and forty-nine.

17 *Antiochus the Younger* And Lysias understood that the
king was dead, and he set up Antiochus his son to reign, whom
18 he brought up young: and he called his name Eupator. | Now
they that were in the castle had shut up the Israelites round
about the holy places: and they were continually seeking their
19 hurt and to strengthen the Gentiles. | And Judas purposed to
destroy them, and he called together all the people, to besiege
20 them. | And they came together and besieged them in the year
one hundred and fifty: and they made battering slings and en-
21 gines. | And some of the besieged got out, and some wicked
22 men of Israel joined themselves unto them. | And they went
to the king and said: How long do you delay to execute the
23 judgment and to revenge our brethren? | We determined to
serve your father and to do according to his orders and obey
24 his edicts. | And for this they of our nation are alienated from
us and have slain as many of us as they could find and have
25 spoiled our inheritances. | Neither have they put forth their
26 hand against us only, but also against all our borders. | And
behold they have approached this day to the castle of Jeru-
salem to take it, and they have fortified the stronghold of
27 Bethsura. | And unless you speedily prevent them, they will do
greater things than these, and you shall not be able to subdue
28 them. | Now when the king heard this, he was angry, and he
called together all his friends and the captains of his army and
29 them that were over the horsemen. | There came also to him
from other realms and from the islands of the sea hired troops.

30 *The Strong Army of the New King* And the number
of his army was an hundred thousand footmen and twenty
thousand horsemen and thirty-two elephants, trained to bat-
31 tle. | And they went through Idumea and approached to Beth-
sura and fought many days, and they made engines. But they
sallied forth and burned them with fire and fought manfully
32 | And Judas departed from the castle and removed the camp
33 to Bethzacharam, opposite the king's camp. | And the king
rose before it was light and made his troops march on fiercely
toward the way of Bethzacharam. And the armies made them-
selves ready for the battle, and they sounded the trumpets,
34 and they showed the elephants the blood of grapes and mul-
35 berries, to provoke them to fight. | And they distributed the
beasts by the legions, and there stood by every elephant a thou-

sand men in coats of mail and with helmets of brass on their heads: and five hundred horsemen set in order were chosen for
36 every beast, | these before the time: wherever the beast was, they were there: and wherever it went they went, and they de-
37 parted not from it. | And upon the beast there were strong wooden towers which covered every one of them, and engines upon them; and upon every one thirty-two valiant men, who
38 fought from above, and an Indian to rule the beast. | And the rest of the horsemen he placed on this side and on that side at the two wings, with trumpets to stir up the army and to hasten them forward that stood thick together in the legions thereof. |
39 Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and of brass, the mountains glittered therewith: and they shone like lamps
40 of fire. | And part of the king's army was distinguished by the high mountains, and the other part by the low places: and they
41 marched on warily and orderly. | And all the inhabitants of the land were moved at the noise of their multitude and the marching of the company and the rattling of the armor: for the army
42 was exceeding great and strong. | And Judas and his army drew near for battle: and there fell of the king's army six hundred men.

43 ***The Valiancy of Eleazar*** And Eleazar the son of Saura saw one of the beasts harnessed with the king's harness; and it was higher than the other beasts, and it seemed to him that the
44 king was on it. | And he exposed himself to deliver his people
45 and to get himself an everlasting name. | And he ran up to it boldly in the midst of the legion, killing on the right hand and on the left: and they fell by him on this side and that side. |
46 And he went between the feet of the elephant and put himself under it and slew it; and it fell to the ground upon him, and he died there.

47 Then they, seeing the strength of the king and the fierceness
48 of his army, turned away from them. | But the king's army went up against them to Jerusalem: and the king's army pitched
49 their tents against Judea and mount Sion. | And he made peace with them that were in Bethsura: and they came forth out of the city, because they had no victuals, being shut up there,
50 for it was the year of rest to the land. | And the king took Bethsura, and he placed there a garrison to keep it.

51 ***Jerusalem Besieged*** And he turned his army against the

6, 37: *Thirty-two:* read 2 or 3 or 4.

sanctuary for many days: and he set up there battering sling
and engines and instruments to cast fire and engines to cas
stones and javelins and pieces to shoot arrows, and slings.
52 And they also made engines against their engines, and the
53 fought for many days. | But there were no victuals in the city
because it was the seventh year: and such as had stayed it
Judea of them that came from among the nations had eater
54 the residue of all that which had been stored up. | And there
remained in the holy places but a few, for the famine had pre
vailed over them: and they were dispersed every man to hi
own place.
55 Now Lysias heard that Philip, whom king Antiochus whil
he lived had appointed to bring up his son Antiochus, and t
56 reign, to be king, | had returned from Persia and Media, with
the army that went with him and that he sought to take upo
57 him the affairs of the kingdom. | Wherefore he made haste t
go and say to the king and to the captains of the army: W
decay daily and our provision of victuals is small and the plac
that we lay siege to is strong, and it lies upon us to take ord
58 for the affairs of the kingdom. | Now therefore let us come t
an agreement with these men and make peace with them an
59 with all their nation. | And let us covenant with them th
they may live according to their own laws as before: for b
cause of our despising their laws, they have been provoked ar
60 have done all these things. | And the proposal was acceptah
in the sight of the king and of the princes, and he sent to the
61 to make peace: and they accepted it. | And the king and th
princes swore to them: and they came out of the stronghol
62 | Then the king entered into mount Sion and saw the streng
of the place, and he quickly broke the oath that he had tak
and gave commandment to throw down the wall round abo
63 | And he departed in haste and returned to Antioch, where
found Philip master of the city: and he fought against him a
took the city.

7

1 ***Demetrius Is Made King*** In the hundred and fifty-fi
year, Demetrius the son of Seleucus departed from the city
Rome and came up with a few men into a city of the seaco

7, 1: In 161 B.C. Demetrius I, son of Seleucus IV, Philopator,
caped from Rome where he was sent as a hostage for his uncle Antioch
Epiphanes. Polybius the Historian helped him to escape. He landed
Tripolis, Syria.

and reigned there. | And it came to pass, as he entered into the
house of the kingdom of his fathers, that the army seized upon
Antiochus and Lysias, to bring them unto him. | And when he
knew it, he said: Let me not see their face. | So the army slew
them. And Demetrius sat upon the throne of his kingdom.
And there came to him the wicked and ungodly men of Is-
rael: and Alcimus was at the head of them, who desired to be
made high priest. | And they accused the people to the king,
saying: Judas and his brethren have destroyed all your friends,
and he has driven us out of our land. | Now therefore send
some man whom you trust, and let him go and see all the havoc
he has made among us and in the king's lands: and let him
punish all his friends and their helpers.

Bacchides and Alcimus Betray Judas Then the king chose
Bacchides, one of his friends that ruled beyond the great
river in the kingdom, and was faithful to the king: and he sent
him | to see the havoc that Judas had made. And the wicked
Alcimus he made high priest and commanded him to take re-
venge upon the children of Israel. | And they arose and came
with a great army into the land of Juda: and they sent mes-
sengers and spoke to Judas and his brethren with peaceable
words deceitfully. | But they gave no heed to their words, for
they saw that they had come with a great army. | Then there
assembled to Alcimus and Bacchides a company of the scribes,
to require things that are just. | First the Assideans that were
among the children of Israel; and they sought peace of them,
| for they said: One that is a priest of the seed of Aaron has
come, he will not deceive us. | And he spoke to them peace-
ably, and swore to them, saying: We will do you no harm, nor
your friends. | And they believed him. And he took threescore of
them and slew them in one day, according to the word that is
written: | The flesh of your saints and the blood of them they
have shed round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury
them. | Then fear and trembling fell upon all the people, and
they said: There is no truth nor justice among them: for they
have broken the covenant and the oath which they made. |
And Bacchides removed the camp from Jerusalem and pitched
in Bethzecha: and he sent and took many of them that had
fled away from him, and some of the people he killed, and
threw them into a great pit. | Then he committed the country

7, 8: *Beyond the great river:* the Euphrates.
7, 13: *Assideans:* see 2, 42 n.

to Alcimus and left with him troops to help him. So Bacchid
21 went away to the king. | But Alcimus did what he could
22 maintain his chief priesthood. | And they that disturbed th
people resorted to him, and they got the land of Juda into the
power and did much hurt in Israel.
23 And Judas saw all the evils that Alcimus and they that wer
with him did to the children of Israel, much more than the Gen
24 tiles. | And he went out into all the coasts of Judea roun
about, and took vengeance upon the men that had revolte
25 and they ceased to go forth any more into the country. | An
Alcimus saw that Judas and they that were with him pr
vailed: and he knew that he could not stand against them, an
he went back to the king and accused them of many crime

26 *Nicanor Sent to Jerusalem* And the king sent Nicano
one of his principal lords, who was a great enemy to Israe
27 and he commanded him to destroy the people. | And Nicano
came to Jerusalem with a great army, and he sent to Judas an
28 his brethren deceitfully with friendly words, | saying: Let ther
be no fighting between me and you. I will come with a fe
29 men to see your faces with peace. | And he came to Judas an
they saluted one another peaceably, but the enemies were pr
30 pared to take away Judas by force. | And the thing was know
to Judas that he had come to him with deceit: and he wa
much afraid of him and would not see his face any more.
31 And Nicanor knew that his counsel was discovered: and h
32 went out to fight against Judas near Capharsalama. | And ther
fell of Nicanor's army almost five thousand men, and they fle
33 into the city of David. | And after this Nicanor went up int
mount Sion, and some of the priests and the people came ou
to salute him peaceably and to show him the holocausts tha
34 were offered for the king. | But he mocked and despised ther
35 and abused them, and he spoke proudly, | and swore in ange
saying: Unless Judas and his army be delivered into my hand
as soon as ever I return in peace, I will burn this house. An
36 he went out in a great rage. | And the priests went in an
stood before the face of the altar and the temple, and weepin
37 they said: | You, O Lord, have chosen this house for your nam
to be called upon therein, that it might be a house of praye
38 and supplication for your people. | Be avenged of this ma
and his army, and let them fall by the sword. Remember the
blasphemies and suffer them not to continue any longer.

7, 31: *Capharsalama:* unknown site.

39 Then Nicanor went out from Jerusalem and encamped near
40 to Bethoron: and an army of Syria joined him. | But Judas
pitched in Adarsa with three thousand men. And Judas prayed,
41 and said: | O Lord, when they that were sent by king Sen-
nacherib blasphemed you, an angel went out and slew of them
42 a hundred and eighty-five thousand. | Even so destroy this
army in our sight today and let the rest know that he has
spoken ill against your sanctuary: and judge him according to
his wickedness.

43 ***Judas Defeats Nicanor*** And the armies joined battle on
the thirteenth day of the month Adar: and the army of Nicanor
44 was defeated, and he himself was first slain in the battle. | And
when his army saw that Nicanor was slain, they threw away
45 their weapons and fled. | And they pursued after them one
day's journey from Adazer, even till you come to Gazara: and
46 they sounded the trumpets after them with signals. | And
they went forth out of all the towns of Judea round about, and
they pushed them with the horns and they turned again to
them: and they were all slain with the sword and there was not
47 left of them so much as one. | And they took the spoils of them
for a booty, and they cut off Nicanor's head and his right hand
which he had proudly stretched out, and they brought it and
48 hung it up over against Jerusalem. | And the people rejoiced
49 exceedingly and they spent that day with great joy. | And he
ordained that this day should be kept every year, being the
50 thirteenth of the month of Adar. | And the land of Juda was
quiet for a short time.

1 ***Judas Hears of the Romans' Fame*** Now Judas heard
of the fame of the Romans, that they are powerful and strong
and willingly agree to all things that are requested of them, and
that they have made amity with all who have come to them,
2 and that they are mighty in power. | And they heard of their
battles and their noble acts, which they had done in Galatia:
how they had conquered them and brought them under tribute.
3 | And how great things they had done in the land of Spain, and
that they had brought under their power the mines of silver

7, 41: A reference to 4 Kgs 19, 35.
7, 46: *They pushed them with the horns:* they outflanked the enemy.
8, 2: *Galatia:* in 190 B.C. the Romans conquered the Gauls in upper Italy.
8, 3: *Land of Spain:* the Romans took Carthaginian Spain in 201 B.C.

and of gold that are there, and had come into possession of all
4 the place by their counsel and patience. | And that they had
conquered places that were very far off from them, and kings
that came against them from the ends of the earth and had
overthrown them with great slaughter: and the rest pay tribute
5 to them every year. | And that they had defeated in battle
Philip, and Perses the king of the Ceteans, and the rest that had
6 borne arms against them, and had conquered them: | and how
Antiochus the great king of Asia, who went to fight against
them, having a hundred and twenty elephants with horsemen
7 and chariots and a very great army, was routed by them; | and
how they took him alive and appointed to him that both he and
they that should reign after him should pay a great tribute,
and that he should give hostages and that which was agreed
8 upon; | and the country of the Indians and of the Medes and
of the Lydians, some of their best provinces, and those which
9 they had taken from them they gave to king Eumenes. | And
that they who were in Greece had a mind to go and to destroy
10 them: and they had knowledge thereof. | And they sent a gen-
eral against them and fought with them, and many of them
were slain, and they carried away their wives and their chil-
dren captives and spoiled them, and took possession of their
land and threw down their walls, and brought them to be their
servants unto this day.
11 And the other kingdoms and islands that at any time had
resisted them, they had destroyed and brought under their
12 power. | But with their friends and such as relied upon them
they kept amity, and had conquered kingdoms that were near
and that were far off: for all that heard their name were afraid
13 of them. | That whom they had a mind to help to a kingdom,
those reigned; and whom they would, they deposed from the
kingdom: and they were greatly exalted.

8, 5: *Philip:* the Romans in 197 B.C. at Cynoscephalae (Greece) defeated Philip V, king of Macedonia. *Perses king of the Ceteans:* Perseus, king of the Macedonians, Philip's successor. The Romans defeated him at the battle of Pydna, Macedonia, in 168 B.C.

8, 6: Antiochus III, the Great, king of Syria, was defeated by Scipio Africanus at Magnesia in 190 B.C.

8, 7: *They took him alive:* the classical authors say he escaped. The sacred writer does not guarantee the truth of the source he is using here or elsewhere in 1, 2 Mc, but transmits the sources for what they are worth.

8, 8: *King Eumenes:* Eumenes II of Pergamon.

8, 9-10: This may refer to the Roman general, M. Fulvius Nobilior, in the Aetolian war of 191-188 B.C.

14 And none of all these wore a crown or was clothed in pur-
15 ple, to be magnified thereby. | And that they had made themselves a senate house and consulted daily three hundred and twenty men that sat in council always for the people, that they
16 might do the things that were right. | And that they committed their government to one man every year, to rule over all their country, and they all obey one, and there is no envy, nor jealousy among them.

17 ***The Treaty with Rome*** So Judas chose Eupolemus the son of John, the son of Jacob, and Jason the son of Eleazar, and he sent them to Rome to make a league of amity and con-
18 federacy with them. | And that they might take off from them the yoke of the Grecians, for they saw that they oppressed the
19 kingdom of Israel with servitude. | And they went to Rome, a very long journey, and they entered into the senate house and
20 said: | Judas Machabeus and his brethren and the people of the Jews have sent us to you, to make alliance and peace with you, and that we may be registered your confederates and
21-22 friends. | And the proposal was pleasing in their sight. | And this is the copy of the writing that they wrote back again, graven in tables of brass, and sent to Jerusalem, that it might be with them there for a memorial of the peace and alliance.
23 GOOD SUCCESS BE TO THE ROMANS, and to the people of the Jews, by sea and by land for ever and far be the sword and
24 enemy from them. | But if there come first any war upon the Romans or any of their confederates, in all their dominions: |
25 the nation of the Jews shall help them according as the time
26 shall direct, with all their heart. | Neither shall they give them, while they are fighting, or furnish them with wheat or arms or money or ships, as it has seemed good to the Romans: and they shall obey their orders, without taking anything of them. |
27 In like manner also if war shall come first upon the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall help them with all their heart, ac-
28 cording as the time shall permit them. | And there shall not be given to them that come to their aid either wheat or arms or money or ships, as it has seemed good to the Romans: and they
29 shall observe their orders without deceit. | According to these articles did the Romans covenant with the people of the Jews. |

8, 15: *Consulted daily:* the senate did not convene every day.
8, 16: *To one man:* there were *two* consuls.
8, 23-30: In this alliance of 161 B.C., not found among Roman historians, the Jews gained nothing.

30 And if after this one party or the other shall have a mind to add
to these *articles* or take away anything, they may do it at their
pleasure: and whatsoever they shall add or take away shall be
31 ratified. | Moreover, concerning the evils that Demetrius the
king has done against them, we have written to him, saying:
Why have you made your yoke heavy upon our friends and
32 allies, the Jews? | If therefore they come again to us complain-
ing of you, we will do them justice and will make war against
you by sea and land.

9

1 ***Bacchides and Alcimus Sent again into Judea*** In the
meantime, when Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his army
had fallen in battle, he sent again Bacchides and Alcimus into
2 Judea; and the right wing of his army with them. | And they
took the road that leads to Galgal and they encamped in Masa-
loth, which is in Arabella: and they made themselves masters of
3 it and slew many people. | In the first month of the hundred
4 and fifty-second year they brought the army to Jerusalem: and
they arose and went to Berea with twenty thousand men and
5 two thousand horsemen. | Now Judas had pitched his tents in
6 Laisa, and three thousand chosen men with him. | And they
saw the multitude of the army that they were many, and they
were seized with great fear. And many withdrew themselves
out of the camp, and there remained of them no more than
7 eight hundred men. | And Judas saw that his army slipped
away and the battle pressed upon him, and his heart was cast
down: because he had not time to gather them together, and he
8 was discouraged. | Then he said to them that remained: Let
us arise and go against our enemies, if we may be able to fight
9 against them. | But they dissuaded him, saying: We shall not be
able, but let us save our lives now and return to our brethren
10 and then we will fight against them, for we are but few. | Then
Judas said: God forbid we should do this thing and flee away
from them: But if our time be come, let us die manfully for our
brethren, and let us not stain our glory.

11 ***Defeat and Death of Judas*** And the army removed out

8, 31-32: This was orally delivered. It did not form part of the formal alliance.

9, 2: *Galgal:* read Galilee. *Arabella:* near the western shoreline of the Sea of Galilee.

9, 3: 160 B.C.

9, 4: *Berea:* about ten miles north of Jerusalem.

9, 5: *Laisa:* southwest of Berea.

of the camp, and they stood over against them. And the horsemen were divided into two troops, and the slingers and the archers went before the army, and they that were in the front
2 *were* all men of valor. | And Bacchides was in the right wing, and the legion drew near on two sides, and they sounded the
3 trumpets. | And they also that were on Judas' side, even they also cried out, and the earth shook at the noise of the armies. And the battle was fought from morning even unto the eve-
4 ning. | And Judas perceived that the stronger part of the army of Bacchides was on the right side, and all the stout of heart
5 came together with him; and the right wing was discomfited
6 by them, and he pursued them even to the mount Azotus. | And they that were in the left wing saw that the right wing was dis-
7 comfited, and they followed after Judas and them that were with him, at their back. | And the battle was hard fought, and there fell many wounded of the one side and of the other. |
8 And Judas was slain and the rest fled away.

9 And Jonathan and Simon took Judas their brother and buried him in the sepulcher of their fathers in the city of Modin. |
10 And all the people of Israel bewailed him with great lamenta-
11 tion, and they mourned for him many days, | and said: How is
12 the mighty man fallen that saved the people of Israel! | But the rest of the words of the wars of Judas and of the noble acts that he did and of his greatness are not written: for they were very many.

13 And it came to pass after the death of Judas that the wicked began to put forth their heads in all the confines of Israel, and
14 all the workers of iniquity rose up. | In those days there was a very great famine, and they and all their country yielded to
15 Bacchides. | And Bacchides chose the wicked men and made
16 them lords of the country. | And they sought out and made diligent search after the friends of Judas and brought them to Bacchides and he took vengeance of them and abused them. |
17 And there was a great tribulation in Israel, such as was not since the day that there was no prophet seen in Israel.

18 ***Jonathan Succeeds His Brother Judas*** And all the friends
19 of Judas came together and said to Jonathan: | Since your brother Judas died there is not a man like him to go forth against our enemies, Bacchides and them that are the enemies
20 of our nation. | Now therefore we have chosen you this day to be our prince and captain in his stead to fight our battle. |

9, 23: *The wicked:* the renegades or Grecized Jews.

31 So Jonathan took upon him the government at that time and
32 rose up in the place of Judas his brother. | And Bacchides had
33 knowledge of it and sought to kill him. | And Jonathan and
Simon his brother knew it, and all that were with them: and
they fled into the desert of Thecua and they pitched by the
34 water of the lake Asphar. | And Bacchides understood it, and
he came himself with all his army over the Jordan on the sab-
bath day.

35 And Jonathan sent his brother, a captain of the people, to
desire the Nabutheans, his friends, that they would lend them
36 their equipage which was copious. | And the children of Jambri
came forth out of Madaba and took John and all that he had
37 and went away with them. | After this it was told Jonathan
and Simon his brother that the children of Jambri made a great
marriage and were bringing the bride out of Madaba, the daugh-
ter of one of the great princes of Chanaan, with great pomp.
38 And they remembered the blood of John their brother: and
they went up and hid themselves under the covert of the moun-
39 tain. | And they lifted up their eyes and saw: and behold a
tumult and great preparation, and the bridegroom came forth
and his friends and his brethren to meet them with timbrels
40 and musical instruments and many weapons. | And they rose
up against them from the place where they lay in ambush and
slew them, and there fell many wounded, and the rest fled into
41 the mountains; and they took all their spoils, | and the mar-
riage was turned into mourning, and the noise of their musical
42 instruments into lamentation. | And they took revenge for the
blood of their brother, and they returned to the bank of the
Jordan.

43 And Bacchides heard it, and he came on the sabbath day
44 even to the bank of the Jordan with a great power. | And
Jonathan said to his company: Let us arise and fight against our
45 enemies, for it is not now as yesterday and the day before: | for
behold the battle is before us, and the water of the Jordan on
this side and on that side, and banks and marshes and wood
46 and there is no place for us to turn aside. | Now therefore
cry to heaven, that you may be delivered from the hand of
47 your enemies. And they joined battle. | And Jonathan stretched
forth his hand to strike Bacchides, but he turned away from
48 him backward. | And Jonathan and they that were with him
leaped into the Jordan and swam over the Jordan to them.
49 And there fell of Bacchides' side that day a thousand men: and
they returned to Jerusalem.

50 And they built strong cities in Judea, the fortress that was

Jericho, and in Ammaus and in Bethoron and in Bethel and Thamnata and Phara and Thopo, with high walls and gates
1 and bars. | And he placed garrisons in them that they might
2 wage war against Israel. | And he fortified the city of Bethsura and Gazara and the castle, and set garrisons in them and pro-
3 visions of victuals. | And he took the sons of the chief men of the country for hostages and put them in the castle in Jeru-salem in custody.

4 ***Alcimus Stricken with Palsy*** Now in the year one hundred and fifty-three, the second month, Alcimus commanded the walls of the inner *court* of the sanctuary to be thrown down
5 and the works of the prophets to be destroyed: and he began
6 to destroy. | At that time Alcimus was struck: and his works were hindered and his mouth was stopped and he was taken
7 with a palsy, so that he could no more speak a word nor give
8 order concerning his house. | And Alcimus died at that time
9 in great torment.

And Bacchides saw that Alcimus was dead: and he returned
10 to the king, and the land was quiet for two years. And all the wicked held a council, saying: Behold Jonathan and they that
11 are with him dwell at ease and without fear. Now therefore let us bring Bacchides here again, and he shall take them all in one
12.60 night. | So they went and gave him counsel. | And he arose
13 to come with a great army; and he sent secretly letters to his adherents that were in Judea to seize upon Jonathan and them
14 that were with him, but they could not, for their design was
15 known to them. | And he apprehended of the men of the country that were the principal authors of the mischief, fifty men
16 and slew them. | And Jonathan and Simon and they that were with him retired into Bethbessen, which is in the desert: and
17 he repaired the breaches thereof, and they fortified it.

And when Bacchides knew it, he gathered together all his
18 multitude, and sent word to them that were of Judea. | And
19 he came and camped above Bethbessen and fought against it many days and made engines. | But Jonathan left his brother Simon in the city and went forth into the country and came with
20 a number of men. | And he struck Odares and his brethren and the children of Phaseron in their tents: and he began to
21 slay and to increase in forces. | But Simon and they that were with him sallied out of the city and burned the engines.

9, 66: Jonathan attacked Odares and the other allies of Bacchides.

68 ***Bacchides, Defeated, Accepts a Peace Treaty*** And the
fought against Bacchides, and he was discomfited by them
and they afflicted him exceedingly, for his counsel and his enter
69 prise were in vain. | And he was angry with the wicked men tha
had given him counsel to come into their country, and he slew
many of them: and he purposed to return with the rest into
70 their country. | And Jonathan had knowledge of it, and he sen
ambassadors to him to make peace with him and to restore t
71 him the prisoners. | And he accepted it willingly and did ac
cording to his words and swore that he would do him no harm
72 all the days of his life. | And he restored to him the prisoner
which he before had taken out of the land of Juda. And he re
turned and went away into his own country, and he came n
73 more into their borders. | So the sword ceased from Israe
and Jonathan dwelt in Machmas: and Jonathan began there t
judge the people, and he destroyed the wicked out of Israel.

10

1 ***Rivalry of Alexander and Demetrius*** Now in the hun
dred and sixtieth year, Alexander the son of Antiochus, surname
the Illustrious, came up and took Ptolemais: and they receive
2 him and he reigned there. | And king Demetrius heard of
and gathered together an exceeding great army and went fort
3 against him to fight. | And Demetrius sent a letter to Jonatha
4 with peaceable words, to magnify him. | For he said: Let u
first make a peace with him before he make one with Alexande
5 against us: | for he will remember all the evils that we hav
done against him and against his brother and against his natio
6 | And he gave him authority to gather together an army and t
make arms and that he should be his confederate: and th
hostages that were in the castle, he commanded to be delivere
to him.
7 And Jonathan came to Jerusalem and read the letters in th
hearing of all the people and of them that were in the castle.
8 And they were filled with great fear, because they heard tha
the king had given him authority to gather together an army.
9 And the hostages were delivered to Jonathan, and he restore
10 them to their parents. | And Jonathan dwelt in Jerusalem an
11 began to build and to repair the city. | And he ordered work
men to build the walls and mount Sion round about wit

10, 1: Alexander Balas challenged Demetrius by claiming to be th
son of Antiochus Epiphanes. Alexander was supported by the rulers o
Pergamum, Cappadocia, and Egypt, and by the Roman senate.

12 square stones for fortification: and so they did. | And the strangers that were in the strongholds, which Bacchides had
13 built, fled away. | And every man left his place and departed
14 into his own country. | Only in Bethsura there remained some of them that had forsaken the law and the commandments of God: for this was a place of refuge for them.
15 And king Alexander heard of the promises that Demetrius had made Jonathan. And they told him of the battles and the worthy acts that he and his brethren had done and the labors
16 that they had endured, | and he said: Shall we find such another man? Now therefore we will make him our friend and our confederate.

17 ***The Two Kings Seek Jonathan's Friendship*** So he wrote a letter and sent it to him according to these words, saying: |
18.19 King Alexander to his brother Jonathan, greeting. | We have heard of you that you are a man of great power and
20 fit to be our friend. | Now therefore we make you this day high priest of your nation and that you be called the king's friend (and he sent him a purple robe and a crown of gold), and that you be of one mind with us in our affairs and keep friendship
21 with us. | Then Jonathan put on the holy vestment in the seventh month, in the year one hundred and threescore, at the feast day of the tabernacles: and he gathered together an army and made a great number of arms.
22 And Demetrius heard these words and was exceeding sorry
23 and said: | What is this that we have done that Alexander has prevented us to gain the friendship of the Jews to strengthen
24 himself? | I also will write to them words of request and offer
25 dignities and gifts that they may be with me to aid me. | And he wrote to them in these words: King Demetrius to the nation
26 of the Jews, greeting. | Whereas you have kept covenant with us and have continued in our friendship and have not joined
27 with our enemies, we have heard of it and are glad. | Wherefore now continue still to keep fidelity toward us and we will reward you with good things for what you have done in our
28 behalf. | And we will remit to you many charges and will give you gifts.
29 And now I free you and all the Jews from tributes, and I release you from the customs of salt and remit the crowns and
30 the thirds of the seed. | And the half of the fruit of trees,

10, 21: October, 152 B.C.
10, 29: *The thirds of the seed:* of the grain.
10, 30: The Seleucids of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt meant to

which is my share, I leave to you from this day forward, so that it shall not be taken of the land of Juda and of the three cities that are added thereto out of Samaria and Galilee, from this
31 day forth and for ever. | And let Jerusalem be holy and free, with the borders thereof, and let the tenths and tributes be for
32 itself. | I yield up also the power of the castle that is in Jerusalem, and I give it to the high priest to place therein such men
33 as he shall choose to keep it. | And every soul of the Jews that has been carried captive from the land of Juda in all my kingdom, I set at liberty freely, that all be discharged from tributes
34 even of their cattle. | And I will that all the feasts and the sabbaths and the new moons and the days appointed, and three days before the solemn day and three days after the solemn day be all *days* of immunity and freedom for all the
35 Jews that are in my kingdom. | And no man shall have power to do any thing against them or to molest any of them in any
36 cause. | And let there be enrolled in the king's army to the number of thirty thousand of the Jews: and allowance shall be made them as is due to all the king's forces, and certain of them shall be appointed to be in the fortresses of the great king. |
37 And some of them shall be set over the affairs of the kingdom that are of trust, and let the governors be taken from among themselves and let them walk in their own laws, as the king
38 has commanded in the land of Juda. | And the three cities that are added to Judea out of the country of Samaria, let them be accounted with Judea: that they may be under one and obey no other authority but that of the high priest.

39 Ptolemais, and the confines thereof, I give as a free gift to the holy places that are in Jerusalem, for the necessary charges
40 of the holy things. | And I give every year fifteen thousand sicles of silver out of the king's accounts, of what belongs to
41 me. | And all that is above, which they that were over the affairs the years before had not paid, from this time they shall
42 give it to the works of the house. | Moreover the five thousand sicles of silver which they received from the account of the holy places every year shall also belong to the priests that execute the
43 ministry. | And whosoever shall flee into the temple that is in Jerusalem and in all the borders thereof, being indebted to the king for any matter, let them be set at liberty, and all that they
44 have in my kingdom, let them have it free. | For the building also or repairing the works of the holy places, the charges shall

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convey the idea of ownership through outrageous taxes on subjugated lands. *The three cities:* named in 11, 34.

45 be given out of the king's revenues. | For the building also of
the walls of Jerusalem and the fortifying thereof round about,
the charges shall be given out of the king's account, as also for
the building of the walls in Judea.
46 Now when Jonathan, and the people heard these words they
gave no credit to them nor received them: because they re-
membered the great evil that he had done in Israel, for he had
47 afflicted them exceedingly. | And their inclinations were toward
Alexander, because he had been the chief promoter of peace in
their regard, and him they always helped.

48 ***Demetrius Slain in Battle*** And king Alexander gathered
together a great army and moved his camp near to Demetrius. |
49 And the two kings joined battle and the army of Demetrius fled
away, and Alexander pursued after him and pressed them close.
50 | And the battle was hard fought till the sun went down: and
Demetrius was slain that day.
51 And Alexander sent ambassadors to Ptolemee, king of Egypt,
52 with words to this effect, saying: | Forasmuch as I am returned
into my kingdom and am set in the throne of my ancestors and
have got the dominion and have overthrown Demetrius and
53 possessed our country, | and have joined battle with him, and
both he and his army have been destroyed by us, and we are
54 placed in the throne of his kingdom: | now therefore let us
make friendship one with another. And give me now your
daughter to wife and I will be your son-in-law and I will give
55 both you and her gifts worthy of you. | And king Ptolemee
answered, saying: Happy is this day of your return to the land
56 of your fathers and to the throne of their kingdom. | And now
I will do to you as you have written: but meet me at Ptolemais
that we may see one another and I may give her to you as you
57 have said. | So Ptolemee went out of Egypt, with Cleopatra his
daughter, and he came to Ptolemais in the hundred and sixty-
58 second year. | And king Alexander met him and he gave him
his daughter, Cleopatra: and he celebrated her marriage at
Ptolemais with great glory, after the manner of kings.

59 ***Jonathan Honored by Alexander*** And king Alexander
60 wrote to Jonathan that he should come and meet him. | And
he went honorably to Ptolemais and he met there the two kings
and he gave them much silver, and gold, and presents: and he

10, 57: This is Ptolemy (Ptolemee) VI, Philometor. *Hundred and sixty-second year:* 150 B.C.

61 found favor in their sight. | And some pestilent men of Israel,
men of a wicked life, assembled themselves against him to
62 accuse him: and the king gave no heed to them. | And he com-
manded that Jonathan's garments should be taken off and that
he should be clothed with purple: and they did so. And the
63 king made him sit by himself. | And he said to his princes:
Go out with him into the midst of the city and make procla-
mation that no man complain against him of any matter and
64 that no man trouble him for any manner of cause. | So when
his accusers saw his glory proclaimed and him clothed with
65 purple they all fled away. | And the king magnified him and
enrolled him among his chief friends and made him governor
66 and partaker of his dominion. | And Jonathan returned into
Jerusalem with peace and joy.

67 ***The Son of Demetrius Claims the Throne*** In the year
one hundred and sixty-five, Demetrius the son of Demetrius,
68 came from Crete into the land of his fathers. | And king Alex-
ander heard of it and was much troubled and returned to
69 Antioch. | And king Demetrius made Apollonius his general,
who was governor of Celesyria; and he gathered together a
great army and came to Jamnia, and he sent to Jonathan the
70 high priest, | saying: You alone stand against us and I am
laughed at and reproached, because you show your power
71 against us in the mountains. | Now therefore, if you trust in
your forces, come down to us into the plain, and there let us try
72 one another: for with me is the strength of war. | Ask and
learn who I am and the rest that help me, who also say that
your foot cannot stand before our face, for your fathers have
73 twice been put to flight in their own land. | And now how will
you be able to abide the horsemen and so great an army in the
plain, where there is no stone nor rock nor place to flee to?
74 Now when Jonathan heard the words of Apollonius he was
moved in his mind: and he chose ten thousand men and went
out of Jerusalem, and Simon his brother met him to help him.
75 And they pitched their tents near Joppe, but they shut him out
of the city: because a garrison of Apollonius was in Joppe, and
76 he laid siege to it. | And they that were in the city, being
77 afraid, opened the gates to him: so Jonathan took Joppe. | And
Apollonius heard of it, and he took three thousand horsemen
78 and a great army: | and he went to Azotus as one that was
making a journey, and immediately he went forth into the plain,

10, 67: *In the year one hundred and sixty-five:* 147 B.C.

because he had a great number of horsemen and he trusted in them. And Jonathan followed after him to Azotus, and they
79 joined battle. | And Apollonius left privately in the camp a
80 thousand horsemen behind them. | And Jonathan knew that there was an ambush behind him, and they surrounded his army and cast darts at the people from morning till evening.

81 ***Jonathan's Victory over Apollonius*** But the people stood still, as Jonathan had commanded them: and so their
82 horses were fatigued. | Then Simon drew forth his army and attacked the legion: for the horsemen were wearied, and they
83 were discomfited by him and fled. | And they that were scattered about the plain fled into Azotus and went into Beth-
84 dagon their idol's temple, there to save themselves. | But Jonathan set fire to Azotus and the cities that were round about it, and took the spoils of them and the temple of Dagon: and all
85 them that had fled into it, he burned with fire. | So they that were slain by the sword, with them that were burned, were
86 almost eight thousand men. | And Jonathan removed his army from thence and camped against Ascalon: and they went out of the city to meet him with great honor.
87 And Jonathan returned into Jerusalem with his people, hav-
88 ing many spoils. | And it came to pass, when Alexander the king heard these words, that he honored Jonathan yet more. |
89 And he sent him a buckle of gold, as the custom is, to be given to such as are of the royal blood. And he gave him Accaron and all the borders thereof in possession.

11

1 ***Ptolemee Invades Alexander's Kingdom*** And the king of Egypt gathered together an army, like the sand that lies upon the seashore, and many ships: and he sought to get the kingdom of Alexander by deceit and join it to his own kingdom.
2 | And he went out into Syria with peaceable words, and they opened to him the cities and met him. For king Alexander had ordered them to go forth to meet him, because he was his
3 father-in-law. | Now when Ptolemee entered into the cities he
4 put garrisons of soldiers in every city. | And when he came near to Azotus, they showed him the temple of Dagon that was burned with fire and Azotus and the suburbs thereof that were destroyed and the bodies that were cast abroad and the graves of them that were slain in the battle which they had made near
5 the way. | And they told the king that Jonathan had done these
6 things, to make him odious: but the king held his peace. | And

Jonathan came to meet the king at Joppe with glory, and they
7 saluted one another and they lodged there. | And Jonathan
went with the king as far as the river called Eleutherus: and he
returned into Jerusalem.
8 And king Ptolemee got the dominion of the cities by the sea-
side, even to Seleucia: and he devised evil designs against
9 Alexander. | And he sent ambassadors to Demetrius, saying:
Come, let us make a league between us and I will give you my
daughter whom Alexander has: and you shall reign in the
10 kingdom of your father. | For I repent that I have given him
11 my daughter because he has sought to kill me. | And he slan-
12 dered him, because he coveted his kingdom. | And he took
away his daughter and gave her to Demetrius and alienated
himself from Alexander: and his enmities were made manifest.
13 | And Ptolemee entered into Antioch and set two crowns upon
14 his head, that of Egypt and that of Asia. | Now king Alexander
was in Cilicia at that time: because they that were in those
15 places had rebelled. | And when Alexander heard of it he
came to give him battle, and king Ptolemee brought forth his
army and met him with a strong power and put him to flight. |
16 And Alexander fled into Arabia, there to be protected: and king
17 Ptolemee was exalted. | And Zabdiel the Arabian took off
18 Alexander's head and sent it to Ptolemee. | And king Ptolemee
died the third day after: and they that were in the strongholds
19 were destroyed by them that were within the camp. | And
Demetrius reigned in the hundred and sixty-seventh year.
20 In those days Jonathan gathered together them that were in
Judea, to take the castle that was in Jerusalem: and they made
21 many engines of war against it. | Then some wicked men that
hated their own nation went away to king Demetrius and told
22 him that Jonathan was besieging the castle. | And when he
heard it he was angry: and forthwith he came to Ptolemais and
wrote to Jonathan that he should not besiege the castle but
23 should come to him in haste and speak to him. | But when
Jonathan heard this he bade them besiege it still: and he chose
some of the ancients of Israel and of the priests and put himself
24 in danger. | And he took gold and silver and raiment, and
many other presents, and went to the king to Ptolemais: and he

11, 7: *Eleutherus:* north of Tripolis, Syria. For Jonathan to accompany the king was to gain prestige in the eyes of his subjects, besides paying respect to a powerful monarch.
11, 19: *Hundred and sixty-seventh year:* 145 B.C.

found favor in his sight. | And certain wicked men of his nation made complaints against him.

Demetrius Honors Jonathan But the king treated him as his predecessors had done before: and he exalted him in the sight of all his friends. | And he confirmed him in the high priesthood and all the honors he had before: and he made him the chief of his friends.

And Jonathan requested of the king that he would make Judea free from tribute, and the three governments and Samaria and the confines thereof: and he promised him three hundred talents. | And the king consented, and he wrote letters to Jonathan of all these things to this effect: | King Demetrius to his brother Jonathan and to the nation of the Jews, greeting. | We sent you here a copy of the letter which we have written to Lasthenes our parent, concerning you, that you might know it. | King Demetrius to Lasthenes his parent, greeting. | We have determined to do good to the nation of the Jews who are our friends and keep the things that are just with us, for their good will which they bear toward us. | We have ratified therefore unto them all the borders of Judea and the three cities, *Apherema,* Lydda and Ramatha, which are added to Judea, out of Samaria, and all their confines, to be set apart to all them who sacrifice in Jerusalem, instead of the payments which the king received of them every year, and for the fruits of the land and of the trees. | And as for other things that belonged to us of the tithes and of the tributes, from this time we discharge them of them; the saltpans also and the crowns that were presented to us. | We give all to them, and nothing hereof shall be revoked from this time forth and for ever. | Now therefore see that you make a copy of these things: and let it be given to Jonathan and set upon the holy mountain, in a conspicuous place.

And king Demetrius, seeing that the land was quiet before him and nothing resisted him, sent away all his forces, every man to his own place, except the foreign army which he had drawn together from the islands of the nations: so all the troops of his fathers hated him. | Now there was one Tryphon who had been of Alexander's party before. Seeing that all the army murmured against Demetrius, he went to Emalchuel the Arabian who had brought up Antiochus the son of Alexander. |

11, 31: *Lasthenes:* a Cretan relative (not "parent") who supported Demetrius.

40 And he pressed him much to deliver him to him that he might be king in his father's place: and he told him all that Demetrius had done and how his soldiers hated him. And he remained there many days.

41 And Jonathan sent to king Demetrius, desiring that he would cast out them that were in the castle in Jerusalem and those that were in the strongholds: because they fought against
42 Israel. | And Demetrius sent to Jonathan, saying: I will not only do this for you and for your people, but I will greatly honor you and your nation, when opportunity shall serve. |
43 Now therefore you shall do well if you send me men to help me: for all my army has gone from me.

44 ***Jonathan Assists Demetrius*** And Jonathan sent him three thousand valiant men to Antioch: and they came to the king,
45 and the king was very glad of their coming. | And they that were of the city assembled themselves together, to the number of a hundred and twenty thousand men, and would have killed
46 the king. | And the king fled into the palace, and they of the
47 city kept the passages of the city and began to fight. | And the king called the Jews to his assistance: and they came to him all at once, and they all dispersed themselves through the city. |
48 And they slew in that day a hundred thousand men and they set fire to the city and got many spoils that day and delivered
49 the king. | And they that were of the city saw that the Jews had got the city as they would; and they were discouraged in their mind and cried to the king, making supplication and
50 saying: | Grant us peace, and let the Jews cease from assaulting
51 us and the city. | And they threw down their arms and made peace, and the Jews were glorified in the sight of the king and in the sight of all that were in his realm and were renowned throughout the kingdom and returned to Jerusalem with many spoils.

52 So king Demetrius sat in the throne of his kingdom: and the
53 land was quiet before him. | And he falsified everything that he had said and alienated himself from Jonathan and did not reward him according to the benefits he had received from him
54 but gave him great trouble. | And after this, Tryphon returned, and with him Antiochus the young boy who was made
55 king, and put on the diadem. | And there assembled unto him all the hands which Demetrius had sent away, and they fought
56 against Demetrius, who turned his back and fled. | And Tryphon took the elephants and made himself master of Antioch.

57 ***Antiochus the Younger Favors Jonathan*** And young Antiochus wrote to Jonathan, saying: I confirm you in the high priesthood and I appoint you ruler over the four cities and to
58 be one of the king's friends. | And he sent him vessels of gold for his service, and he gave him leave to drink in gold and to
59 be clothed in purple and to wear a golden buckle. | And he made his brother Simon governor from the borders of Tyre even to the confines of Egypt.
60 Then Jonathan went forth and passed through the cities beyond the river: and all the forces of Syria gathered themselves to him to help him. And he came to Ascalon, and they
61 met him honorably out of the city. | And he went from there to Gaza, and they that were in Gaza shut him out: and he besieged it and burned all the suburbs round about and took
62 the spoils. | And the men of Gaza made supplication to Jonathan, and he gave them the right hand. And he took their sons for hostages and sent them to Jerusalem: and he went through
63 the country as far as Damascus. | And Jonathan heard that the generals of Demetrius had come treacherously to Cades, which is in Galilee, with a great army, purposing to remove
64 him from the affairs of the kingdom. | And he went against them, but left his brother Simon in the country.
65 And Simon encamped against Bethsura and assaulted it
66 many days and shut them up. | And they desired him to make peace, and he granted it them. And he cast them out from the
67 city and took it and placed a garrison in it. | And Jonathan and his army encamped by the water of Genesar: and before
68 it was light they were ready in the plain of Asor. | And behold the army of the strangers met him in the plain, and they laid an ambush for him in the mountains but he went out against
69 them. | And they that lay in ambush rose out of their places
70 and joined battle. | And all that were on Jonathan's side fled, and none was left of them but Mathathias the son of Absalom
71 and Judas the son of Calphi, chief captain of the army. | And Jonathan rent his garments and cast earth upon his head and
72 prayed. | And Jonathan turned again to them to battle: and he
73 put them to flight, and they fought. | And they of his part that fled saw *this* and they turned again to him; and they all with him pursued *the enemies* even to Cades to their own camp, and
74 they came even thither. | And there fell of the aliens in that day three thousand men: and Jonathan returned to Jerusalem.

11, 68: *Army of the strangers:* of the foreigners.

12

1 *Jonathan's League with Rome and Sparta* And Jonathan saw that the time served him. So he chose certain men
and sent them to Rome, to confirm and to renew the amity
2 with them. | And he sent letters to the Spartans and to other
3 places according to the same form. | And they went to Rome
and entered into the senate house and said: Jonathan the high
priest and the nation of the Jews have sent us to renew the
4 amity and alliance as it was before. | And they gave them
letters to their governors in every place, to conduct them into
the land of Juda with peace.

5 And this is a copy of the letters which Jonathan wrote to
6 the Spartans: | Jonathan the high priest, and the ancients of
the nation, and the priests and the rest of the people of the
7 Jews to the Spartans, their brethren, greeting. | There were
letters sent long ago to Onias the high priest from Arius who
reigned then among you, to signify that you are our brethren,
8 as the copy here underwritten specifies. | And Onias received
the ambassador with honor, and received the letters wherein
9 there was mention made of the alliance and amity. | We,
though we needed none of these things, having for our com-
10 fort the holy books that are in our hands, | chose rather to
send to you to renew the brotherhood and friendship, lest we
should become strangers to you altogether: for a long time has
11 passed since you sent to us. | We, therefore, at all times
without ceasing, both in our festivals and other days wherein
it is convenient, remember you in the sacrifices that we offer
and in our observances, as it is meet and becoming to remember
12.13 brethren. | And we rejoice at your glory. | But we have had
many troubles and wars on every side, and the kings that are
14 round about us, have fought against us. | But we would not be
troublesome to you, nor to the rest of our allies and friends in
15 these wars. | For we have had help from heaven and we have
16 been delivered, and our enemies are humbled. | We have chosen
therefore Numenius the son of Antiochus, and Antipater the
son of Jason, and have sent them to the Romans to renew with

12, 1: *Time served him:* good luck was on his side.

12, 2: *He sent letters . . . to other places:* see 15, 22-23, where the "other places" are enumerated.

12, 7: The references are to Onias I, the high priest, and to Arius I of Sparta.

12, 16: The renewal of the alliance with Rome was of no more help than the first one (8, 23-30), since the Romans never extended a helping hand to Judas Machabee.

17 them the former amity and alliance. | And we have commanded them to go also to you and to salute you and to deliver you our letters concerning the renewing of our brotherhood. |
18 And now you shall do well to give us an answer hereto.
19 And this is the copy of the letter which he had sent to Onias:
20 | Arius king of the Spartans to Onias the high priest, greeting. |
21 It is found in writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews, that they are brethren and that they are of the stock of Abraham.
22 | And now since this has come to our knowledge, you do well
23 to write to us of your prosperity. | And we also have written back to you: that our cattle, and our possessions are yours, and yours ours. We, therefore, have commanded that these things should be told you.

24 ***Jonathan Pursues the Forces of Demetrius*** Now Jonathan heard that the generals of Demetrius came again with a
25 greater army than before to fight against him. | So he went out from Jerusalem and met them in the land of Amath: for he
26 gave them no time to enter into his country. | And he sent spies into their camp, and they came back and brought him word
27 that they designed to come upon them in the night. | And when the sun was set, Jonathan commanded his men to watch and to be in arms all night long ready to fight: and he set sentinels
28 round about the camp. | And the enemies heard that Jonathan and his men were ready for battle, and they were struck with fear and dread in their heart: and they kindled fires in their
29 camp. | But Jonathan and they that were with him knew it not
30 till the morning, for they saw the lights burning. | And Jonathan pursued after them but overtook them not: for they had
31 passed the river Eleutherus. | And Jonathan turned upon the Arabians that are called Zabadeans, and he defeated them and
32 took the spoils of them. | And he went forward and came to
33 Damascus and passed through all that country. | Simon also went forth and came as far as Ascalon and the neighboring fortresses, and he turned aside to Joppe and took possession of
34 it, | (for he heard that they designed to deliver the hold to them that took part with Demetrius): and he put a garrison there to keep it.
35 And Jonathan came back and called together the ancients of the people: and he took a resolution with them to build for-
36 tresses in Judea, | and to build up walls in Jerusalem and raise a mount between the castle and the city, to separate it from

12, 20-23: See Introduction on the unauthenticity of this document.

the city: that so it might have no communication, and that they
37 might neither buy nor sell. | And they came together to build
up the city, for the wall that was upon the brook toward the
east was broken down; and he repaired that which is called
38 Caphetetha. | And Simon built Adiada in Sephela and fortified
it and set up gates and bars.
39 Now when Tryphon had conceived a design to make himself
king of Asia and to take the crown and to stretch out his hand
40 against king Antiochus, fearing lest Jonathan would not suffer
him but would fight against him: he sought to seize upon him
41 and to kill him. So he rose up and came to Bethsan. | And
Jonathan went out to meet him with forty thousand men chosen
for battle and came to Bethsan.

42 ***Tryphon Deceives Jonathan and Captures Him*** Now
when Tryphon saw that Jonathan came with a great army, he
43 dared not stretch forth his hand against him, | but received
him with honor and commended him to all his friends and gave
him presents; and he commanded his troops to obey him as
44 himself. | And he said to Jonathan: Why have you troubled all
45 the people, when we have no war? | Now therefore send them
back to their own houses and choose yourself a few men that
may be with you and come with me to Ptolemais, and I will de-
liver it to you, and the rest of the strongholds and the army and
all that have any charge. And I will return and go away, for this
46 is the cause of my coming. | And Jonathan believed him and
did as he said and sent away his army: and they departed into
47 the land of Juda. | But he kept with him three thousand men,
of whom he sent two thousand into Galilee, and one thousand
went with him.
48 Now as soon as Jonathan entered into Ptolemais, they of
Ptolemais shut the gates of the city and took him: and all them
49 that came in with him they slew with the sword. | Then
Tryphon sent an army and horsemen into Galilee and into the
50 great plain to destroy all Jonathan's company. | But they, when
they understood that Jonathan and all that were with him were
taken and slain, encouraged one another and went out ready for
51 battle. | Then they that had come after them, seeing that they
52 stood for their lives, returned back. | Whereupon, they all came

12, 37: *Caphetetha:* the part of the wall facing the Brook of Cedron (Kedron) and the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem.
12, 50: Everyone thinks that Jonathan was executed, but he was only imprisoned (13, 12).

peaceably into the land of Juda. And they bewailed Jonathan and them who had been with him, exceedingly: and Israel
53 mourned with great lamentation. | Then all the heathens that were round about them sought to destroy them. For they said: |
54 They have no prince nor any to help them. Now therefore let us make war upon them and take away the memory of them from among men.

13

1 ***Simon Is Chosen in Place of His Brother*** Now Simon heard that Tryphon was gathering a very great army, to invade
2 the land of Juda and to destroy it. | And seeing that the people were in dread and in fear, he went up to Jerusalem and assem-
3 bled the people, | and exhorted them, saying: You know what great battles I and my brethren and the house of my father have fought for the laws and the sanctuary and the distresses
4 that we have seen. | By reason whereof all my brethren have
5 lost their lives for Israel's sake and I am left alone. | And now far be it from me to spare my life in any time of trouble: for I
6 am not better than my brethren. | I will avenge then my nation and the sanctuary and our children and wives: for all the heathens are gathered together to destroy us out of mere malice.
7 | And the spirit of the people was enkindled as soon as they
8 heard these words. | And they answered with a loud voice, saying: You are our leader in the place of Judas and Jonathan
9 your brother. | Fight you our battles: and we will do whatsoever you shall say to us.
10 So gathering together all the men of war, he made haste to finish all the walls of Jerusalem: and he fortified it round about.
11 | And he sent Jonathan the son of Absalom, and with him a new army, into Joppe: and he cast out them that were in it and
12 himself remained there. | And Tryphon removed from Ptolemais with a great army, to invade the land of Juda: and Jona-
13 than was with him in custody. | But Simon pitched in Addus,
14 across the plain. | And when Tryphon understood that Simon had risen up in the place of his brother Jonathan and that he meant to join battle with him he sent messengers to him,
15 | saying: We have detained your brother Jonathan for the money that he owed in the king's account by reason of the
16 affairs which he had the management of. | But now send a hundred talents of silver, and his two sons for hostages, that when he is set at liberty he may not revolt from us, and we will
17 release him. | Now Simon knew that he spoke deceitfully to him. Nevertheless he ordered the money and the children to

be sent, lest he should bring upon himself a great hatred of the
18 people of Israel, who might have said: | Because he sent not the
19 money and the children, therefore is Jonathan lost. | So he sent
the children and the hundred talents: and he lied and did not
let Jonathan go.
20 And after this Tryphon entered within the country to destroy
it, and they went about by the way that leads to Ador: and
Simon and his army marched to all places wherever they went. |
21 And they that were in the castle sent messengers to Tryphon
that he should make haste to come through the desert and send
22 them victuals. | And Tryphon made ready all his horsemen to
come that night: but there fell a very great snow, and he came
not into the country of Galaad.

23 ***Tryphon Slays Jonathan*** And when he approached to
24 Bascama, he slew Jonathan and his sons there. | And Tryphon
25 returned and went into his own country. | And Simon sent and
took the bones of Jonathan his brother and buried them in
26 Modin, in the city of his fathers. | And all Israel bewailed him
with great lamentation: and they mourned for him many days.
27 | And Simon built over the sepulcher of his father and of his
brethren a building lofty to the sight, of polished stone behind
28 and before. | And he set up seven pyramids one against an-
other for his father and his mother and his four brethren. |
29 And round about these he set great pillars, and upon the pillars
arms for a perpetual memory; and by the arms ships carved,
30 which might be seen by all that sailed on the sea. | This is the
sepulcher he made in Modin that may be seen even unto this
day.
31 But Tryphon when he was upon a journey with the young
32 king Antiochus treacherously slew him. | And he reigned in
his place and put on the crown of Asia and brought great evils
upon the land.
33 And Simon built up the strongholds of Judea, fortifying
them with high towers and great walls and gates and bars: and
34 he stored up victuals in the fortresses. | And Simon chose men
and sent to king Demetrius, to the end that he should grant an
immunity to the land: for all that Tryphon did was to spoil. |
35 And king Demetrius, in answer to this request, wrote a letter
36 in this manner: | King Demetrius to Simon, the high priest and
friend of kings, and to the ancients and to the nation of the
37 Jews, greeting. | The golden crown and the palm which you
sent we have received: and we are ready to make a firm peace
with you and to write to the king's chief officers to release you

38 the things that we have released. | For all that we have decreed
in your favor shall stand in force. The strongholds that you
39 have built shall be your own. | And as for any oversight or
fault committed unto this day, we forgive it and the crown
which you owed: and if any other thing were taxed in Jeru-
40 salem, now let it not be taxed. | And if any of you be fit to be
enrolled among ours, let them be enrolled: and let there be
peace between us.
41 In the year one hundred and seventy the yoke of the Gentiles
42 was taken off from Israel. | And the people of Israel began to
write in the instruments and public records: the first year under
Simon the high priest, the great captain and prince of the Jews.

43 ***Simon Takes Gaza and the Castle of Jerusalem*** In
those days Simon besieged Gaza and camped round about it; and
he made engines, and set them to the city, and he struck one
44 tower, and took it. | And they that were within the engine
leaped into the city: and there was a great uproar in the city. |
45 And they that were in the city went up with their wives and chil-
dren upon the wall, with their garments rent, and they cried with
46 a loud voice, beseeching Simon to grant them peace. | And they
said: Deal not with us according to our evil deeds, but accord-
47 ing to your mercy. | And Simon being moved did not destroy
them: but yet he cast them out of the city and cleansed the
houses wherein there had been idols, and then he entered into it
48 with hymns, blessing the Lord. | And having cast out of it all
uncleanness, he placed in it men that should observe the law:
and he fortified it and made it his habitation.
49 But they that were in the castle of Jerusalem were hindered
from going out and coming into the country and from buying
and selling, and they were straitened with hunger, and many of
50 them perished through famine. | And they cried to Simon for
peace, and he granted it to them: and he cast them out from
51 the castle and cleansed it from uncleanness. | And they entered
into it the three and twentieth day of the second month, in the
year one hundred and seventy-one, with thanksgiving and
branches of palm trees and harps and cymbals, and psalteries
and hymns and canticles: because the great enemy was de-

13, 41: *In the year one hundred and seventy:* 142 B.C.

13, 42: *To write in the instruments:* to write into the documents. Archeologists have found copper coins of Simon, supporting the text that a new chronological era began with him.

13, 43: *Gaza:* read Gezer.

13, 51: They entered the castle at the beginning of June, 141 B.C.

52 stroyed out of Israel. | And he ordained that these days should
53 be kept every year with gladness. | And he fortified the mountain of the temple that was near the castle, and he dwelt there,
54 himself and they that were with him. | And Simon saw that John his son was a valiant man for war, and he made him captain of all the forces; and he dwelt in Gazara.

14

1 ***Judea Flourishes under Simon's Government*** In the year one hundred and seventy-two, king Demetrius assembled his army and went into Media to get him succors to fight against
2 Tryphon. | And Arsaces, the king of Persia and Media, heard that Demetrius had entered within his borders: and he sent one of his princes to take him alive and bring him to him. |
3 And he went and defeated the army of Demetrius; and took him and brought him to Arsaces; and he put him into custody.
4 And all the land of Juda was at rest all the days of Simon. And he sought the good of his nation, and his power and his
5 glory pleased them well all *his* days. | And with all his glory he took Joppe for a haven and made an entrance to the isles of
6 the sea. | And he enlarged the bounds of his nation and made
7 himself master of the country. | And he gathered together a great number of captives and had the dominion of Gazara and of Bethsura and of the castle, and took away all uncleanness
8 out of it: and there was none that resisted him. | And every man tilled his land with peace: and the land of Juda yielded
9 her increase, and the trees of the fields their fruit. | The ancient men sat all in the streets and treated together of the good things of the land, and the young men put on them glory and the
10 robes of war. | And he provided victuals for the cities, and he appointed that they should be furnished with ammunition, so that the fame of his glory was renowned even to the end of the
11 earth. | He made peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with
12 great joy. | And every man sat under his vine and under his
13 fig tree: and there was none to make them afraid. | There was none left in the land to fight against them. Kings were dis-
14 comfited in those days. | And he strengthened all those of his people that were brought low and he sought the law and took

14, 1: In 140 B.C.
14, 2: *Arsaces:* all the kings of Parthia assumed this name of the founder of their kingdom. It is comparable to Caesar of the Romans and Ptolemy of the Egyptians. The Arsaces of this text is Mithridates I.
14, 9: The young men put on rich robes and armor.
14, 12: *Vine . . . fig tree:* in the Bible, the figure of prosperity

15 away every unjust and wicked man. | He glorified the sanctuary
and multiplied the vessels of the holy places.

16 ***Renewal of the Alliance with Sparta*** And it was heard
at Rome and as far as Sparta that Jonathan was dead: and
17 they were very sorry. | But when they heard that Simon his
brother was made high priest in his place and was possessed of
18 all the country and the cities therein, | they wrote to him in
tables of brass, to renew the friendship and alliance which they
19 had made with Judas and with Jonathan his brethren. | And
they were read before the assembly in Jerusalem. And this is
20 the copy of the letters that the Spartans sent. | The princes and
the cities of the Spartans to Simon the high priest and to the
ancients and the priests and the rest of the people of the Jews
21 their brethren, greeting. | The ambassadors that were sent to
our people have told us of your glory and honor and joy, and
22 we rejoiced at their coming. | And we registered what was said
by them in the councils of the people in this manner: Numenius
the son of Antiochus and Antipater the son of Jason, ambassa-
dors of the Jews, came to us to renew the former friendship
23 with us. | And it pleased the people to receive the men honora-
bly and to put a copy of their words in the public records, to
be a memorial to the people of the Spartans. And we have
written a copy of them to Simon the high priest.

24 ***The League with Rome also Renewed*** And after this
Simon sent Numenius to Rome, with a great shield of gold, of
the weight of a thousand pounds, to confirm the league with
25 them. And when the people of Rome had heard | these words,
they said: What thanks shall we give to Simon and his sons? |
26 For he has restored his brethren and has driven away in fight
the enemies of Israel from them: and they decreed him liberty
and registered it in tables of brass and set it upon pillars in
27 mount Sion. | And this is a copy of the writing: The eighteenth
day of the month Elul, in the year one hundred and seventy-
two, being the third year under Simon the high priest at
28 Asaramel, | in a great assembly of the priests and of the people,
and the princes of the nation, and the ancients of the country,
these things were notified: As often as there have been wars
29 in our country, | Simon, the son of Mathathias of the children
of Jarib, and his brethren have put themselves in danger and
resisted the enemies of their nation, for the maintenance of

14, 27: September, 140 B.C.

their holy places and the law, and have raised their nation to
30 great glory. | And Jonathan gathered together his nation and
was made their high priest, and he was laid to his people. |
31 And their enemies desired to tread down and destroy their
country and to stretch forth their hands against their holy
32 places. | Then Simon resisted and fought for his nation and
laid out much of his money and armed the valiant men of his
33 nation and gave them wages; | and he fortified the cities of
Judea, and Bethsura that lies in the borders of Judea, where
the armor of the enemies was before; and he placed there a
34 garrison of Jews: | and he fortified Joppe which lies by the sea
and Gazara, which borders upon Azotus, wherein the enemies
dwelt before, and he placed Jews here and furnished them with
all the things convenient for their reparation.
35 And the people seeing the acts of Simon and to what glory
he meant to bring his nation, made him their prince and high
priest, because he had done all these things, and for the justice
and faith which he kept to his nation, and for that he sought
36 by all means to advance his people. | And in his days things
prospered in his hands, so that the heathens were taken away
out of their country, and they also that were in the city of David
in Jerusalem in the castle, out of which they issued forth and
profaned all places round about the sanctuary and did much
37 evil to its purity. | And he placed therein Jews for the defense
of the country and of the city, and he raised up the walls of
Jerusalem.

38 ***Demetrius Confirms Simon as High Priest*** And king
39 Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood. | According
to these things he made him his friend and glorified him with
40 great glory, | for he had heard that the Romans had called the
Jews their friends and confederates and brethren and that they
41 had received Simon's ambassadors with honor. | And that the
Jews and their priests had consented that he should be their
prince and high priest for ever, till there should arise a faithful
42 prophet; | and that he should be chief over them and that he
should have the charge of the sanctuary and that he should
appoint rulers over their works and over the country and over
43 the armor and over the strongholds. | And that he should have
care of the holy places, and that he should be obeyed by all, and
that all the writings in the country should be made in his name,
44 and that he should be clothed with purple and gold. | And
that it should not be lawful for any of the people or of the
priests to disannul any of these things or to gainsay his words

or to call together an assembly in the country without him, or
45 to be clothed with purple or to wear a buckle of gold. | And
whosoever shall do otherwise or shall make void any of these
things shall be punished.
46 And it pleased all the people to establish Simon and to do
47 according to these words. | And Simon accepted thereof and
was well pleased to execute the office of the high priesthood,
and to be captain and prince of the nation of the Jews and of
48 the priests and to be chief over all. | And they commanded that
this writing should be put in tables of brass and that they
should be set up within the compass of the sanctuary, in a
49 conspicuous place, | and that a copy thereof should be put in
the treasury, that Simon and his sons may have it.

15

1 ***The Letter of Antiochus to Simon*** And king Antiochus
the son of Demetrius sent letters from the isles of the sea to
Simon the priest and prince of the nation of the Jews and to
2 all the people. | And the contents were these: King Antiochus
to Simon the high priest and to the nation of the Jews, greeting.
3 | Forasmuch as certain pestilent men have usurped the king-
dom of our fathers, and my purpose is to challenge the king-
dom and to restore it to its former estate, I have chosen a great
4 army and have built ships of war. | And I design to go through
the country that I may take revenge of them that have destroyed
our country and that have made many cities desolate in my
5 realm. | Now therefore I confirm unto you all the oblations
which all the kings before me remitted to you and whatever
6 other gifts they remitted to you. | And I give you leave to coin
7 your own money in your country. | And let Jerusalem be holy
and free: and all the armor that has been made, and the for-
tresses which you have built and which you keep in your hands,
8 let them remain to you. | And all that is due to the king and
what should be the king's hereafter, from this present and for
9 ever, is forgiven you. | And when we shall have recovered
our kingdom, we will glorify you and your nation and temple
with great glory, so that your glory shall be made manifest in
all the earth.
10 In the year one hundred and seventy-four Antiochus entered

15, 1: Antiochus VII, son of Demetrius I, and the brother of Demetrius II, who was being held by the Parthians (14, 3), challenged the usurper, Tryphon, for the throne. *Isles of the sea:* the island of Rhodes.

15, 10: In 139-138 B.C. Antiochus lands on Syrian soil.

into the land of his fathers, and all the forces assembled to him,
11 so that few were left with Tryphon. | And king Antiochus pur-
sued after him, and he fled along by the seacoast and came to
12 Dora: for he perceived that evils were gathered together upon
13 him, and his troops had forsaken him. | And Antiochus camped
above Dora with a hundred and twenty thousand men of war
14 and eight thousand horsemen. | And he invested the city, and
the ships drew near by sea: and they annoyed the city by land
and by sea and suffered none to come in or to go out.

15 ***The Letter of the Romans*** And Numenius, and they that
had been with him, came from the city of Rome, having letters
written to the kings and countries, the contents whereof were
16 these: | Lucius, the consul of the Romans, to king Ptolemee,
17 greeting. | The ambassadors of the Jews, our friends, came to
us, to renew the former friendship and alliance, being sent from
18 Simon the high priest and the people of the Jews. | And they
19 brought also a shield of gold of a thousand pounds. | It has
seemed good therefore to us to write to the kings and countries,
that they should do them no harm nor fight against them, their
cities or countries, and that they should give no aid to them
20 that fight against them. | And it has seemed good to us to re-
21 ceive the shield of them. | If therefore any pestilent men have
fled out of their country to you, deliver them to Simon the high
priest, that he may punish them according to their law.
22 These same things were written to king Demetrius and to
23 Attalus and to Ariarathes and to Arsaces, | and to all the
countries; and to Lampsacus and to the Spartans and to Delus
and Myndus and Sicyon and Caria and Samus and Pamphylia
and Lycia and Alicarnassus and Cos and Side and Aradus and
Rhodes and Phaselis and Gortyna and Gnidus and Cyprus
24 and Cyrene. | And they wrote a copy thereof to Simon the high
priest and to the people of the Jews.
25 But king Antiochus moved his camp to Dora the second time,
assaulting it continually and making engines: and he shut up
26 Tryphon, that he could not go out. | And Simon sent to him

15, 16: *Lucius:* most probably Lucius Calpurnius Piso, who was consul in 139 B.C. The king was Ptolemy II, Euergetes.

15, 17-18: Reference to 14, 24.

15, 22: *These same things were written to king Demetrius:* the Jewish ambassador left Rome before the Parthians captured Demetrius (14, 3). The others are: Attalus II, king of Pergamum; Ariarathes V of Cappadocia; and Arsaces, see 14, 2 n.

15, 26: *And Simon sent to him:* to Antiochus.

two thousand chosen men to aid him, silver also and gold and
27 abundance of furniture. | And he would not receive them but
broke all the covenant that he had made with him before and
alienated himself from him.

28 ***Antiochus Hostile to Simon*** And he sent to him Athenobius, one of his friends, to treat with him, saying: You hold
Joppe and Gazara, and the castle that is in Jerusalem, which
29 are cities of my kingdom. | Their borders you have wasted, and
you have made great havoc in the land and have got the do-
30 minion of many places in my kingdom. | Now therefore deliver
up the cities that you have taken and the tributes of the places
whereof you have got the dominion outside the borders of
31 Judea. | But if not, give me for them five hundred talents of
silver, and for the havoc that you have made and the tributes
of the cities, other five hundred talents: or else we will come
32 and fight against you. | So Athenobius the king's friend came
to Jerusalem and saw the glory of Simon and his magnificence
in gold and silver and his great equipage; and he was astonished
and told him the king's words.
33 And Simon answered him, and said to him: We have neither
taken other men's land, neither do we hold that which is other
men's, but the inheritance of our fathers, which was for some
34 time unjustly possessed by our enemies. | But we having op-
35 portunity claim the inheritance of our fathers. | And as to your
complaints concerning Joppe and Gazara, they did great harm
to the people and to our country, *yet* for these we will give a
hundred talents. And Athenobius answered him not a word |
36 but returning in a rage to the king, made report to him of these
words, and of the glory of Simon and of all that he had seen.
And the king was exceeding angry.
37.38 And Tryphon fled away by ship to Orthosias. | And the
king appointed Cendebeus captain of the seacoast and gave
39 him an army of footmen and horsemen. | And he commanded
him to march with his army toward Judea; and he commanded
him to build up Gedor and to fortify the gates of the city and
to war against the people. But the king himself pursued after
40 Tryphon. | And Cendebeus came to Jamnia and began to provoke the people and to ravage Judea and to take the people

15, 27: After Antiochus blockaded Tryphon (v. 25), he no longer needed Simon's support. This confidence emboldened Antiochus to ask for all "reparations," which Simon refuses.

15, 37: *Orthosias:* a city north of Tripolis on the coast of modern Lebanon. Tryphon committed suicide.

41 prisoners and to kill them, and to build Gedor. | And he placed there horsemen and an army that they might issue forth and make incursions upon the ways of Judea, as the king had commanded him.

16

1 ***Simon's Sons Defeat the Enemy*** Then John came up from Gazara and told Simon his father what Cendebeus had
2 done against their people. | And Simon called his two eldest sons, Judas and John, and said to them: I and my brethren and my father's house have fought against the enemies of Israel from your youth even to this day. And things have prospered so well in our hands that we have delivered Israel oftentimes. |
3 And now I am old, but be you instead of me and my brethren. And go out and fight for our nation: and the help from heaven be with you.
4 Then he chose out of the country twenty thousand fighting men and horsemen; and they went forth against Cendebeus,
5 and they rested in Modin. | And they arose in the morning and went into the plain: and behold a very great army of footmen and horsemen came against them, and there was a running
6 river between them. | And he and his people pitched their camp over against them. And he saw that the people were afraid to go over the river, so he went over first: then the men seeing
7 him passed over after him. | And he divided the people and set the horsemen in the midst of the footmen; but the horsemen of
8 the enemies were very numerous. | And they sounded the holy trumpets, and Cendebeus and his army were put to flight: and there fell many of them wounded, and the rest fled into the
9 stronghold. | At that time Judas, John's brother, was wounded: but John pursued after them, till he came to Cedron, which he
10 had built. | And they fled even to the towers that were in the fields of Azotus, and he burned them with fire. And there fell of them two thousand men: and he returned into Judea in peace.
11 Now Ptolemee the son of Abobus was appointed captain in the plain of Jericho; and he had abundance of silver and gold, |
12.13 for he was son-in-law of the high priest. | And his heart was lifted up and he designed to make himself master of the country: and he purposed treachery against Simon, and his sons, to
14 destroy them. | Now Simon, as he was going through the cities

16, 4: *Horsemen:* this is the first time we are told that the Jews used cavalry.

16, 14: January-February, 134 B.C.

that were in the country of Judea and taking care for the good ordering of them, went down to Jericho, he and Mathathias and Judas his sons, in the year one hundred and seventy-seven, the eleventh month, the same is the month Sabath.

15 ***Simon and Two of His Sons Are Slain*** And the son of Abobus received them deceitfully into a little fortress that is called Doch, which he had built, and he made them a great
16 feast and hid men there. | And when Simon and his sons had drunken plentifully, Ptolemee and his men rose up and took their weapons and entered into the banqueting place and slew him
17 and his two sons and some of his servants. | And he committed a great treachery in Israel and rendered evil for good. |
18 And Ptolemee wrote these things, and sent to the king that he should send him an army to aid him, and he would deliver him
19 the country and their cities and tributes. | And he sent others to Gazara to kill John. And to the tribunes he sent letters to come to him, and that he would give them silver and gold and
20 gifts. | And he sent others to take Jerusalem and the mountain
21 of the temple. | Now one running before told John in Gazara that his father and his brethren were slain and that Ptolemee
22 had sent men to kill him also. | And when he heard it he was exceedingly afraid; and he apprehended the men that came to kill him and he put them to death: for he knew that they sought to kill him.

23 And as concerning the rest of the acts of John and his wars and the worthy deeds which he bravely achieved, and the building of the walls which he made and the things that he did: |
24 behold these are written in the book of the days of his priesthood, from the time that he was made high priest after his father.

16, 18: Ptolemy betrayed his country to king Antiochus.

16, 19: *To kill John:* see v. 21.

16, 24: *The book of the days of his priesthood:* this may not be a real book, but the author's way of imitating the manner of recording the end of each reign in the books of Kings. *He was made high priest after his father:* this is the famous John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.), who was to continue the war of independence.

THE SECOND BOOK OF MACHABEES

INTRODUCTION

Sometime after 124 B.C., an anonymous author, perhaps in Alexandria, Egypt, wrote the Second Book of Machabees in Greek. The work is an abridgment of a five volume history (2, 24), also written in Greek by Jason of Cyrene, Libya. The small parts which the unknown inspired author wrote himself are too difficult to discern from the work of Jason. The latter used oral sources and seven letters.

Chapters 1—2 of this book contain two letters from Palestinian Jews to Egyptian Jews, and the author's preface. The rest of the book covers fifteen years of the Machabean revolt. It corresponds to the first seven chapters in the First Book of Machabees. This second book is often classified as "pathetic history," a popular literary form in the Greek world of its day. The work bears the stamp of an orator who appeals to what is dramatic and what edifies. The oratorical historian inflates numbers, and the Jews never seem to suffer a casualty. The author transforms the then current Greek literary device of the apparition of gods to help warriors in battle into the celestial apparition. See 2, 22 n. In spite of the idealization of history, the book contains true history even though it is not as historical as the First Book of Machabees.

Besides edifying his readers the author most probably wanted to divert the worship of the Egyptian Jews from the temple of Leontopolis, Egypt, to the temple of Jerusalem. The religious tone is far more pronounced than in the First Book of Machabees. A loving God constantly intervenes in history. Moreover, important dogmatic truths are taught, such as the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice on the part of the living for the faithful departed, the intercession of the saints, and the resurrection of the dead. Small wonder that the Roman Liturgy uses the Second Book of Machabees more extensively than the first one.

Main divisions of the Second Book of Machabees are:

1. Two Letters to the Egyptian Jews, and the Author's Preface, 1—2
2. Persecution and Revolt under Judas Machabee, 3, 1—10, 9
3. The Battles of Judas Machabee, 10, 10—15, 40

1

1 ***First Letter from Jerusalem to the Jews in Egypt*** To the brethren, the Jews that are throughout Egypt, the brethren,

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1, 1—2, 19: The traditional opinion is still supported by the majority that there are two, not one or three, letters in this section, namely: the first letter in 1, 1-9 and the second in 1, 10—2, 19.

1, 1-5: These verses form the Epistle of the votive Mass for peace.

1, 1: *The Jews are throughout Egypt:* successive waves of Jews emigrated to Egypt, especially after Nabuchodonosor's capture of Jeru-

the Jews that are in Jerusalem and in the land of Judea, send
1 2 health and good peace. | May God be gracious to you and remember his covenant that he made with Abraham and Isaac
1 3 and Jacob, his faithful servants, | and give you all a heart to worship him and to do his will with a great heart and a willing
1 4 mind. | May he open your heart in his law and in his com-
1 5 mandments and send you peace. | May he hear your prayers and be reconciled unto you and never forsake you in time of
6,7 evil. | And now here we are praying for you. | When Demetrius reigned, in the year one hundred and sixty-nine, we Jews wrote to you in the trouble and violence that came upon us in those years, after Jason withdrew himself from the holy
1 8 land and from the kingdom. | They burned the gate and shed innocent blood. Then we prayed to the Lord and were heard, and we offered sacrifices and fine flour, and lighted the lamps
1 9 and set forth the loaves. | And now celebrate you the days of Scenopegia in the month of Casleu.

10 ***The Second Letter*** In the year one hundred and eighty-eight, the people that is at Jerusalem and in Judea, and the senate, and Judas, to Aristobolus, the preceptor of king Ptolemee, who is of the stock of the anointed priests, and to the

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salem in 587 B.C., and after Alexander's (the Great) conquests in the fourth century B.C. Besides Alexandria, which was the most famous colony of Jews in Egypt, there were other Jewish colonies, both military, in Elephantine and Leontopolis. At the time of the Machabees, the temple in Elephantine had long ceased to exist, but the temple at Leontopolis was quite active. About 170 B.C. the son of the high priest of Jerusalem, Onias IV, built the temple at Leontopolis, about eighteen miles northeast of Cairo.

1, 7: This is a reference to a letter sent during the reign of Demetrius II, king of Syria. Jason was the puppet-high priest of the Syrian king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. See 4, 7-13.

1, 8: *They burned the gate:* this alludes to 1 Mc 4, 38 where the same expression signifies the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. The rest of the verse alludes to the temple's reconsecration in 1 Mc 4, 50-53.

1, 9: The purpose of the letter is to invite the Egyptian Jews to commemorate the purification of the temple by Judas Machabee.

1, 10—2, 19: The second letter. See 1, 1—2, 19 n.

1, 10: *In the year one hundred and eighty-eight:* in 124 B.C. *The senate, and Judas:* the senders of the letter are the ruling body of the elders and Judas Machabee. *Aristobolus:* the writer of an allegorical interpretation of the Pentateuch dedicated to Ptolemy VI, Philometor. Aristobolus was a relative of Onias IV, the high priest and builder of the temple at Leontopolis. Since Aristobolus enjoyed so much prestige, the Jews in the homeland wrote to him to be certain of reaching the Egyptian Jews.

11 Jews that are in Egypt, health and welfare. | Having been de-
livered by God out of great dangers, we give him great thanks
12 forasmuch as we have been in war with such a king. | For he
made numbers of men swarm out of Persia that have fought
13 against us and the holy city: for when the leader himself
was in Persia, and with him a very great army, he fell in the
temple of Nanea, being deceived by the counsel of the priests of
14 Nanea. | For Antiochus with his friends came to the place, as
though he would marry her, and that he might receive great
15 sums of money under the title of a dowry. | And when the
priests of Nanea had set it forth, and he with a small company
had entered into the compass of the temple, they shut the tem-
16 ple | when Antiochus had come in. And, opening a secret en-
trance of the temple, they cast stones and slew the leader and
them that were with him and hewed them in pieces, and cut
17 ting off their heads they threw them forth. | Blessed be God in
18 all things, who has delivered up the wicked. | Therefore,
whereas we purpose to keep the purification of the temple on
the five and twentieth day of the month of Casleu, we thought
it necessary to signify it to you: that you also may keep the day
of Scenopegia and the day of the fire that was given when
Nehemias offered sacrifice, after the temple and the altar were
19 built. | For when our fathers were led into Persia, the priests
that then were worshipers of God took privately the fire from
the altar and hid it in a valley where there was a deep pit
without water: and there they kept it safe, so that the place
20 was unknown to all men. | But when many years had passed

1, 11: The Jews were victorious over the king, who is called Antiochus in v. 14.

1, 12: Read instead: For he (God) drove away those that fought against us and the holy city (Jerusalem).

1, 13-16: The author does not intend to separate fact from fiction in the popular legend of his day on the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. Moreover, most commentators say it is the death of the same Antiochus Epiphanes, but in different versions in 9, 1-29 and 1 Mc 6, 1-14. For another account of his death, see Dn 11, 45 n.

1, 17: The sacred author interprets the king's death as a punishment from God as the account in 9, 1-29 clearly shows.

1, 18-33: The purpose of the letter is the same as that of the first letter (see 1, 9 n), namely, to commemorate the purification of the temple and to join to this anniversary, as modern Jews still do, the remembrances of the "miraculous" recovery of the sacred fire. According to Lv 6, 5-6, the fire must never be extinguished. The reason for this anecdote may have been to show that the Jerusalem temple was superior to that of Leontopolis. See 1 Mc 4, 59 n for the Talmud's version of the "miracle."

1, 19: *Persia:* Babylonia is here called Persia.

and it pleased God that Nehemias should be sent by the king of Persia, he sent some of the posterity of those priests that had hid it, to seek for the fire: and as they told us, they found
21 no fire, but thick water. | Then he bade them draw it up and bring it to him; and the priest Nehemias commanded the sacrifices that were laid on to be sprinkled with the same water,
22 both the wood, and the things that were laid upon it. | And when this was done and the time came that the sun shone out, which before was in a cloud, there was a great fire kindled, so
23 that all wondered. | And all the priests made prayer while the sacrifice was consuming, Jonathan beginning and the rest answering.

24 ***The Prayer of Nehemias*** And the prayer of Nehemias was after this manner: O Lord God, Creator of all things, dreadful and strong, just and merciful, who alone are the good
25 king, | who alone are gracious, who alone are just and almighty and eternal, who delivered Israel from all evil, who chose the
26 fathers and sanctified them: | receive the sacrifice for all your people Israel, and preserve your own portion, and sanctify it. |
27 Gather together our scattered people: deliver them that are slaves to the Gentiles, and look upon them that are despised and abhorred so that the Gentiles may know that you are our
28 God. | Punish them that oppress us and that treat us in-
29 juriously with pride. | Establish your people in your holy place, as Moses has spoken.
30 And the priests sang hymns till the sacrifice was consumed. |
31 And when the sacrifice was consumed, Nehemias commanded the water that was left to be poured out upon the great stones. |
32 Which being done, there was kindled a flame from them: but
33 it was consumed by the light that shone from the altar. | And when this matter became public, it was told to the king of Persia that, in the place where the priests that were led away had hidden the fire, there appeared water with which Nehemias
34 and they that were with him had purified the sacrifices. | And the king, considering and diligently examining the matter, made
35 a temple for it that he might prove what had happened. | And when he had proved it, he gave the priests many goods and divers presents and he took and distributed them to them with
36 his own hand. | And Nehemias called this place Nephthar, which is interpreted purification. But many call it Nephi.

1, 34: *A temple:* an enclosure.

2

1 ***Jeremias Hides the Ark*** Now it is found in the descriptions of Jeremias the prophet that he commanded them that went into captivity to take the fire, as it has been signified, and how he gave charge to them that were carried away into cap-
2 tivity. | And how he gave them the law that they should not forget the commandments of the Lord and that they should not err in their minds, seeing the idols of gold and silver and the
3 ornaments of them. | And with other such like speeches he exhorted them that they would not remove the law from their
4 heart. | It was also contained in the same writing, how the prophet, being warned by God, commanded that the tabernacle and the ark should accompany him, till he came forth to the mountain where Moses went up and saw the inheritance of God.
5 | And when Jeremias came there he found a hollow cave, and he carried into it the tabernacle and the ark and the altar of in-
6 cense and so stopped the door. | Then some of them that followed him came up to mark the place; but they could not find
7 it. | And when Jeremias perceived it, he blamed them, saying: The place shall be unknown till God gathers together the con-
8 gregation of the people and shows mercy. | And then the Lord will show these things, and the majesty of the Lord shall appear and there shall be a cloud, as it was also shown to Moses, and he showed it when Solomon prayed that the place might be
9 sanctified to the great God. | For he treated wisdom in a magnificent manner: and, like a wise man, he offered the sacrifice
10 of the dedication and of the finishing of the temple. | And as Moses prayed to the Lord and fire came down from heaven and consumed the holocaust: so Solomon also prayed and fire
11 came down from heaven and consumed the holocaust. | And Moses said: Because the sin offering was not eaten, it was con-
12 sumed. | So Solomon also celebrated the dedication eight days.
13 And these same things were set down in the memoirs and commentaries of Nehemias: and how he made a library and gathered together out of the countries the books both of the prophets and of David and the epistles of the kings and con-

2, 1-12: The purpose of the sacred writer in using this apocryphal story, which contains many historical anachronisms, is probably to assert the continuity of the true cult from Moses' tabernacle-tent down to Solomon's temple and on to the temple purified by Judas Machabee.

2, 1: *Descriptions:* memoirs now lost.

2, 13-14: Judas' purification of the temple included the reassembling of the temple library left by Nehemias and his successors.

cerning the holy gifts. | And in like manner Judas also gathered together all such things as were lost by the war we had; and they are in our possession. | Wherefore if you want these things, send some that may fetch them to you. | As we are then about to celebrate the purification, we have written unto you: and you shall do well, if you keep the same days. | And we hope that God who has delivered his people and has rendered to all the inheritance and the kingdom and the priesthood and the sanctuary, | as he promised in the law, will shortly have mercy upon us and will gather us together from every land under heaven into the holy place: | for he has delivered us out of great perils and has cleansed the place. | Now as concerning Judas Machabeus and his brethren and the purification of the great temple and the dedication of the altar, | as also the wars against Antiochus the Illustrious and his son Eupator, | and the manifestations that came from heaven to them that behaved themselves manfully on the behalf of the Jews, so that, being but a few, they made themselves masters of the whole country and put to flight the barbarous multitude: | and recovered again the most renowned temple in all the world and delivered the city and restored the laws that were abolished, the Lord with all clemency showing mercy to them.

The Author's Preface And all such things as have been comprised in five books by Jason of Cyrene, we have attempted to abridge in one book. | For, considering the multitude of books, and the difficulty that they find who desire to undertake the narrations of histories, because of the multitude of the matter, | we have taken care for those indeed who are willing to read that it might be a pleasure of mind: and for the studious that they may more easily commit to memory, and that all who read might receive profit. | And as to ourselves indeed, in undertaking this work of abridging, we have taken in hand no easy task, yea rather a business full of watching and sweat. | But, as they who prepare a feast and seek to satisfy

2, 19: *The place:* the temple.

2, 20-33: In his preface which is oddly placed here, the author informs the readers about his abridgment of Jason's five books.

2, 21: *Antiochus the Illustrious:* he is known in history as Antiochus V Epiphanes. *Eupator* was Antiochus V.

2, 22: *And the manifestations that came from heaven:* examples of such heavenly apparitions are in 3, 25; 10, 29-30; 11, 8.

2, 27: *A business full of watching and sweat:* this is a classical example used in manuals to teach that the sacred writers were not necessarily aware of being inspired.

the will of others for the sake of many, we willingly undergo
29 the labor, | leaving to the authors the exact handling of every
particular; and as for ourselves, according to the plan pro-
30 posed, studying to be brief: | for, as the master builder of a
new house must have care of the whole building, but he who
takes care to paint it must seek out fit things for the adorning
31 of it, so must it be judged for us. | For to collect all that is to
be known, to put the discourse in order and curiously to discuss
every particular point, is the duty of the author of a history.
32 | But to pursue brevity of speech and to avoid nice declarations
of things is to be granted to him who makes an abridgment. |
33 Here then we will begin the narration: let this be enough by
way of a preface. For it is a foolish thing to make a long pro-
logue and to be short in the story itself.

3

1 ***Heliodorus Sent to Rob the Temple*** Therefore when
the holy city was inhabited with all peace and the laws as yet
were very well kept, because of the godliness of Onias the high
2 priest and the hatred his soul had of evil, | it came to pass that
even the kings themselves and the princes esteemed the place
worthy of the highest honor and glorified the temple with very
3 great gifts: | so that Seleucus king of Asia allowed out of his
revenues all the charges belonging to the ministry of the sacri-
4 fices. | But one Simon of the tribe of Benjamin, who was ap-
pointed overseer of the temple, strove in opposition to the high
5 priest to bring about some unjust thing in the city. | And when
he could not overcome Onias he went to Apollonius the son of
Tharseas, who at that time was governor of Celesyria and
6 Phoenicia, | and told him that the treasury in Jerusalem was
full of immense sums of money, and the common store was
infinite, which did not belong to the account of the sacrifices,
and that it was possible to bring all into the king's hands.
7 Now when Apollonius had given the king notice concerning
the money that he was told of, he called for Heliodorus, who

3, 1: Judea was enjoying peace because it was not under the Syrians, and Egypt no longer fought to conquer her after 199 B.C. *Onias:* this is Onias III. For his son, Onias IV, see 1, 10—2, 19 n.

3, 3: *Seleucus king of Asia:* Seleucus IV of Syria, elder brother of Antiochus Epiphanes, paid for the expenses of the cult.

3, 4: *Overseer of the temple:* Simon, a layman, in charge of the temporal administration of the temple, also wanted to control the business life of Jerusalem (i.e., fix prices, control weights and measures, and inspect merchandise). These were the typical functions of the *Agoranomos* of the Greek cities.

had the charge over his affairs, and sent him with commission
8 to bring him the foresaid money. | So Heliodorus forthwith
began his journey, with the pretext of visiting the cities of
Celesyria and Phoenicia, but indeed to fulfill the king's pur-
9 pose. | And when he came to Jerusalem and was courteously
received in the city by the high priest, he told him what in-
formation had been given concerning the money and declared
the cause for which he had come and asked if these things were
10 so indeed. | Then the high priest told him that these were sums
deposited and provisions for the subsistence of the widows and
11 the fatherless, | and that some part of that which wicked Simon
had given intelligence of belonged to Hircanus *son* of Tobias, a
man of great dignity; and that the whole was four hundred
12 talents of silver and two hundred of gold: | but that to deceive
them who had trusted to the place and temple which is hon-
ored throughout the whole world, for the reverence and holi-
ness of it, was a thing which could not by any means be done. |
13 But he, by reason of the orders he had received from the king,
said that by all means the money must be carried to the king.

14 ***The Anguish of the Priests and People*** So on the day
he had appointed, Heliodorus entered in to order this matter.
15 But there was no small terror throughout the whole city. | And
the priests prostrated themselves before the altar in their priests'
vestments, and called upon him from heaven who made the law
concerning things given to be kept, that he would preserve them
16 safe for them that had deposited them. | Now whosoever saw
the countenance of the high priest was wounded in heart: for
his face and the changing of his color declared the inward
17 sorrow of his mind. | For the man was so compassed with sad-
ness and horror that it was manifest to them that beheld him
18 what sorrow he had in his heart. | Others also came flocking
together out of their houses, praying and making public suppli-
cation, because the place was like to come into contempt. |
19 And the women, girded with haircloth about their breasts, came
together in the streets. And the virgins also that were con-
fined indoors came forth, some to Onias, and some to the walls,
20 and others looked out of the windows. | And all, holding up
21 their hands toward heaven, made supplication. | For the ex-
pectation of the mixed multitude and of the high priest who
22 was in an agony, would have moved any one to pity. | And

3, 11: Some of the money in the temple about which Simon spoke belonged to Hyrcanus.

these indeed called upon almighty God to preserve the things that had been committed to them, safe and sure for those that
23 had committed them. | But Heliodorus executed that which he had resolved on, himself being present in the same place with his guard about the treasury.

24 ***Heliodorus Is Punished*** But the spirit of the almighty God gave a great evidence of his presence, so that all that had presumed to obey him, falling down by the power of God, were
25 struck with fainting and dread. | For there appeared to them a horse with a terrible rider upon him, adorned with a very rich covering: and he ran fiercely and struck Heliodorus with his fore feet, and he that sat upon him seemed to have armor of
26 gold. | Moreover there appeared two other young men, beautiful and strong, bright and glorious, and in comely apparel, who stood by him on either side and scourged him without
27 ceasing with many stripes. | And Heliodorus suddenly fell to the ground, and they took him up covered with great darkness;
28 having put him into a litter they carried him out. | So he that came with many servants and all his guard into the aforesaid treasury was carried out, no one being able to help him,
29 the manifest power of God being known. | And he indeed by the power of God lay speechless and without all hope of re-
30 covery. | But they praised the Lord because he had glorified his place. And the temple, that a little before was full of fear and trouble when the almighty Lord appeared, was filled with joy and gladness.

31 ***The Prayer of Onias Saves Heliodorus*** Then some of the friends of Heliodorus forthwith begged of Onias that he would call upon the Most High to grant him his life, who was
32 ready to give up the ghost. | So the high priest, considering that the king might perhaps suspect that some mischief had been done to Heliodorus by the Jews, offered a sacrifice of health
33 for the recovery of the man. | And when the high priest was praying, the same young men in the same clothing stood by Heliodorus and said to him: Give thanks to Onias the priest,
34 because for his sake the Lord has granted you life. | And you, having been scourged by God, declare unto all men the great

3, 24-39: This story teaches the inviolability of the temple. The rider (v. 25) and the two young men or angels are interpreted as the author's customary literary device of celestial visions as explained in 5. 2-4 n.

works and the power of God. And having spoken thus, they appeared no more.

15 So Heliodorus, after he had offered a sacrifice to God and made great vows to him that had granted him life and given thanks to Onias, taking his troops with him, returned to the
16 king, | and he testified to all men the works of the great God,
17 which he had seen with his own eyes. | And when the king asked Heliodorus who might be a fit man to be sent yet once
18 more to Jerusalem, he said: | If you have any enemy or traitor to your kingdom, send him there, and you shall receive him again scourged, if he escapes: for there is undoubtedly in that
19 place a certain power of God. | For he that has his dwelling in the heavens is the visitor and protector of that place: and he
20 strikes and destroys them that come to do evil to it. | And the things concerning Heliodorus and the keeping of the treasury fell out in this manner.

1 ***Jason's Wickedness*** But Simon, of whom we spoke before, who was the betrayer of the money and of his country, spoke ill of Onias, as though he had incited Heliodorus to do these
2 things and had been the promoter of evils. | And he presumed to call him a traitor to the kingdom, who provided for the city and defended his nation and was zealous for the law of God. |
3 But when the enmities proceeded so far that murders were also
4 committed by some of Simon's friends, | Onias, considering the danger of this contention and that Apollonius, who was the governor of Celesyria and Phoenicia, was outrageous, which
5 increased the malice of Simon, went to the king: | not to be an accuser of his countrymen, but with a view to the common good
6 of all the people. | For he saw that, except the king took care, it was impossible that matters should be settled in peace or that Simon would cease from his folly.

7 But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, who was called the Illustrious, had taken possession of the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias ambitiously sought the high priest-
8 hood. And he went to the king, promising him three hundred and sixty talents of silver and, out of other revenues, fourscore talents.

3, 40: Inscriptions and a statue of Heliodorus have been found on
ie island of Delos. From extrabiblical sources we know that Heliodorus
as behind the murder of king Seleucus, but he did not succeed in
resting the throne from the legitimate heir, Antiochus Epiphanes. See

9 ***Abominable Foreign Customs Introduced*** Besides this, he promised also a hundred and fifty more, if he might have license to set him up a place for exercise and a place for youth, and to entitle them that were at Jerusalem, Antiochians. |
10 Which when the king had granted and he had gotten the rule into his hands, forthwith he began to bring over his country-
11 men to the fashion of the heathens. | And abolishing those things, which had been decreed of special favor by the kings in behalf of the Jews by the means of John the father of that Eupolemus who went ambassador to Rome to make amity and alliance, he disannulled the lawful ordinances of the citizens
12 and brought in fashions that were perverse. | For he had the boldness to set up, under the very castle, a place of exercise and
13 to put all the choicest youths in brothel houses. | Now this was not the beginning but an increase and progress of heathenish and foreign manners, through the abominable and unheard of
14 wickedness of Jason, that impious wretch and no priest. | Insomuch that the priests were not now occupied about the offices of the altar, but, despising the temple and neglecting the sacrifices, hastened to be partakers of the games and of the unlawful
15 allowance thereof and of the exercise of the discus. | And setting nought by the honors of their fathers, they esteemed the
16 Grecian glories as the best, | for the sake of which they incurred a dangerous contention and followed earnestly their ordinances, and in all things they coveted to be like them who were their enemies and murderers.
17 But acting wickedly against the laws of God does not pass
18 unpunished: and this the time following will declare. | Now when the game that was used every fifth year was kept at Tyre,
19 the king being present, | the wicked Jason sent from Jerusalem sinful men to carry three hundred didrachmas of silver for the sacrifice of Hercules. But the bearers thereof desired it might not be bestowed on the sacrifices, because it was not necessary,
20 but might be deputed for other charges. | So the money was appointed by him who sent it to the sacrifice of Hercules: but

4, 9: *A place for exercise and a place for youth:* Jason wanted a Greek gymnasium, an association for older boys from eighteen to twenty, and the privileges accompanying the title "Antiochians."

4, 12: *Castle:* see map: Jerusalem of the Machabees, p. 1705.

4, 16: The meaning here is: The Jews found themselves in the unhappy circumstances of making enemies with those whom they were imitating.

4, 18-20: The representatives of Jerusalem at Tyre gave the money toward the construction of galleys.

because of them that carried it, it was employed for the making of galleys.

21 Now when Apollonius the son of Mnestheus was sent into Egypt to treat with the nobles of king Philometor, and Antiochus understood that he was wholly excluded from the affairs of the kingdom, consulting his own interest, he went on
22 to Joppe, and from there to Jerusalem, | where he was received in a magnificent manner by Jason and the city, and came in with torch lights and with praises: and from there he returned with his army into Phoenicia.

23 *Menelaus Becomes High Priest* Three years afterward, Jason sent Menelaus, brother of the aforesaid Simon, to carry money to the king and to bring answers from him concerning
24 certain necessary affairs. | But he being recommended to the king, when he had magnified the appearance of his power, got the high priesthood for himself, by offering more than Jason
25 by three hundred talents of silver. | So having received the king's mandate, he returned, bringing nothing worthy of the high priesthood: but having the mind of a cruel tyrant and the
26 rage of a savage beast. | Then Jason, who had undermined his own brother, being himself undermined, was driven out a
27 fugitive into the country of the Ammonites. | So Menelaus got the principality; but as for the money he had promised to the king, he took no care, when Sostratus the governor of the castle
28 called for it. | For to him appertained the gathering of the
29 taxes: wherefore they were both called before the king. | And Menelaus was removed from the priesthood, Lysimachus his brother succeeding; and Sostratus was made governor of the Cyprians.

30 When these things were in doing, it fell out that they of Tharsus and Mallos raised a sedition, because they were given
31 for a gift to Antiochis, the king's concubine. | The king therefore went in all haste to appease them, leaving Andronicus, one
32 of his nobles, for his deputy. | Then Menelaus, supposing that

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4, 21-22: *To treat with the nobles of king Philometor:* to attend the coronation ceremony of Ptolemy VI Philometor. When king Antiochus found out from Apollonius that Ptolemy was thinking of recapturing Phoenicia, Antiochus marches there with his troops.

4, 23: *The aforesaid Simon:* see 4, 3.

4, 27: *The governor of the castle:* the commander of the citadel.

4, 29: *Governor of the Cyprians:* the sense of the Greek is that Sostratus was replaced by Crates the commander of the Cyprian mercenaries.

4, 30: *Tharsus and Mallos:* cities of Cilicia in modern Turkey.

he had found a convenient time, having stolen certain vessels of gold out of the temple, gave them to Andronicus: and others
33 he had sold at Tyre and in the neighboring cities. | Which when Onias understood, most certainly he reproved him, keeping himself in a safe place at Antioch beside Daphne.

34 ***The Death of Onias*** Whereupon Menelaus, coming to Andronicus, desired him to kill Onias. And he went to Onias and gave him his right hand with an oath, and (though he was suspected by him) persuaded him to come forth out of the sanctuary and immediately slew him, without any regard to
35 justice. | For which cause not only the Jews but also the other nations conceived indignation, and were much grieved for the
36 unjust murder of so great a man. | And when the king returned from the places of Cilicia, the Jews that were at Antioch, and also the Greeks, went to him, complaining of the unjust murder
37 of Onias. | Antiochus therefore was grieved in his mind for Onias and, being moved to pity, shed tears, remembering the sobriety and modesty of the deceased.

38 ***Punishment of Andronicus and Lysimachus*** And being inflamed to anger, he commanded Andronicus to be stripped of his purple and to be led about through all the city, and that in the same place wherein he had committed the impiety against Onias, the sacrilegious wretch should be put to death, the
39 Lord repaying him his deserved punishment. | Now when many sacrileges had been committed by Lysimachus in the temple by the counsel of Menelaus, and the rumor of it was spread abroad, the multitude gathered themselves together against Lysimachus, a great quantity of gold being already
40 carried away. | Wherefore the multitude making an insurrection, and their minds being filled with anger, Lysimachus armed about three thousand men and began to use violence, one Tyrannus being captain, a man far gone both in age and in
41 madness. | But when they perceived the attempt of Lysimachus some caught up stones, some strong clubs, and some threw ashes
42 upon Lysimachus. | And many of them were wounded and some struck down to the ground, but all were put to flight: and

4, 33: *Daphne:* a place in suburban Antioch.

4, 40: Lysimachus used Tyrannus as his captain against the insurgents.

4, 41: *The attempt:* the attack.

as for the sacrilegious fellow himself, they slew him beside the treasury.

43 ***Menelaus Acquitted*** Now concerning these matters, an
44 accusation was laid against Menelaus. | And when the king had come to Tyre, three men were sent from the ancients to
45 plead the cause before him. | But Menelaus, being convicted, promised Ptolemee to give him much money to persuade the
46 king to favor him. | So Ptolemee went to the king in a certain court where he was, as it were to cool himself, and brought him
47 to be of another mind. | So Menelaus who was guilty of all the evil was acquitted by him of the accusations; and those poor men, who, if they had pleaded their cause even before Scythians, should have been judged innocent, were condemned to death. |
48 Thus they who prosecuted the cause for the city and for the people and the sacred vessels did soon suffer unjust punish-
49 ment. | Wherefore even the Tyrians being moved with indigna-
50 tion were liberal toward their burial. | And so through the covetousness of them that were in power, Menelaus continued in authority, increasing in malice to the betraying of the citizens.

5

1 ***Wonderful Signs Are Seen in the Air*** At the same time,
2 Antiochus prepared for a second journey into Egypt. | And it came to pass that through the whole city of Jerusalem for the space of forty days there were seen horsemen running in the air, in gilded raiment and armed with spears, like bands of
3 soldiers. | And horses set in order by ranks, running one against another, with the shakings of shields, and a multitude of men in helmets, with drawn swords, and casting of darts, and glittering
4 of golden armor and of harnesses of all sorts. | Wherefore all men prayed that these prodigies might turn to good.

4, 45: The "Ptolemee" here is the son of Dorymenus, a favorite of king Antiochus mentioned in 1 Mc 3, 38.

5, 1: The majority of scholars teach that Antiochus made two expeditions to Egypt, but it is impossible to specify the exact date of the "second journey" in this text.

5, 2-4: There are examples in ancient and modern times of similar celestial phenomena which could be caused by reflections in the clouds of troops marching on land. The author here may be using this apparition as a literary device to indicate that important things concerning the temple were about to happen. See "pathetic history" in the Introduction. Compare the portents of "Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds" (*Julius Caesar*, II, 2).

5 Now when a false rumor went abroad as though Antiochus had died, Jason, taking with him no fewer than a thousand men, suddenly assaulted the city: and though the citizens ran together to the wall, the city at length was taken and Menelaus
6 fled into the castle. | But Jason slew his countrymen without mercy, not considering that prosperity against one's own kindred is a very great evil, thinking they had been enemies and not
7 citizens whom he conquered. | Yet he did not get the principality, but received confusion, at the end, for the reward of his treachery: and fled again into the country of the Ammonites.

8 ***Jason's End*** At the last, having been shut up by Aretas the king of the Arabians because of the destruction he had wrought, flying from city to city, hated by all men as a forsaker of the laws and execrable as an enemy of his country and countrymen,
9 he was thrust out into Egypt. | And he that had driven many out of their country perished in a strange land, going to Lacedemon,
10 as if for kindred sake he should have refuge there. | But he that had cast out many unburied, was himself cast forth both unlamented and unburied, neither having foreign burial, nor being partaker of the sepulcher of his fathers.

11 ***Antiochus Takes Jerusalem*** Now when these things were done, the king suspected that the Jews would forsake the alliance. Whereupon, departing out of Egypt with a furious
12 mind, he took the city by force of arms. | And commanded the soldiers to kill and not to spare any that came in their way and
13 to go up into the houses to slay. | Thus there was a slaughter of young and old, a destruction of women and children, and kill-
14 ing of virgins and infants. | And there were slain in the space of three whole days fourscore thousand, forty thousand were
15 made prisoners, and as many sold. | But this was not enough: he presumed also to enter into the temple, the most holy in all the world, Menelaus, that traitor to the laws and to his country, being his guide.

16 ***The Temple Profaned and Plundered*** And taking in his wicked hands the holy vessels which were given by other kings and cities for the ornament and the glory of the place, he
17 unworthily handled and profaned them. | Thus Antiochus,

5, 9: *Lacedemon:* Sparta.
5, 11-20: This expands the parallel passage in 1 Mc 1, 20-24.
5, 11: *The city:* Jerusalem.

going astray in mind, did not consider that God was angry for
a while because of the sins of the inhabitants of the city: and
18 therefore this contempt had happened to the place. | Other-
wise had they not been involved in many sins, as Heliodorus,
who was sent by king Seleucus to rob the treasury, so this man
also, as soon as he had come, had been forthwith scourged and
19 put back from his presumption. | But God did not choose the
people for the place's sake, but the place for the people's sake.
20 | And therefore the place also itself was made partaker of the
evils of the people, but afterward shall communicate in the
good things thereof: and as it was forsaken in the wrath of al-
mighty God, shall be exalted again with great glory when the
great Lord shall be reconciled.

21 So when Antiochus had taken away out of the temple a thou-
sand and eight hundred talents he went back in all haste to
Antioch, thinking through pride that he might now make the
land navigable and the sea passable on foot: such was the
22 haughtiness of his mind. | He left also governors to afflict the
people. At Jerusalem, Philip, a Phrygian by birth, but in man-
23 ners more barbarous than he that set him there. | And in
Gazarim, Andronicus and Menelaus, who bore a more heavy
24 hand upon the citizens than the rest. | And whereas he was set
against the Jews, he sent that hateful prince Apollonius with an
army of two and twenty thousand men, commanding him to
kill all that were of perfect age and to sell the women and the
25 younger sort. | Who when he came to Jerusalem, pretending
peace, rested till the holy day of the sabbath: and then, the
Jews keeping holiday, he commanded his men to take arms. |
26 And he slew all that had come forth to celebrate: and, running
through the city with armed men, he destroyed a very great
multitude.

27 But Judas Machabeus, who was the tenth, had withdrawn
himself into a desert place, and there lived among wild beasts
in the mountains with his company: and they continued feeding
on herbs that they might not be partakers of the pollution.

6 1 ***The Decree of Antiochus*** But not long after, the king

5, 18: *Heliodorus:* a reference to 3, 25-27.
5, 23: *Gazarim:* see 6, 2 n.
5, 24: *Perfect age:* adult men. *The younger sort:* boys.
5, 27: *Judas Machabeus, who was the tenth:* he had nine others with him. *The pollution:* social relations with the pagans.
6, 1-9: See parallel in 1 Mc 1, 45-51.

sent a certain old man of Antioch to compel the Jews to depar
2 from the laws of their fathers and of God, | and to defile th
temple that was in Jerusalem and to call it the temple of Jupite
Olympius, and that in Gazarim of Jupiter Hospitalis, accordin
3 as they were that inhabited the place. | And very bad was thi
4 invasion of evils and grievous to all. | For the temple was ful
of the riot and revellings of the Gentiles and of men lying wit
lewd women. And women thrust themselves of their accord int
the holy places and brought in things that were not lawful.
5 The altar also was filled with unlawful things, which were for
6 bidden by the laws. | And neither were the sabbaths kept, no
the solemn days of the fathers observed; neither did any man
7 plainly profess himself to be a Jew. | But they were led b
bitter constraint on the king's birthday to the sacrifices; an
when the feast of Bacchus was kept, they were compelled t
8 go about crowned with ivy in honor of Bacchus. | And ther
went out a decree into the neighboring cities of the Gentiles, b
the suggestion of the Ptolemeans, that they also should act i
9 like manner against the Jews, to oblige them to sacrifice, an
whosoever would not conform themselves to the ways of th
Gentiles should be put to death. Then was misery to be seen:
10 for two women, accused to have circumcised their childre
whom, when they had openly led about through the city wit
the infants hanging at their breasts, they threw down headlon
11 from the walls. | And others that had met together in cave
that were near and were keeping the sabbath day privatel
being discovered by Philip, were burned with fire, because the
made a conscience to help themselves with their hands, by rea
son of the religious observance of the day.
12 Now I beseech those that shall read this book that they l
not shocked at these calamities, but that they consider the thing
that happened, not as being for the destruction but for the co
13 rection of our nation. | For it is a token of great goodness whe
sinners are not suffered to go on in their ways for a long time
14 but are presently punished. | For, not as with other nation
(whom the Lord patiently expects that when the day of judg

6, 2: *Gazarim of Jupiter Hospitalis:* this was the temple of th Samaritans. Since they were originally strangers, the name of Hospital which signifies strangers, or belonging to strangers, was applicable to t idol set up in their temple.

6, 4: *Things that were not lawful:* for sacrifice.

6, 11: *Philip:* the ruler of Jerusalem. *They made a conscien . . . of the day:* they resolved not to use their hands for self-defen because of the Sabbath.

ment shall come he may punish them in the fullness of their sins), | does he also deal with us, so as to suffer our sins to come to their height and then take vengeance on us. | And therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us, but though he chastises his people with adversity, he forsakes them not. | But let this suffice in a few words for a warning to the readers. And now we must come to the narration:

The Heroic Death of Eleazar Eleazar, one of the chief of the scribes, a man advanced in years and of a comely countenance, was pressed to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. | But he, choosing rather a most glorious death than a hateful life, went forward voluntarily to the torment. | And considering in what manner he was to suffer it, patiently bearing, he determined not to do any unlawful things for the love of life. | But they that stood by, being moved with wrongful pity, for the old friendship they had with the man, taking him aside, desired that flesh might be brought which it was lawful for him to eat, that he might make as if he had eaten, as the king had commanded of the flesh of the sacrifice: | that by so doing he might be delivered from death. And for the sake of their old friendship with the man they did him this courtesy. | But he began to consider the dignity of his age and his ancient years and the inbred honor of his gray head and his good life and conversation from a child: and he answered without delay, according to the ordinances of the holy law made by God, saying that he would rather be sent into the other world. | For it does not become our age, said he, to dissemble: because many young persons might think that Eleazar, at the age of fourscore and ten years, has gone over to the life of the heathens. | And so, they, through my dissimulation and for a little time of a corruptible life, should be deceived, and hereby I should bring a stain and a curse upon my old age. | For, though for the present time I should be delivered from the punishments of men, I should yet not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead. | Wherefore by departing manfully out of this life, I shall show myself worthy of my old age, and I shall leave an example of fortitude to young men, if with a ready mind and constancy I suffer an honorable death for the most venerable and most holy laws. And having spoken thus, he was forthwith carried to execution.

6, 21: *Wrongful pity:* their pity was wrongful because they wanted to save his life by dissimulation.

29 And they that led him, and had been a little before more mild,
were changed to wrath for the words he had spoken, which
30 they thought were uttered out of arrogancy. | But when he
was now ready to die with the stripes, he groaned and said:
O Lord, in your holy knowledge, you know manifestly that,
whereas I might be delivered from death, I suffer grievous pains
in body: but in soul I am well content to suffer these because
31 I fear you. | Thus did this man die, leaving not only to young
men, but also to the whole nation, the memory of his death for
an example of virtue and fortitude.

7

1 ***The Martyrdom of Seven Brothers*** It came to pass also
that seven brethren, together with their mother, were appre-
hended and compelled by the king to eat swine's flesh against
the law, for which end they were tormented with whips and
2 scourges. | But one of them, who was the eldest, said thus:
What would you ask, or learn of us? We are ready to die
rather than to transgress the laws of God, received from our
3 fathers. | Then the king, being angry, commanded frying pans
and brazen caldrons to be made hot. As they were being heated,
4 | he commanded to cut out the tongue of him that had spoken
first, and the skin of his head being drawn off, to chop off also
the extremities of his hands and feet, the rest of his brethren
5 and his mother looking on. | And when he was now maimed
in all parts, he commanded him, being yet alive, to be brought
to the fire and to be fried in the frying pan. And while he was
suffering therein long torments, the rest, together with the
6 mother, exhorted one another to die manfully, | saying: The
Lord God will look upon the truth and will take pleasure in
us, as Moses declared in the profession of the canticle: and in
his servants he will take pleasure.
7 So, when the first was dead after this manner, they brought
the next to make him a mocking stock. And, when they had
pulled off the skin of his head with the hair, they asked him if
he would eat before he was punished throughout the whole
8 body in every limb. | But he answered in his own language
and said: I will not do it. Wherefore, he also in the next place

7, 1: *To eat swine's flesh:* the parallel test for Christians during Roman persecutions was casting grains of incense at the feet of the emperor's image.

7, 6: The meaning is that the Lord will take care of them and have pity on them as Moses sings in his Canticle, Dt 32, 36.

7, 8: *In his own language:* Aramaic.

9 received the torments of the first. | And when he was at the
last gasp, he said thus: You indeed, O most wicked man, de-
stroy us out of this present life; but the King of the world will
raise us up, who die for his laws, in the resurrection of eternal
life.

10 After him the third was made a mocking stock, and when he
was required, he quickly put forth his tongue and courageously
11 stretched out his hands, | and said with confidence: These I
have from heaven, but because of the laws of God I now despise
12 them, for I hope to receive them again from him. | So that the
king and they that were with him wondered at the young man's
13 courage, because he esteemed the torments as nothing. | And
after he was thus dead, they tormented the fourth in the like
14 manner. | And when he was now ready to die he spoke thus:
It is better, being put to death, by men, to look for hope from
God, to be raised up again by him: for, as to you, you shall have
15 no resurrection unto life. | And when they had brought the
fifth, they tormented him. But he looking upon the king, | said:
Whereas you have power among men, though you are corrupti-
ble, you do what you will: but think not that our nation is for-
saken by God. | But stay patiently a while and you shall see
his great power, in what manner he will torment you and your
seed. | After him they brought the sixth. And he, being ready
to die, spoke thus: Be not deceived without cause, for we suffer
these things for ourselves, having sinned against our God, and
things worthy of admiration are done to us. | But do not think
that you shall escape unpunished for having attempted to fight
against God.

Their Mother's Faith and Courage Now the mother
was to be admired above measure and worthy to be remem-
bered by good men, who beheld her seven sons slain in the space
of one day and bore it with a good courage, for the hope that
she had in God. | And she bravely exhorted every one of them
in her own language, being filled with wisdom. And joining a
man's heart to a woman's thought, | she said to them: I know
not how you were formed in my womb; for I neither gave you
breath, nor soul, nor life, neither did I frame the limbs of every

7, 9: The resurrection of the body is clearly revealed in this chapter, especially vv. 9, 11, 14, 23, 29, 36. See also Dn 12, 2-3 n.
7, 10-11: The third son makes explicit that his entire body will be restored.
7, 14: The resurrection here is apparently restricted to the just.
7, 17: It was not long before the prophecy was realized.

23 one of you. | But the Creator of the world that formed the nativity of man and that found out the origin of all, he will restore to you again in his mercy, both breath and life, as now you despise yourselves for the sake of his laws.

24 Now Antiochus, thinking himself despised and withal despising the voice of the upbraider, when the youngest was yet alive, did not only exhort him by words, but also assured him with an oath that he would make him a rich and a happy man, and, if he would turn from the laws of his fathers, would take 25 him for a friend and furnish him with things necessary. | But when the young man was not moved with these things, the king called the mother and counseled her to deal with the young 26 man to save his life. | And when he had exhorted her with 27 many words, she promised that she would counsel her son. | So bending herself toward him, mocking the cruel tyrant, she said in her own language: My son, have pity upon me that bore you nine months in my womb and gave you suck three years 28 and nourished you and brought you up unto this age. | I beseech you, my son, look upon heaven and earth and all that is in them, and consider that God made them out of nothing, and 29 mankind also: | so you shall not fear this tormentor, but being made a worthy partner with your brethren, receive death, that in that mercy I may receive you again with your brethren.

30 ***Steadfastness of the Youngest*** While she was yet speaking these words, the young man said: For whom do you stay? I will not obey the commandment of the king, but the com- 31 mandment of the law which was given us by Moses. | But you that has been the author of all mischief against the Hebrews 32 shall not escape the hand of God. | For we suffer thus for our 33 sins. | And though the Lord our God is angry with us a little while for our chastisement and correction, yet he will be re- 34 onciled again to his servants. | But you, O wicked and of all men most flagitious, be not lifted up without cause with vain 35 hopes, while you are raging against his servants. | For you have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty God who beholds 36 all things. | For my brethren, having now undergone a short pain, are under the covenant of eternal life, but you by the judgment of God shall receive just punishment for your pride.

7, 28: *God made them out of nothing:* the Greek text says literally: "not from existing things did God make these things." This is the closest biblical text to the philosophical notion of "nothing" meaning absolute nothingness.

But I, like my brethren, offer up my life and my body for the laws of our fathers, calling upon God to be speedily merciful to our nation, and that you by torments and stripes may confess that he alone is God. | But in me and in my brethren the wrath of the Almighty, which has justly been brought upon all our nation, shall cease.

Then the king, being incensed with anger, raged against him more cruelly than all the rest, taking it grievously that he was mocked. | So this man also died undefiled, wholly trusting in the Lord. | And last of all, after the sons, the mother also was consumed.

But now there is enough said of the sacrifices and of the excessive cruelties.

Judas Gathers an Army But Judas Machabeus and they that were with him went privately into the towns: and calling together their kinsmen and friends and taking unto them such as continued in the Jews' religion, they assembled six thousand men. | And they called upon the Lord that he would look upon his people that was trodden down by all and would have pity on the temple that was defiled by the wicked. | That he would have pity also upon the city that was destroyed, that was ready to be made even with the ground, and would hear the voice of the blood that cried to him. | That he would remember also the most unjust deaths of innocent children and the blasphemies offered to his name and would show his indignation on this occasion.

Now when Machabeus had gathered a multitude, he could not be withstood by the heathens: for the wrath of the Lord had turned into mercy. | So coming unawares upon the towns and cities, he set them on fire and, taking possession of the most commodious places, he made no small slaughter of the enemies. | And especially in the nights he went upon these expeditions, and the fame of his valor was spread abroad everywhere. |Then Philip, seeing that the man gained ground by little and little, and that things for the most part succeeded prosperously with

42: It is perhaps mainly because the Machabean martyrs were the heis of subsequent Christian martyrs that they became the only Old ament saints who found their way into the liturgy of the Universal ch. (Heb 11, 35 alludes to this chapter.) They are commemorated the Mass on August 1.

1ff: See 1 Mc 3, 38—4, 25 for parallel accounts.

8: *Philip, seeing:* the governor of Jerusalem found himself unable

him, wrote to Ptolemee the governor of Celesyria and Phoenici
to send aid to the king's affairs.

9 *Nicanor Sent against Judas* And he with all speed se
Nicanor the son of Patroclus, one of his special friends, givir
him no fewer than twenty thousand armed men of different n
tions, to root out the whole race of the Jews, joining also wi
him Gorgias, a good soldier and of great experience in matte
10 of war. | And Nicanor purposed to raise for the king tl
tribute of two thousand talents that was to be given to tl
Romans by making so much money of the captive Jews.
11 Wherefore he sent immediately to the cities upon the seacoas
to invite men together to buy up the Jewish slaves, promisir
that they should have ninety slaves for one talent, not reflecti
on the vengeance, which was to follow him from the Almight
12 | Now when Judas found that Nicanor was coming, he ir
parted to the Jews that were with him that the enemy was
13 hand. | And some of them, being afraid and distrusting tl
14 justice of God, fled away. | Others sold all that they had le
and withal besought the Lord that he would deliver them fro
the wicked Nicanor, who had sold them before he came ne
15 them, | and if not for their sakes, yet for the covenant th
he had made with their fathers, and for the sake of his hc
and glorious name that was invoked upon them.
16 But Machabeus, calling together seven thousand that we
with him, exhorted them not to be reconciled to the enemies n
to fear the multitude of the enemies who came wrongful
17 against them, but to fight manfully: | setting before their ey
the injury they had unjustly done the holy place and also t
injury they had done to the city, which had been shameful
abused, besides their destroying the ordinances of the fathe
18 | For, said he, they trust in their weapons and in their boldne
but we trust in the almighty Lord who at a beck can utter
destroy both them that come against us and the whole wor
19 Moreover he put them in mind also of the helps their fathe
had received from God, and how under Sennacherib a hundr
20 and eighty-five thousand had been destroyed. | And of the b
tle that they had fought against the Galatians in Babylon

to contend with Judas, especially after the victories he had obtained ov
Apollonius and Seron (1 Mc 3).

8, 19: A reference to Sennacherib in 4 Kgs 19, 35.

8, 20: Some Jewish mercenaries in the army of Antiochus III fou
the rebel Molon, whose army numbered some Gauls ("Galatians"),
Media (modern northwestern Iran) in 220 B.C.

how they, being in all but six thousand, when it came to the point, and the Macedonians their companions were at a stand, slew a hundred and twenty thousand, because of the help they had from heaven and for this they received many favors. | With these words they were greatly encouraged and disposed even to die for the laws and their country. | So he appointed his brethren captains over each division of his army, Simon and Joseph and Jonathan, giving to each one fifteen hundred men. | And after the holy book had been read to them by Esdras and he had given them for a watchword, The help of God: himself leading the first band, he joined battle with Nicanor.

Judas Defeats Nicanor And the Almighty being their helper, they slew above nine thousand men; and having wounded and disabled the greater part of Nicanor's army, they obliged them to flee. | And they took the money of them that came to buy them, and they pursued them on every side. | But they came back for want of time: for it was the day before the sabbath and therefore they did not continue the pursuit. | But when they had gathered together their arms and their spoils, they kept the sabbath, blessing the Lord who had delivered them that day, distilling the beginning of mercy upon them. | Then after the sabbath they divided the spoils to the feeble and the orphans and the widows: and the rest they took for themselves and their servants. | When this was done and they had all made a common supplication, they besought the merciful Lord to be reconciled to his servants unto the end.

Other Victories of Judas Moreover, they slew above twenty thousand of them that were with Timotheus and Bacchides who fought against them, and they made themselves masters of the high strongholds. And they divided among them many spoils, giving equal portions to the feeble, the fatherless and the widows, yea and the aged also. | And when they had carefully gathered together their arms, they laid them all up in convenient places and the residue of their spoils they carried to Jerusalem. | They slew also Philarches who was with Timotheus, a wicked man, who had in many ways afflicted the Jews. | And when they kept the feast of the victory at Jerusalem, they burned Callisthenes, that had set fire to the holy gates, who had taken refuge in a certain house, rendering to him a worthy reward for his impieties. | But as for that most wicked man Nicanor, who had brought a thousand merchants to the sale

35 of the Jews, | being through the help of the Lord brought dow
by them of whom he had made no account, laying aside hi
garment of glory, fleeing through the midland country, he cam
alone to Antioch, being rendered very unhappy by the destruc
36 tion of his army. | And he that had promised to levy th
tribute for the Romans by the means of the captives of Jeru
salem now professed that the Jews had God for their protectc
and therefore they could not be hurt, because they followe
the laws appointed by him.

9

1 ***The Punishment of Antiochus*** At that time Antiochu
2 returned with dishonor out of Persia. | For he had entered int
the city called Persepolis and attempted to rob the temple an
to oppress the city, but the multitude, running together to arm
put them to flight: and so it fell out that Antiochus being pu
3 to flight returned with disgrace. | Now when he reached E
batana, he received the news of what had happened to Nicanc
4 and Timotheus. | And swelling with anger he thought to r
venge upon the Jews the injury done by them that had pu
him to flight. And therefore he commanded his chariot to b
driven without stopping in his journey, the judgment of heave
urging him forward, because he had spoken so proudly, that h
would come to Jerusalem and make it a common burying pla
of the Jews.

5 But the Lord, the God of Israel, that sees all things, struc
him with an incurable and an invisible plague. For as soon
he had ended these words, a dreadful pain in his bowels cam
6 upon him and bitter torments of the inner parts. | And indee
very justly, seeing he had tormented the bowels of others wit
many and new torments, albeit he by no means ceased from h
7 malice. | Moreover, being filled with pride, breathing out fi
in his rage against the Jews and commanding the matter to b
hastened, it happened as he was going with violence that h
fell from the chariot, so that his limbs were much pained by
8 grievous bruising of the body. | Thus he that seemed to himsc
to command even the waves of the sea, being proud above th
condition of man, and to weigh the heights of the mountair
in a balance, now being cast down to the ground, was carri

8, 35: *Laying aside his garment of glory:* lest he be recognized.

9, 1-29: One of the accounts of Antiochus' death as explained 1, 13-16 n.

9, 2: *Persepolis:* this is not the well known capital of Persia; he it merely means a Persian city.

in a litter, bearing witness to the manifest power of God in
9 himself: | so that worms swarmed out of the body of this man,
and while he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell off and the
10 filthiness of his smell was noisome to the army. | And the man
that thought a little before he could reach to the stars of heaven,
no man could endure to carry, for the intolerable stench. |
11 And by this means, being brought from his great pride, he began
to come to the knowledge of himself, being admonished by the
12 scourge of God, his pains increasing every moment. | And
when he himself could not now abide his own stench, he spoke
thus: It is just to be subject to God and that a mortal man
13 should not equal himself to God. | Then this wicked man
prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not like to obtain mercy.
14 | And the city to which he was going in haste to lay it even
with the ground and to make it a common burying place, he
15 now desired to make free. | And the Jews whom he said he
would not account worthy to be so much as buried, but would
give them up to be devoured by the birds and wild beasts, and
would utterly destroy them with their children, he now prom-
16 ised to make equal with the Athenians. | The holy temple also
which before he had spoiled, he promised to adorn with goodly
gifts and to multiply the holy vessels and to allow out of his
17 revenues the charges pertaining to the sacrifices. | Yea, also,
that he would become a Jew himself and would go through
every place of the earth and declare the power of God.

18 ***The Letter of Antiochus*** But his pains not ceasing (for
the just judgment of God had come upon him), despairing *of
life,* he wrote to the Jews in the manner of a supplication a
19 letter in these words: | To his very good subjects, the Jews,
Antiochus, king and ruler, wishes much health and welfare and
20 happiness. | If you and your children are well and if all matters
21 go with you to your mind, we give very great thanks. | As for
me, being infirm, but yet kindly remembering you, returning
out of the places of Persia, and being taken with a grievous
disease, I thought it necessary to take care for the common
22 good: | not distrusting my life, but having great hopes to escape
23 the sickness. | But considering that my father also, at what
time he led an army into the higher countries, appointed who
24 should reign after him, | to the end that if anything contrary to
expectation should fall out, or any bad tidings should be

9, 13: *He was not like to obtain mercy:* because he was not truly sorry.

brought, they that were in the countries, knowing to whom the
25 whole government was left, might not be troubled. | Moreover, considering that neighboring princes and borderers wait for opportunities and expect what shall be the event, I have appointed my son Antiochus king, whom I often recommended to many of you when I went into the higher provinces. And I
26 have written to him what I have joined here below. | I pray you therefore and request of you, that, remembering favors both public and private, you will every man of you continue to
27 be faithful to me and to my son. | For I trust that he will behave with moderation and humanity, and following my intentions, will be gracious unto you.
28 Thus the murderer and blasphemer, being grievously struck down, as he himself had treated others, died a miserable death in
29 a strange country among the mountains. | But Philip that was brought up with him carried away his body: and out of fear of the son of Antiochus, went into Egypt to Ptolemee Philometor.

10

1 ***The Purification of the Temple*** But Machabeus and they that were with him, by the protection of the Lord, recovered the
2 temple and the city again. | And he threw down the altars which the heathens had set up in the streets, as also the temples
3 of the idols. | And having purified the temple, they made another altar: and taking fire out of the fiery stones, they offered sacrifices after two years and set forth incense and lamps and
4 the loaves of proposition. | And when they had done these things, they besought the Lord, lying prostrate on the ground, that they might no more fall into such evils: but if they should at any time sin, that they might be chastised by him more gently, and not be delivered up to barbarians and blasphemous
5 men. | Now upon the same day that the temple had been polluted by the strangers, on the very same day it was cleansed again, to wit, on the five and twentieth day of the month of
6 Casleu. | And they kept eight days with joy, after the manner of the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long before they had kept the feast of the tabernacles when they were in
7 the mountains and in dens, like wild beasts. | Therefore they *now* carried boughs and green branches and palms for him who

10, 1-8: This section is expanded in 1 Mc 4, 36-59. See 1 Mc 4, 59 n. The purification of the temple occurred in December 164 B.C. and therefore preceded Antiochus' death in the spring of 163 B.C.

10, 3: *Loaves of proposition:* a synonym for showbread. (See Lv 24, 5-9.)

8 had given them good success in cleansing his place. | And they ordained by a common statute and decree that all the nation of the Jews should keep those days every year.

9 And this was the end of Antiochus that was called the Il-
10 lustrious. | But now we will relate the acts of Eupator, the son of that wicked Antiochus, abridging the account of the
11 evils that happened in the wars. | For when he acceded to the crown, he appointed over the affairs of his realm one Lysias,
1 general of the army of Phoenicia and Syria. | For Ptolemee that was called Macer, was determined to be strictly just to the Jews, and especially by reason of the wrong that had been done
3 them, and to deal peaceably with them. | But being accused for this to Eupator by his friends and being oftentimes called traitor, because he had left Cyprus which Philometor had committed to him, and coming over to Antiochus the Illustrious had revolted also from him, he put an end to his life by poison. |
4 But Gorgias who was governor of the district, taking with him
5 the strangers, often fought against the Jews. | And the Jews that occupied the most commodious stronghold received those that were driven out of Jerusalem and attempted to make war.

6 ***Judas Takes the Strongholds of the Idumeans*** Then they that were with Machabeus, beseeching the Lord by prayers to be their helper, made a strong attack upon the strongholds
7 of the Idumeans: | and assaulting them with great force, won the strongholds, killed them that came in the way and slew al-
8 together no fewer than twenty thousand. | And whereas some had fled into very strong towers, having all manner of pro-
9 vision to sustain a siege, | Machabeus left Şimon and Joseph and Zacheus and those that were with them in sufficient number to continue the siege, and departed to those expeditions
10 which urged more. | Now they that were with Simon, being led with covetousness, were persuaded for the sake of money by some that were in the towers: and taking seventy thousand
11 didrachmas, let some of them escape. | But when it was told Machabeus what was done, he assembled the rulers of the people and accused those men that they had sold their brethren
12 for money, having let their adversaries escape. | So he put these traitors to death and forthwith took the two towers. |
13 And having good success in arms and in all things he took in hand, he slew more than twenty thousand in the two strongholds.

10, 13: *Philometor:* Ptolemy VI of Egypt.
10, 14: *The strangers:* mercenaries.

24 *Judas Defeats Timotheus* But Timotheus who before had
been overcome by the Jews, having called together a multi-
tude of foreign troops and assembled horsemen out of Asia,
came as though he would take Judea by force of arms. |
25 But Machabeus and they that were with him, when he drew
near, prayed to the Lord, sprinkling earth upon their heads and
26 girding their loins with haircloth, | and lying prostrate at the
foot of the altar besought him to be merciful to them, and to
be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their ad-
27 versaries, as the law says. | And so after prayer taking their
arms, they went forth further from the city, and when they had
28 come very near the enemies they rested. | But as soon as the
sun had risen both sides joined battle: the one part having with
their valor the Lord for a surety of victory and success, but the
29 other side making their rage their leader in battle. | But when
they were in the heat of the engagement, there appeared to the
enemies from heaven five men upon horses, comely, with golden
30 bridles, conducting the Jews: | two of whom took Machabeus
between them and covered him on every side with their arms
and kept him safe, but cast darts and fireballs against the enemy,
so that they fell down, being both confounded with blindness
31 and filled with trouble. | And there were slain twenty thou-
sand five hundred, and six hundred horsemen.
32 But Timotheus fled into Gazara, a stronghold where Chereas
33 was governor. | Then Machabeus and they that were with him,
34 cheerfully laid siege to the fortress four days. | But they that
were within, trusting to the strength of the place, blasphemed
35 exceedingly and cast forth abominable words. | But when the
fifth day appeared, twenty young men of them that were with
Machabeus, inflamed in their minds because of the blasphemy,
approached manfully to the wall and, pushing forward with
36 fierce courage, got up upon it. | Moreover, others also getting
up after them went to set fire to the towers and the gates and
37 to burn the blasphemers alive. | And having for two days to-
gether pillaged and sacked the fortress, they killed Timotheus,
who was found hidden in a certain place: they slew also his
38 brother Chereas and Apollophanes. | And when this was done,
they blessed the Lord with hymns and thanksgiving, who had
done great things in Israel and given them the victory.

10, 29-30: For the literary device of the celestial apparition see 3, 24-39 n.

10, 37: *A certain place:* in a cistern or pit.

11

1 ***Lysias Is Overthrown by Judas*** A short time after this,
Lysias, the king's lieutenant and cousin, and who had chief
charge over all the affairs, being greatly displeased with what
2 had happened, | gathered together fourscore thousand men
and all the horsemen, and came against the Jews, thinking to
3 take the city and make it a habitation of the Gentiles, | and to
make a gain of the temple, as of the other temples of the Gen-
4 tiles, and to set the high priesthood to sale every year: | never
considering the power of God, but puffed up in mind and trust-
ing in the multitude of his foot soldiers and the thousands of
5 his horsemen and his fourscore elephants. | So he came into
Judea and, approaching to Bethsura, which was in a narrow
place, the space of five furlongs from Jerusalem, he laid siege
to that fortress.

6 But when Machabeus and they that were with him under-
stood that the strongholds were besieged, they and all the people
besought the Lord with lamentations and tears that he would
7 send a good angel to save Israel. | Then Machabeus himself,
first taking his arms, exhorted the rest to expose themselves
together with him to the danger and to succor their brethren. |
8 And when they were going forth together with a willing mind,
there appeared at Jerusalem a horseman going before them in
9 white clothing, with golden armor, shaking a spear. | Then
they all together blessed the merciful Lord and took great cour-
age, being ready to break through not only men but also the
10 fiercest beasts and walls of iron. | So they went on coura-
geously, having a helper from heaven and the Lord who showed
11 mercy to them. | And rushing violently upon the enemy, like
lions, they slew of them eleven thousand footmen and one thou-
12 sand six hundred horsemen, | and put all the rest to flight.
And many of them being wounded, escaped naked: yea and
Lysias himself fled away shamefully and escaped.

13 ***Lysias Appeals for Peace*** And as he was a man of under-
standing, considering with himself the loss he had suffered and
perceiving that the Hebrews could not be overcome, because
they relied upon the help of the almighty God, he sent to them,
14 | and promised that he would agree to all things that are just,

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11, 1ff.: See 1 Mc 4, 26-35 for the parallel account which is more correctly placed before the death of Antiochus.

11, 8: Another example of the literary device of celestial help. See 5, 2-4 n.

15 and that he would persuade the king to be their friend. | Then
Machabeus consented to the request of Lysias, providing for the
common good in all things, and whatsoever Machabeus wrote
to Lysias concerning the Jews, the king allowed of.
16 For there were letters written to the Jews from Lysias, to this
17 effect: Lysias to the people of the Jews, greeting. | John and
Abesalom who were sent from you, delivering your writings,
requested that I would accomplish those things which were sig
18 nified by them. | Therefore, whatsoever things could be re-
ported to the king I have represented to him, and he has granted
19 as much as the matter permitted. | If therefore you will keep
yourselves loyal in affairs, hereafter also I will endeavor to be
20 a means of your good. | But as concerning other particulars,
I have given orders by word, both to these and to them that
21 are sent by me, to commune with you. | Farewell. In the year
one hundred and forty-eight, the four and twentieth day of
the month of Dioscorus.

22 ***The Letters of King Antiochus*** But the king's letter
contained these words: King Antiochus to Lysias his brother,
23 greeting. | Our father being translated among the gods, we are
desirous that they that are in our realm should live quietly and
24 apply themselves diligently to their own concerns. | And we
have heard that the Jews would not consent to my father to
turn to the rites of the Greeks, but that they would keep to their
own manner of living, and therefore that they request us to
25 allow them to live after their own laws. | Wherefore, being
desirous that this nation also should be at rest, we have or-
dained and decreed that the temple should be restored to them
and that they may live according to the custom of their an-
26 cestors. | You shall do well therefore to send to them and
grant them peace, that, our pleasure being known, they may be
of good comfort and look to their own affairs.
27 But the king's letter to the Jews was in this manner: King
Antiochus to the senate of the Jews and to the rest of the Jews.
28 greeting. | If you are well, you are as we desire. We ourselves
29 also are well. | Menelaus came to us, saying that you desired
30 to come down to your countrymen that are with us. | We grant
therefore a safe conduct to all that come and go, until the thir-
31 tieth day of the month of Xanthicus: | that the Jews may use
their own kind of meats and their own laws as before and that
none of them any manner of ways be molested for things which

11, 21: The spring of 164 B.C.

have been done by ignorance. | And we have sent also Menelaus
to speak to you. | Farewell. In the year one hundred and forty-
eight, the fifteenth day of the month of Xanthicus.

The Letter of the Romans The Romans also sent them a letter, to this effect: Quintus Memmius and Titus Manilius, ambassadors of the Romans, to the people of the Jews, greeting. | Whatsoever Lysias the king's cousin has granted you, we also have granted. | But touching such things as he thought should be referred to the king, after you have diligently conferred among yourselves, send someone forthwith, that we may decree as it is convenient for you, for we are going to Antioch. | And therefore make haste to write back, that we may know of what mind you are. | Farewell. In the year one hundred and forty-eight, the fifteenth day of the month of Xanthicus.

12

Judas Overcomes the Treacherous Neighbors When these covenants were made, Lysias went to the king and the Jews gave themselves to husbandry. | But they that were behind, namely, Timotheus and Apollonius the son of Genneus, also Hieronymus and Demophon, and besides them Nicanor, the governor of Cyprus, would not suffer them to live in peace and to be quiet. | The men of Joppe also were guilty of this kind of wickedness. They desired the Jews who dwelt among them to go with their wives and children into the boats which they had prepared, as though they had no enmity to them. | Which they consented to, according to the common decree of the city, suspecting nothing because of the peace: but when they were gone forth into the deep, they drowned no fewer than two hundred of them. | As soon as Judas heard of this cruelty done to his countrymen, he commanded the men that were with him, and after having called upon God the just judge, | he came against those murderers of his brethren and set the haven on fire in the night, burned the boats and slew with the sword them that escaped from the fire. | And when he had done these things in this manner, he departed as if he would return again and root out all the Joppites. | But when he understood that the men of Jamnia also designed to do in like manner to the Jews that dwelt among them, | he came upon the Jamnites also by night and set the haven on fire with the ships, so that the

11, 33: April 164 B.C.

light of the fire was seen at Jerusalem, two hundred and forty furlongs off.
10 And when they were now gone from there nine furlongs, and were marching toward Timotheus, five thousand footmen and five thousand horsemen of the Arabians set upon them. |
11 And after a hard fight in which by the help of God they got the victory, the rest of the Arabians, being overcome, besought Judas for peace, promising to give him pastures and to assist
12 him in other things. | And Judas thinking that they might be profitable indeed in many things, promised them peace: and after having joined hands, they departed to their tents.

13 ***Further Campaigns of Judas*** He also laid siege to a certain strong city, encompassed with bridges and walls, and inhabited by multitudes of different nations, the name of which
14 is Casphin. | But they that were within it, trusting in the strength of the walls and the provision of the victuals, behaved in a more negligent manner and provoked Judas with railing and blaspheming and uttering such words as were not to be
15 spoken. | But Machabeus, calling upon the great Lord of the world who without any rams or engines of war threw down the walls of Jericho in the time of Josue, fiercely assaulted the
16 walls. | And having taken the city by the will of the Lord, he made an unspeakable slaughter, so that a pool adjoining it, of two furlongs broad, seemed to run with the blood of the slain
17 From there they went seven hundred and fifty furlongs, and
18 came to Characa to the Jews that are called Tubianites. | But as for Timotheus, they found him not in those places, for before he had accomplished anything he went back, having left a very
19 strong garrison in a certain hold. | But Dositheus, and Sosipater, who were captains with Machabeus, slew them that were left by Timotheus in the hold, to the number of ten thousand
20 men. | And Machabeus, having set in order about him six thousand men and divided them by bands, went forth against Timotheus, who had with him a hundred and twenty thousand
21 footmen and two thousand five hundred horsemen. | Now when Timotheus had knowledge of the coming of Judas, he sent the women and children and the other baggage before him into a fortress called Carnion: for it was impregnable and hard

12, 13: *Casphin:* probably modern Khisfin about ten miles east of the Sea of Galilee.

12, 15: *Rams:* battering rams used in sieges. The writer refers to Jos 6.

12, 21-28: See the parallel of the battle of Carnion (east of the Sea of Galilee) in 1 Mc 5, 39-44 (where the name is spelled Carnaim)

22 to come at, by reason of the straitness of the places. | But when
the first band of Judas came in sight, the enemies were struck
with fear, by the presence of God who sees all things: and
they were put to flight one from another, so that they were
often thrown down by their own companions and wounded
23 with the strokes of their own swords. | But Judas was vehe-
mently earnest in punishing the profane, of whom he slew thirty
24 thousand men. | And Timotheus himself fell into the hands of
the band of Dositheus and Sosipater; and with many prayers
he besought them to let him go with his life, because he had
the parents and brethren of many of the Jews, who, by his
25 death might happen to be deceived. | And when he had given
his faith that he would restore them according to the agree-
ment, they let him go without hurt, for the saving of their
brethren.

26 Then Judas went away to Carnion, where he slew five and
27 twenty thousand persons. | And after he had put to flight and
destroyed these, he removed his army to Ephron, a strong city,
wherein there dwelt a multitude of divers nations; and stout
young men standing upon the walls made a vigorous resistance.
And in this place there were many engines of war and a provi-
28 sion of darts. | But when they had invocated the Almighty,
who with his power breaks the strength of the enemies, they
took the city and slew five and twenty thousand of them that
29 were within. | From there they departed to Scythopolis, which
30 lies six hundred furlongs from Jerusalem. | But the Jews that
were among the Scythopolitans, testified that they were used
kindly by them and that even in the times of their adversity they
31 had treated them with humanity. | So they gave them thanks,
exhorting them to be still friendly to their nation, and they
came to Jerusalem, the feast of the weeks being at hand.

32 *Defeat of Gorgias* And after Pentecost they marched
33 against Gorgias, the governor of Idumea. | And he came out
with three thousand footmen and four hundred horsemen. |
34 And when they had joined battle, it happened that a few of the
35 Jews were slain. | But Dositheus, a horseman, one of Bacenor's
band, a valiant man, took hold of Gorgias: and when he would
have taken him alive, a certain horseman of the Thracians

12, 24: *Because he had the parents and brethren . . . deceived:* if they killed Timotheus, the parents and brethren of the Jews under his control would be punished or executed.

12, 29: *Scythopolis:* a city south of the Sea of Galilee.

came upon him and cut off his shoulder: and so Gorgias escaped
36 to Maresa. | But when they that were with Esdrin had fought
long, and were weary, Judas called upon the Lord to be their
37 helper, and leader of the battle. | Then beginning in his own
language and singing hymns with a loud voice, he put Gorgias'
soldiers to flight.
38 So Judas, having gathered together his army, came into the
city of Odollam: and when the seventh day came, they purified
themselves according to the custom and kept the sabbath in the
39 same place. | And the day following, Judas came with his com-
pany to take away the bodies of them that were slain and to
bury them with their kinsmen in the sepulchers of their fathers.
40 | And they found under the coats of the slain some of the
donaries of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids to the
Jews: so that all plainly saw that for this cause they were slain.
41 | Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord, who had
42 discovered the things that were hidden. | And so betaking them-
selves to prayers they besought him that the sin which had been
committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas ex-
horted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as
they saw before their eyes what had happened because of the
sins of those that were slain.

43 ***Prayers for the Dead*** And making a gathering, he sent
twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice
to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and reli-
44 giously concerning the resurrection. | For if he had not hoped
that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed

12, 38: *The city of Odollam:* southwest of Jerusalem.

12, 40: The sin of these dead soldiers in carrying amulets ("donaries") was perhaps the violation of the prohibition (see Dt 7, 25) which forbade taking the gold and silver of pagan idols for self enrichment. *For this cause they were slain:* the sacred writer, in typical Old Testament tradition, attributes the cause of death to their sin.

12, 42-46: This famous dogmatic passage most fittingly is incorporated into the Epistle of the anniversary Mass for the Dead (vv. 43-46), and the Epistle of the second Mass of All Soul's Day. It is better to follow the Greek text which says: "And if he was thinking that a splendid reward was reserved for those who had fallen asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought (v. 45). Therefore he had a sacrifice of atonement made for the dead that they might be freed from their sin" (v. 46). By "reward" in v 45, the sacred writer means the resurrection spoken of in v. 44. Vv. 42-46 comprise the only Old Testament passage teaching an intermediate state of the dead during which the faithful on earth could intercede for them through their prayers (v. 42) and sacrifice (v. 43). This state is called purgatory in modern terminology.

45 superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. | And because he
considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had
46 great grace laid up for them. | It is therefore a holy and whole-
some thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed
from sins.

13

1 ***Menelaus Is Put to Death*** In the year one hundred and
forty-nine, Judas understood that Antiochus Eupator was com-
2 ing with a multitude against Judea, | and with him Lysias the
regent, who had charge over the affairs *of the realm,* having
with him a hundred and ten thousand footmen, five thousand
horsemen, twenty-two elephants *and* three hundred chariots
3 armed with hooks. | Menelaus also joined himself with them:
and with great deceitfulness besought Antiochus, not for the
welfare of his country but in hopes that he should be appointed
4 chief ruler. | But the King of kings stirred up the mind of
Antiochus against the sinner, and upon Lysias suggesting that
he was the cause of all the evils, he commanded (as the custom
is with them) that he should be apprehended and put to death
5 in the same place. | Now there was in that place a tower fifty
cubits high, having a heap of ashes on every side. This had a
6 prospect steep down. | From there he commanded the sacrile-
gious wretch to be thrown down into the ashes, all men thrust-
7 ing him forward unto death. | And by such a law it happened
that Menelaus the transgressor of the law was put to death:
8 not having so much as burial in the earth. | And indeed very
justly, for insomuch as he had committed many sins against
the altar of God, the fire and ashes of which were holy, he was
condemned to die in ashes.

9 ***Judea again Attacked*** But the king, with his mind full
of rage, came on to show himself worse to the Jews than his
10 father was. | Which, when Judas understood, he commanded
the people to call upon the Lord day and night that, as he had
11 always done, so now also he would help them: | because they
were afraid to be deprived of the law and of their country and
of the holy temple; and that he would not suffer the people that
had of late taken breath for a little while to be again in sub-
12 jection to blasphemous nations. | So when they had all done

13, 1: *In the year one hundred and forty-nine:* 162 B.C.
13, 4: *The King of Kings:* God.

this together and had craved mercy of the Lord with weeping and fasting, lying prostrate on the ground for three days con-
13 tinually, Judas exhorted them to make themselves ready. | But he with the ancients determined, before the king should bring his army into Judea and make himself master of the city, to go out and to commit the event of the thing to the judgment of the
14 Lord. | So committing all to God, the creator of the world, and having exhorted his people to fight manfully and to stand up even to death for the laws, the temple, the city, their country
15 and citizens, he placed his army about Modin. | And having given his company for a watchword, The Victory of God, with most valiant chosen young men he set upon the king's quarter by night and slew four thousand men in the camp, and the greatest of the elephants with them that had been upon him |
16 And having filled the camp of the enemies with exceeding great fear and tumult, they went off with good success.
17 Now this was done at the break of day, by the protection and
18 help of the Lord. | But the king, having taken a taste of the hardiness of the Jews, attempted to take the strong places by
19 policy. | And he marched with his army to Bethsura, which was a stronghold of the Jews: but he was repulsed, he failed,
20 he lost his men. | Now Judas sent necessaries to them that were
21 within. | But Rhodocus, one of the Jews' army, disclosed the secrets to the enemies, so he was sought out and taken up and
22 put in prison. | Again the king treated with them that were in Bethsura: gave his right hand, took theirs, and went away.

23 ***Antiochus Makes Peace*** He fought with Judas and was overcome. And when he understood that Philip, who had been left over the affairs, had rebelled at Antioch, he was in a consternation of mind and, entreating the Jews and yielding to them, he swore to all things that seemed reasonable, and, being reconciled, offered sacrifices, honored the temple and left gifts.
24 | He embraced Machabeus and made him governor and prince
25 from Ptolemais unto the Gerrenians. | But when he came to Ptolemais, the men of that city were much displeased with the conditions of the peace, being angry for fear they should break
26 the covenant. | Then Lysias went up to the judgment seat and set forth the reason and appeased the people and returned to Antioch. And thus matters went with regard to the king's coming and his return.

13, 24: The Greek reads: and left Hegemonides as governor in command from Ptolemais to Gerar.

14

1 ***The Treachery of Alcimus*** But after the space of three years, Judas and they that were with him understood that Demetrius the son of Seleucus had come with a great power and a navy by the haven of Tripolis, to places proper for his
2 purpose, | and had made himself master of the countries, against Antiochus and his general Lysias.
3 Now one Alcimus, who had been chief priest, but had wilfully defiled himself in the time of mingling *with the heathens*, seeing that there was no safety for him, nor access to the altar, |
4 came to king Demetrius in the year one hundred and fifty, presenting unto him a crown of gold and a palm, and besides these some boughs which seemed to belong to the temple. And that
5 day indeed he held his peace. | But having gotten a convenient time to further his madness, being called to counsel by Demetrius and asked what the Jews relied upon and what were their
6 counsels, | he answered: They among the Jews that are called Assideans, of whom Judas Machabeus is captain, nourish wars and raise seditions and will not suffer the realm to be in peace. |
7 For I also, being deprived of my ancestors' glory (I mean of
8 the high priesthood), have now come hither, | principally indeed out of fidelity to the king's interests, but in the next place also to provide for the good of my countrymen: for all our nation suffers much from the evil proceedings of those men. |
9 Wherefore, O king, now that you know all these things, take care, I beseech you, both of the country and of our nation,
10 according to your humanity which is known to all men: | for, as long as Judas lives, it is not possible that the state should be
11 quiet. | Now when this man had spoken to this effect, the rest also of the *king's* friends, who were enemies of Judas, incensed Demetrius against him.

12 ***Demetrius Sends Nicanor into Judea*** And forthwith he sent Nicanor, the commander over the elephants, governor into
13 Judea, | giving him in charge to take Judas himself and disperse all them that were with him and to make Alcimus the
14 high priest of the great temple. | Then the Gentiles who had fled out of Judea from Judas came to Nicanor by flocks, thinking the miseries and calamities of the Jews to be the welfare of
15 their affairs. | Now when the Jews heard of Nicanor's coming

14, 1-10: This is parallel to 1 Mc 7, 1-21.
14, 4: *In the year one hundred and fifty:* 162 B.C.
14, 6: *Assideans:* see 1 Mc 2, 42 n.

and that the nations were assembled against them, they cast earth upon their heads and made supplication to him who chose his people to keep them for ever and who protected his portion
16 by evident signs. | Then at the commandment of their captain, they forthwith removed from the place where they were and
17 went to the town of Dessau to meet them. | Now Simon, the brother of Judas, had joined battle with Nicanor, but was
18 frightened with the sudden coming of the adversaries. | Nevertheless, Nicanor hearing of the valor of Judas' companions and the greatness of courage with which they fought for their
19 country, was afraid to try the matter by the sword. | Wherefore he sent Posidonius and Theodotius and Matthias before to present and receive the right hands.

20 *Nicanor's Pact of Friendship Accepted* And when there had been a consultation thereupon and the captain had acquainted the multitude with it, they were all of one mind to
21 consent to covenants. | So they appointed a day upon which they might commune together by themselves; and seats were
22 brought out and set for each one. | But Judas ordered men to be ready in convenient places, lest some mischief might be suddenly practiced by the enemies: so they made an agreeable
23 conference. | And Nicanor abode in Jerusalem and did no wrong, but sent away the flocks of the multitudes that had been
24 gathered together. | And Judas was always dear to him from
25 the heart, and he was well affected to the man. | And he desired him to marry a wife and to have children. So he married. He lived quietly and they lived in common.
26 But Alcimus, seeing the love they had one to another, and the covenants, came to Demetrius and told him that Nicanor assented to the foreign interest, for that he meant to make
27 Judas, who was a traitor to the kingdom, his successor. | Then the king, being in a rage and provoked with this man's wicked accusations, wrote to Nicanor, signifying that he was greatly displeased with the covenant of friendship and that he commanded him nevertheless to send Machabeus prisoner in all
28 haste to Antioch. | When this was made known to him, Nicanor was in a consternation and took it grievously that he should make void the articles that were agreed upon, having received no injury from the man.

29 *Nicanor Ordered to Break the Pact* But because he

14, 23-31: This passage of the friendship between Nicanor and Judas is an expansion of a terse allusion to their friendship in 1 Mc 7, 28-29.

could not oppose the king, he watched an opportunity to
10 comply with the orders. | But when Machabeus perceived that
Nicanor was more stern to him and that when they met together
as usual he behaved himself in a rough manner, he sensed that
this rough behavior came not of good; and he gathered together
11 a few of his men and hid himself from Nicanor. | But he,
finding himself notably prevented by the man, came to the great
and holy temple and commanded the priests that were offering
12 the accustomed sacrifices to deliver him the man. | And when
they swore unto him that they knew not where the man was
13 whom he sought, he stretched out his hand to the temple | and
swore, saying: Unless you deliver Judas prisoner to me, I will
14 lay this temple of God even with the ground and will beat down
the altar and I will dedicate this temple to Bacchus. | And
when he had spoken thus he departed. But the priests, stretch-
ing forth their hands to heaven, called upon him that was ever
15 the defender of their nation, saying in this manner: | You,
O Lord of all things, who want nothing, were pleased that the
16 temple of your habitation should be among us. | Therefore
now, O Lord, the Holy of all Holies, keep this house for ever
undefiled, which was lately cleansed.

17 *The Death of Razias* Now Razias, one of the ancients of
Jerusalem, a man that was a lover of the city and of good
report and who for his affection was called the father of the
18 Jews, was accused to Nicanor. | Razias had for a long time,
held fast his purpose of keeping himself pure in the Jews'
religion and was ready to expose his body and life that he
19 might persevere therein. | So Nicanor, being willing to de-
clare the hatred that he bore the Jews, sent five hundred soldiers
20 to take him. | For he thought by insnaring him to hurt the Jews
21 very much. | Now as the multitude sought to rush into his
house and to break open the door and to set fire to it, when he
was ready to be taken, he struck himself with his sword: |
22 choosing to die nobly rather than to fall into the hands of the
23 wicked and to suffer abuses unbecoming his noble birth. | But
whereas through haste he missed of giving himself a sure
wound, and the crowd was breaking into the doors, he ran
boldly to the wall and manfully threw himself down to the

14, 41-46: Although Razias' suicidal act was objectively wrong, he apparently thought he was acting correctly by taking his life lest he fall into apostasy. The sacred author seems noncommittal on the matter of the suicidal act. This text has often been quoted erroneously as an argument in favor of suicide and, also erroneously, as proof of the non-inspiration of the book.

44 crowd. | But they quickly making room for his fall, he came
45 upon the midst of the neck. | And as he had yet breath in him, being inflamed in mind, he arose and while his blood ran down with a great stream and he was grievously wounded, he ran
46 through the crowd: and standing upon a steep rock, when he was now almost without blood, grasping his bowels with both hands, he cast them upon the throng, calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to restore these to him again. And so he departed this life.

15

1 ***The Vision of Judas and His Prayer*** But when Nicanor understood that Judas was in the places of Samaria, he purposed to set upon him with all violence on the sabbath day. |
2 And when the Jews that were constrained to follow him, said: Do not act so fiercely and barbarously, but give honor to the day that is sanctified and reverence him that beholds all things:
3 that unhappy man asked if there were a mighty One in heaven
4 that had commanded the sabbath day to be kept. | And when they answered: There is the living Lord himself in heaven, the mighty One, that commanded the seventh day to be kept, |
5 then he said: And I am mighty upon the earth and I command to take arms and to do the king's business. Nevertheless he prevailed not to accomplish his design.
6 So Nicanor, being puffed up with exceeding great pride, thought to set up a public monument of his victory over Judas.
7 | But Machabeus ever trusted with all hope that God would
8 help them. | And he exhorted his people not to fear the coming of the nations, but to remember the help they had before received from heaven, and now to hope for victory from the
9 Almighty. | And speaking to them out of the law and the prophets, and withal putting them in mind of the battles they
10 had fought before, he made them more cheerful. | Then after he had encouraged them, he showed withal the falsehood of the
11 Gentiles and their breach of oaths. | So he armed every one of them, not with defense of shield and spear, but with very good speeches and exhortations, and told them a dream worthy to be believed, whereby he rejoiced them all.
12 Now the vision was in this manner: Onias who had been high priest, a good and virtuous man, modest in his looks, gentle

14, 44: *He came upon the midst of the neck:* he fell in the open place.
14, 46: Notice his belief in the resurrection.
15, 8: *The nations:* the pagans.
15, 12-16: The dream exemplifies how the people of the Old Testament called upon their "saints" as Christians call upon theirs.

in his manners and graceful in his speech, and who from a child was exercised in virtues, holding up his hands, prayed for all
13 the people of the Jews. | After this, there appeared also another man, admirable for age and glory, and environed with
14 great beauty and majesty. | Then Onias answering, said: This is a lover of his brethren and of the people of Israel. This is he that prays much for the people and for all the holy city:
15 Jeremias, the prophet of God. | Whereupon Jeremias stretched forth his right hand and gave to Judas a sword of gold, saying:
16 | Take this holy sword, a gift from God, wherewith you shall overthrow the adversaries of my people Israel.

17 Thus being exhorted with the words of Judas, which were very good and proper to stir up the courage and strengthen the hearts of the young men, they resolved to fight and set upon them manfully: that valor might decide the matter, because the
18 holy city and the temple were in danger. | For their concern was less for their wives and children and for their brethren and kinsfolk: but their greatest and principal fear was for the holi-
19 ness of the temple. | And they also that were in the city had no little concern for them that were to be engaged in battle. |
20 And now when all expected what judgment would be given, and the enemies were at hand, and the army was set in array, the beasts and the horsemen ranged in convenient places, |
21 Machabeus, considering the coming of the multitude and the divers preparations of armor and the fierceness of the beasts, stretching out his hands to heaven, called upon the Lord who works wonders, who gives victory to them that are worthy, not according to the power of their arms, but according as it seems
22 good to him. | And in his prayer he said after this manner: You, O Lord, who did send your angel in the time of Ezechias
23 king of Juda, and did kill a hundred and eighty-five thousand of the army of Sennacherib, | send now also, O Lord of heaven, your good angel before us, for the fear and dread of the great-
24 ness of your arm: | that they may be afraid, who come with blasphemy against your holy people. And thus he concluded his prayer.

25 But Nicanor and they that were with him came forward,
26 with trumpets and songs. | But Judas and they that were with him encountered them, calling upon God by prayers.

27 *Nicanor Defeated and Slain* So, fighting with their hands but praying to the Lord with their hearts, they slew no less than five and thirty thousand, being greatly cheered with the presence

15, 22: A reference to 4 Kgs 19, 35.

28 of God. | And when the battle was over and they were return-
ing with joy, they understood that Nicanor was slain in his
29 armor. | Then making a shout and a great noise, they blessed
30 the almighty Lord in their own language. | And Judas, who
was altogether ready, in body and mind, to die for his country-
men, commanded that Nicanor's head and his hand with the
31 shoulder should be cut off and carried to Jerusalem. | And
when he had arrived there, he called together his countrymen
and the priests to the altar, and sent also for them that were
32 in the castle, | and showing them the head of Nicanor and the
wicked hand which he had stretched out, with proud boasts,
33 against the holy house of the almighty God, | he commanded
also that the tongue of the wicked Nicanor should be cut out
and given by pieces to birds, and the hand of the furious man
34 to be hanged up over against the temple. | Then all blessed the
Lord of heaven, saying: Blessed be he that has kept his own
35 place undefiled. | And he hung up Nicanor's head in the top of
the castle, that it might be an evident and manifest sign of the
help of God.

36 ***The Conclusion*** And they all ordained by a common
decree, by no means to let this day pass without solemnity, |
37 but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, in the
Syrian language called the day before Mardochias' day.
38 So these things being done with relation to Nicanor, and
from that time the city being possessed by the Hebrews, I also
39 will here make an end of my narration. | Which if I have done
well, and as it becomes the history, it is what I desired: but if
40 not so perfectly, it must be pardoned me. | For as it is hurtful
to drink always wine or always water, but pleasant to use
sometimes the one and sometimes the other: so if the speech
be always nicely framed, it will not be grateful to the readers.
But here it shall be ended.

15, 30: Compare: "He bears the vaunter's head and hand, That threaten'd desolation to the land." (Part III of Handel's oratorio, *Judas Maccabeus.)*

15, 37: *Syrian language:* Aramaic language. *Mardochias' day:* this is another name for the feast of Purim, which was also celebrated on the fourteenth of Adar but only by the Jews who lived "in towns not walled . . ." (Est 9, 19). See Est 9, 21 n for the two different dates of celebration.

NOTES